



**newcastle furniture service**  
Living Spaces, 180 Frames

Issue 7 - Autumn 2009



# NFS newsletter



Your Homes  
Newcastle



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

For more information on NFS or any features in this newsletter please contact:

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This information is about Your Homes Newcastle's Newcastle Furniture Service, which supplies furniture to tenants to help them set up their homes. If you need this in your language or a different language phone 0191 278 8633. This information is also available in easy read, 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 হোম নিউক্যাসল- কাউন্সিলের ফার্নিচার সার্ভিস সমন্ধে যারা টেনান্টদের ঘর বাড়ী সাজাতে সাহায্যের জন্য ফার্নিচার সরবরাহ করে। 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 Your Homes Newcastle (您的纽卡斯尔住房) 纽卡斯尔家具服务的信息, 此服务向租客提供家具以便他们安顿。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) 紐卡素家具服務的信息, 此服務向租客提供家具以便他們安頓。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 در مورد بخش وسایل خانه در سازمان «خانه های شما در نیوکاسل» است که مبلمان و وسایل خانگی مورد نیاز مستأجران را تأمین می کند. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبان های دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۸۸۶۳۳ تماس بگیرید.
Français French	Ces informations concernent le service « mobilier » de Your Homes Newcastle, qui fournit du mobilier aux locataires pour les aider à s'installer dans leur logement. 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 خزمەتگانی داوین کردنی ساباتی نیومار Your Homes Newcastle ٤- که ساباتی نیومار دەخاتە بەردەستی کرێشینان. ئەگەر حەزتان لە وەرگرتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا هەر زمانێکی دیکە هەیه بە ژمارە تیلیفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پێوەندی بکرن.
Português Portuguese	Esta informação refere-se ao serviço de Mobiliário da Your Homes Newcastle, que fornece mobiliário aos inquilinos para os ajudar a estabelecer as suas casas. Se precisar desta informação em <português> ou noutra língua, queira ligar para o 0191 278 8633.
Русском Russian	Информация о службе по обеспечению мебелью Your Homes Newcastle, которая поставяет мебель квартиросъемщикам с целью их обоснования в домах. Если Вы нуждаетесь в этой информации <на русском> или другом языке звоните по тел. 0191 278 8633.
Español Spanish	Esta es información sobre el Servicio de Muebles Your Homes de Newcastle, que proporciona muebles a los inquilinos para ayudarles a montar su casa. Si necesita esta información en español o en otro idioma, llame al 0191 278 8633.

# Welcome to our seventh newsletter, produced especially for NFS customers.

This newsletter is to let you know how well the service is working and what we are doing to make improvements.

At the back of this newsletter is a feedback form which we would like you to complete and return in the freepost envelope provided. The feedback we receive from our customers

is very important to us, whether positive or negative, as this will allow us to make improvements to the service we provide to you. All feedback forms will be put into a hat and one lucky person will be drawn out and receive a 19" LCD television.

## Contents

Listening to you	4
Supporting charities	4
Working with the community	4
Service standards	4
How we perform (including NFS service standards)	5
How we spend our money	5
Child Safety Equipment Scheme (including service standards)	6
YHN Garden Care (including service standards)	7
Palatine	8
Compliments, Complaints and Comments	9
How we value our staff	9
Service expansion	9
Future developments	10
Service improvements	10
We want your views	10
2009 Feedback form	11-12



## Listening to you

We have continued to improve our methods of consultation based on your suggestions.

We currently carry out several surveys throughout the year for the furniture service. These surveys include new customer, eight week visit, five year visit and again when you end your tenancy.

We will also carry out one survey per year with clients on the YHN Garden Care scheme as well as carrying out a survey for all customers on the Child Safety Equipment scheme.

We also carry out a quality assurance check each week to make sure we deliver the best possible service to you.



## Supporting charities

Back in 2003 we set up several partnerships with charities in the local area.

