

# Leasehold *news*

## Inside this issue:

- Keeping you safe in your home
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*and more...*

News that matters to you



Your Homes  
Newcastle

Autumn 2009

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

ئهم زانیاریانه سهبارته به Your Homes Newcastle و چۆنیهتی کارکردنه که به له لایهن شۆرای شاری نیوکاسیلهوه ئهرکی نهوهی پیدراوه که خانوه کانی شۆرای شار بهرئوه بهرایهتی بکات. ئه کهرحه زتان له وهرگرتنی ئهم زانیاریانه به زمانی کوردی یا ههر زمانیکه دیکه ههیه به ژماره تلیفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پیوهندی بگرن.

Portugués  
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.

Español  
Spanish

Esta 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.

In light of the tower block fire tragedy that happened in London this edition of Leasehold News includes some important information regarding safety within your home.

Please also take the time to read the other articles as we have tried to capture some of the suggestions you have raised at recent leaseholder events.

There is also an annual report section which should give you some useful information

regarding this year's satisfaction survey.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you all at these difficult times of the service our Advice and Support team can offer. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss your circumstances.



Jeanette Johnson - Manager, Leasehold Team

## Leaks

Leaks from one property to another are a frequent occurrence for people living in flats and the most frequent cause of damage and insurance claims in blocks of flats.

If you are going to be away from your flat please remember to turn the stopcock off at your home to avoid the possibility of a leak.

If you notice even a slight water leak, have it repaired immediately.

Leaseholders who continually cause leaks or refuse to have the leaks repaired are in breach of their lease and YHN can take legal steps to enforce the lease terms. We will charge you if we have to take legal action and also charge you for any damage caused to our tenanted properties.

Therefore it is very important that you act quickly to minimise the damage from leaks both to your own home and to your neighbour's homes.

**For further advice about leaks please contact the Leasehold Team.**

## Make an appointment before coming to see us

If you would like to come and discuss any aspect of your Leasehold property with us in person you need to phone us in the first instance in order to make an appointment before attending our office.

This will allow us to gather some information over your query and have the right officers available for you to discuss the issue.

By making an appointment it also means that you will not waste a journey if there are no officers available to see you.

**If you would like to make an appointment please contact us on freephone 0800 091 0082.**

# Keeping you safe in your home

It's always important to be aware of the potential fire risks in your home. Following the tragic fire which claimed six lives in a London high rise recently, Your Homes Newcastle and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service would to take this opportunity to remind you of some important safety messages to keep you and your family safe at home:

## If you smoke:

- Always use a proper ashtray
- Never leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around. They can easily fall over and start a fire
- Double check all smoking materials are stubbed out and dispose of them carefully
- Always keep lighters and matches well out of reach of children
- Never smoke in bed

## When cooking:

- Never leave pans unattended
- Most fires in the kitchen are caused by chip pans – replace your chip with a thermostatically controlled deep fat fryer
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished

## Escaping from fires in flats and maisonettes

- If there is a fire in your flat, keep calm, act quickly and get everyone out as soon as possible
- Don't investigate the fire – leave it to the professionals
- Leave the flat, closing the doors behind you as go
- Do not use lifts if there is a fire, go down the stairs instead
- Get out, stay out and call 999 as soon as you are clear of the building. Give the address, including the number of your flat and which floor the fire is on
- Never re-enter the building for any reason
- If there is a fire elsewhere in the building, not in your flat, it's usually safer to stay put. Flats and maisonettes are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a time.

Working smoke alarms save lives – you're twice as likely to die in a fire at home if you haven't got a smoke alarm

Looking after your smoke alarm is vital, hardwired systems should be checked annually.

If you have battery operated alarms in your home, please make sure you test them once a week. Standard batteries should be replaced at least once a year.

Fitting a smoke alarm is the first crucial step to protecting yourself from fire.



To find out more, visit [www.twfire.gov.uk](http://www.twfire.gov.uk)  
YHN will also be holding fire safety road shows with the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service. Dates will be announced soon.

# Are you being disturbed by noisy neighbours?

Complaints about excessive noise are investigated by the local authority who can take action if the noise is considered to be a statutory nuisance.

Newcastle City Council operates a Night Time Noise Service 7 nights per week between 8pm and 4am. The team will respond to neighbour noise as quickly as possible. They can be contacted by ringing **0300 1000 101**.

The Council also deals with complaints about burglar alarms, up to midnight seven days a week. Contact the Civic Centre on **0191 232 8520** and ask for the duty Environmental Health Officer.

To make a complaint about noise or to seek further advice you can email: **rspp@newcastle.gov.uk**. This email address is not monitored at night so please use **0300 1000 101** to contact the Night Time Noise Team if you have problems between 8pm and 4am.

**For more information please contact the Environmental Protection, Pollution Control and LA 21 Team on 0191 211 6102.**



# The Billing Process Is So Confusing!

After we sent out the actual invoices this September for 2008/09 the number of calls to the team has indicated that many people are still not too sure of how the new billing process works.

The billing process isn't the easiest of things to understand but the lease terms state that we must invoice this way so here's a reminder of how it works.

You need to pay your service charge in advance of the financial year around March time on an estimated basis which covers what we think your share of the cost of the services will be. We have to charge an estimate because we do not know in advance how much the cost of providing the services will be.

After the end of each financial year we will work out your share of the actual costs

of the service and compare this to what we estimated the costs would be.

If the estimated charge is more than the actual charge, we will put a credit on your service charge account but if the estimated charge is less than the actual charge, we will put a debit on your account. This will be shown in the 'difference between estimated and actual' section of your bill.

We do ask for payment in full in advance as this is what the lease requires us to do but if you are having genuine difficulties our income team are happy to discuss your circumstances and agree an instalment plan.

# Facts and Figures - Management Fee Costs Analysis 08-09

Our Running Costs		2008-09
Expense	Value	
Employee Expenses	£131,420.00	
Supplies and Services	£7,700.00	
Office Accommodation	£10,300.00	
Central Admin Support	£43,680.00	
<b>Total Cost of Service</b>	<b>£193,100.00</b>	
Total Leasehold Residents	1,428	
<b>Total cost per leasehold resident</b>	<b>135.22</b>	

Right to Buy Sales		
Year	Freehold	Leasehold
2004/05	683	184
2005/06	341	144
2006/07	241	69
2007/08	178	64
2008/09	33	17

## Demographics

- Just over half of the respondents (53%) were aged over 55 years of age, with 23% aged between 55-64.
- The majority of respondents were female (45%) with a further 38% being male. 19 respondents (17%) did not provide details of their gender.
- The vast majority of respondents (83%) were White British, with a further 8% from a BME background. 9% of respondents did not provide details of their ethnicity.
- Over two thirds of respondents stated that they were Christian (66%). A further 18% did not provide details of their religious beliefs.
- The vast majority of respondents were straight or heterosexual (79%). Three individuals indicated that they were gay or bisexual. Nearly a fifth of respondents did not provide details of their sexuality (12%) or stated that they 'preferred not to say' (6%).
- Half of respondents stated that they did not have a longstanding illness or disability.
- Eleven respondents (10%) did not indicate if they were disabled or not.

# You said, we did

## Some of you challenged the fact that we were holding an annual amount for cyclical painting.

Following advice from the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal all leaseholder's painting funds have been refunded to them and the practice of holding money in advance for painting has been abolished. However we are still responsible for external painting at your property when this is required you will be consulted and an invoice issued once this work is complete.

## You commented that you would like more feedback on what happens with your suggestions after Leasehold Events.

After every event we now develop an action plan and wherever possible we will try to accommodate your requests. Those who have attended the events will receive a written progress update.