These charities included: William Moulton Charity, Greggs, The Vicars Relief Fund, Families First, Newcastle Independence Network and the Learning and Skills Counselling Service. In the last couple of years the number of charities working closely with the NFS has grown, with charities such as The Sherburn House Charity and The Tyneside Cyrenians also signing up with us.

The purpose of these partnerships is to make sure that the clients of these charities receive high quality and value for money furniture along with an excellent service.

The charities send a referral to the NFS indicating which items of furniture they require along with the client's contact details. The NFS then contact the client to arrange the delivery on a day and time which is convenient to them.

In 2008/09 we carried out over 500 deliveries to these charities, supplying over £120k worth of furniture.

## Working with the community

Throughout the year we have continued to work within the local community with organisations such as Shaw Trust, Connexions, the Brownies, Oakfield College, Mental Health Matters and East End Football Club.

We will continue to expand the number of groups we work with over the next year and of course keep you all updated on our progress.



## Service standards

### What are service standards?

We produce service standards so that every tenant or possible service user is clear about the level of service they can expect to receive from us. All our service standards are reviewed every two years and this process involves tenants, service users and our staff.

We monitor all our service standards and publish this information in "Homes & People" and our annual newsletter, for all tenants and service users to view.

In this issue you will find the service standards for each of the services we provide along with their results for 2008/09.

## How we perform



The NFS Furniture Review survey is sent to all YHN tenants within eight weeks of them receiving their new furniture package from us.

During 2008/09 a total of 1851 surveys were sent out and 181 (10.7%) responded.

- 100% described our staff as professional and polite.
- 95% were satisfied with the service provided.
- 99% said we offered a friendly service and treated them fairly and with respect.

"Staff were professional and friendly, couldn't do enough to help. Really good service."

"Furniture was excellent, very satisfied with everything."

"People were very pleasant and they provided a very quick service."

## NFS service standards

We will:

- Deliver furniture to you within five working days of your request; we aim to do this with 93% of all deliveries.
- Collect furniture from you within five working days of your request; we aim to do this with 93% of all collections.
- Visit you within eight weeks of delivering your furniture to make sure everything is acceptable.
- Repair or replace any faulty cooker, fridge or fridge freezer we have supplied to you within two working days of you telling us about it.

## Performance

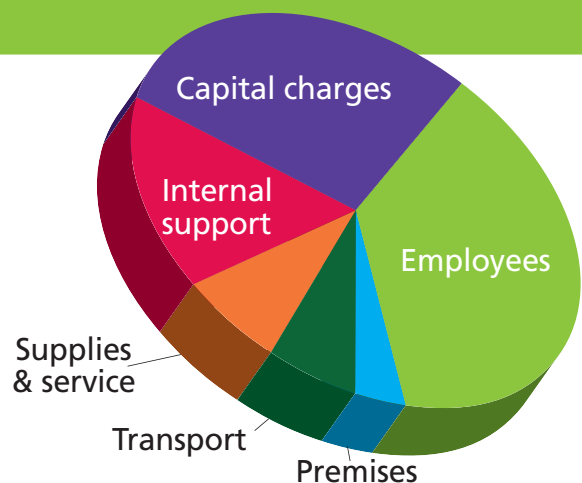
In 2008/09 we:

- Made 4674 deliveries, 95% were within the service standard.
- Made 5619 collections, 94% were within the service standard.
- Visited 100% of tenants within eight weeks of them receiving a furniture pack.
- Repaired/replaced 96% of faulty cookers, fridges or fridge freezers within the service standard.

## How we spend our money

In 2008/09 we spent a total of £3,031,600. These charts show how we spent this.

Employees	£1,177,800
Premises	£102,300
Transport	£191,500
Supplies & service	£204,000
Internal support	£472,400
Capital charges	£883,600
<b>Total spending</b>	<b>£3,031,600</b>



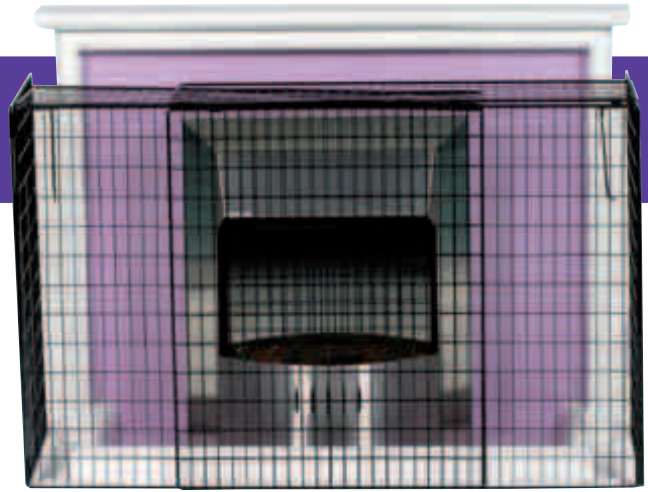
# Child Safety Equipment Scheme

The safety equipment is available free of charge to families with children under five years of age, on a low income or receiving a means tested benefit.

The aim of the scheme is to create a safer environment for young children and therefore cut down the number of accidents caused in the home.

We try, wherever possible, to fit the equipment in your preferred location but we are governed by legislation, manufacturers' guidelines and the layout and condition of your home.

The scheme is currently managed by two fitters and an administrative assistant. The equipment we fit includes fire guards, cupboard locks, door stoppers, smoke alarms, non-slip bath mats and window locks. A safety gate is also available to families with children under the age of 24 months.



Each year we set targets for the number of packs we hope to install. In 2008/09 our target was 1450 packs and we exceeded this by fitting 1600 packs in total.

The scheme's satisfaction survey is given to all customers who have child safety equipment fitted. A total of 146 surveys were returned in 2008/09 which showed:

- 100% rate the scheme as either very good or excellent.
- 99% reported that the fitting was carried out at a time and day convenient to them.
- 100% said the equipment was fitted in the location they asked for.

## Service standards

We will:

- Install your safety equipment within eight weeks of receiving your request.
- Answer any queries within two working days.

## Performance

- 87% were fitted within eight weeks of receiving the request (due to staff shortages and tenants not being in for visits).
- We answered 100% of your queries within two working days.



If you would like more information about the scheme please contact your health visitor or contact us using the details at the front of this newsletter.

In partnership with:



'Working together to make Newcastle's homes safer for our children'  
**Remember – safety equipment is not a substitute for parental supervision**

## YHN Garden Care

### “Great Gardens Great Communities”

YHN Garden Care scheme helps to maintain vulnerable tenants' gardens and improve the community you live in.

It is run by NFS, part of Your Homes Newcastle. Since its launch in January 2007, the scheme has continued to grow and we now help over 1000 tenants to maintain their gardens.

#### The scheme provides the following services:

- Grass cutting
- Hedge trimming
- Border maintenance
- Spring bulb planting
- Weed control
- Pruning
- Litter picking

The Garden Care team will visit you 11 times during a 12 month period.

The service is currently offered to tenants who live in the following housing office areas: Throckley, West Denton, Blakelaw/Cowgate, North Kenton, Newbiggin Hall, Fenham, North Benwell, St Anthony's, Walker, Gosforth, Cruddas Park, Westgate, Shieldfield and Byker.