## You have requested more information regarding health and safety in flats.

This edition of leasehold news includes an article on fire safety and we are working to ensure that all new leases have clauses to enforce annual gas and electrical checks. Remember those of you with existing leases can also buy into our annual gas servicing plan which is excellent value for money.

## Satisfaction levels

In total, 56.8% of respondents who had contacted the Leasehold Team were 'satisfied' with the final outcome of their query. 21.4% of respondents were 'very satisfied', and 33.3% were 'satisfied'. This means that 43.2% were dissatisfied overall, with 17.9% being 'very dissatisfied'.

Respondents were asked how satisfied they felt being kept informed about things that affect them. 34.5% of these Leaseholders stated that the Team was 'very good', and a further 42.5% felt 'fairly good' in keeping them informed. Therefore 81.3% of leaseholders were 'satisfied' with being kept informed about issues that affect them. In contrast, 6 respondents (5.3%) stated that the ways they were kept informed about things was 'fairly poor' and 4 respondents felt that it was 'very poor'. This represents a total of 18.7% who were unsatisfied with how they were kept informed about issues which affect them.

A third of respondents (32.7%) have been involved in any involvement activities.

When asked how satisfied they were with opportunities for participation in management and decision making, over half of respondents (58.7%) stated that they were 'satisfied'.

In total, 8.8% stated they were 'very satisfied' and a further 38.9% stated they were 'satisfied'.

A third of respondents were 'unsatisfied'. 24 respondents were neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, 10 respondents were dissatisfied (8.8%) and 4 respondents were very dissatisfied. Seven respondents did not reply to the question.

When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall service provided by your landlord, nearly two thirds of respondents (62.6%) stated that they were satisfied. Whilst 15% were very satisfied, a further 44.2% (50 respondents) were satisfied. This means that 37.2% of respondents were unsatisfied, with 8% being very dissatisfied, and 11.5% were dissatisfied.

Older people tended to be less satisfied than those from a younger age range. For instance, 25% of those who were satisfied were aged between 16-24 years of age. In comparison, 43% of those who were not satisfied were aged between 55-75 years of age.

Women tended to be more satisfied (53%) compared to men (33%). In addition, nearly half of those who were unsatisfied (48%) were men.

13% of those from BME backgrounds were not satisfied with the service overall.

However, those from Asian or Asian British backgrounds stated that they were satisfied with the service overall.

# 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 minicom (head office): 0191 278 7727
- 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

**Debt Recovery Team** - Tel: 0191 278 8757  
E-mail: [income@yhn.org.uk](mailto:income@yhn.org.uk)

**Advice and Support Team** - Tel: 0800 0911 275

**Concierge** - Tel: 0800 0931 389

**Right to Buy Team** - Tel: 0800 091 1310

**HASBET** (Housing Anti Social Behaviour) -  
Tel: 0191 278 8740  
Tel: 0300 1000 101 (24hr incident reporting line)  
E-mail: [newcastleasbunit@yhn.org.uk](mailto:newcastleasbunit@yhn.org.uk)

**Repaircall** - Tel: 0845 113 8888  
E-mail: [repairs@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@newcastle.gov.uk)

**Envirocall** - Tel: 0191 274 4000

**Council Tax** - Tel: 0845 111 4101  
E-mail: [council.tax@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:council.tax@newcastle.gov.uk)

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

**Northumbrian Water** - Tel: 0845 717 1100

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

**Shelter** - Tel: 0808 800 4444

**Age Concern** - Tel: 0800 009 966

**Leasehold Valuation Tribunal** -  
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

**Newcastle Tenants Federation** -  
1st Floor, 1 Pink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE1 5DW  
Tel: 0191 232 1371  
E-mail: [info@newcastletenantsfed.org.uk](mailto:info@newcastletenantsfed.org.uk)  
[www.newcastletenantsfed.org.uk](http://www.newcastletenantsfed.org.uk)

**Anchor Staying Put** - Metropolitan House,  
Longrigg, Swalwell, Gateshead, NE16 3AS  
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Your Homes  
Newcastle

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