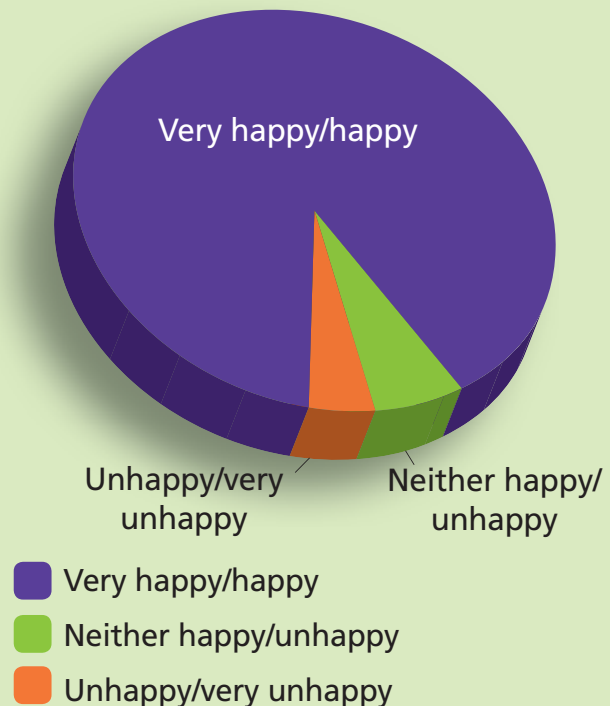
### Service standards

#### We will:

- Visit you 11 times in each 12 month period.
- Answer any queries within two working days.

## Garden Care survey

In February 2009 a survey was carried out to get customer feedback on the Garden Care service. We received some constructive feedback and ideas on how we might improve the service we provide. In total the service received 89.2% satisfaction.



## Expansion Plan

The service aims to be citywide by 31st March 2010.

To receive support in maintaining your garden you can contact your local Community Housing Office or call YHN Garden Care on 0191 278 1899.

“I am thrilled to bits with my garden. The team has been today and they worked hard, were very polite, well mannered and have done a wonderful job, even my neighbours have admired my garden. I can't thank the team enough for their efforts.” Tenant living in Benton.

“I am so amazed at what a fantastic, thorough job the garden team have done in my mother's and neighbour's garden. The gardens are beautiful and I'm very pleased and impressed. The team have swept up and worked extremely hard.” Tenant living in Throckley.

Did you know that a unique business is virtually on your doorstep?

Palatine Beds

Quality craftsmanship

Palatine Beds is owned by Newcastle City Council and operates out of a 150,000 square foot, state of the art factory in Westerhope. We manufacture and sell mattresses, divans, electric beds and headboards. We also offer a full re-upholstery service for both suites and caravans.

### What makes Palatine unique?

Its supported status and history. The factory was originally opened in 1907 and was called the Council Workshop for the Blind.

We now employ nearly 50 staff, 70% of which have some form of a disability. We work closely with the Government's Workstep programme which aims to give disabled people the chance to gain and maintain employment.

We have an extremely loyal workforce, with an average of 12 years of service amongst the current staff! The fact that so many of the staff have been employed by Palatine for so long means the standard of our products is second to none.

### Factory Shop

Our factory shop is open 6 days a week and is staffed by experienced salespeople who are very knowledgeable about the products Palatine manufactures and sells.

Often, the first question you'll be asked is "why do you want a new bed, is it because you've got a bad back, is your bed too soft or too firm, are you too hot in bed or too cold?" The staff can then tailor your buying experience and show you which beds will be most suitable.

Why not visit the factory shop in Westerhope and see the full range of beds, mattresses and electric beds? As we manufacture on site we can offer huge discounts over the high street bed retailers. The mattresses range from basic child's beds to pocket sprung mattresses with memory foam to fully adjustable electric profiling and nursing beds. We can also make beds to order, any size and specification.

Take advantage of the 10% discount voucher at the bottom of this page. Come and see the fantastic range in our factory shop and see which type of mattress and bed will suit you best.

The shop is open from 8am to 4.15pm Monday to Thursday, 8am to 4pm on Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturday.

*The North East's premier bed manufacturer*

Tel: 0191 271 2100

Web: [www.palatinebeds.co.uk](http://www.palatinebeds.co.uk)

Shop opening times:

- Monday - Thursday 8am - 4.15pm
- Friday 8am - 4pm
- Saturday 10am - 4pm

Full re-upholstery service

10% OFF ALL FULL PRICED BEDS

This discount does not run in conjunction with any other offers

Palatine Beds  
Quality craftsmanship

Factory Shop,  
Stamfordham Road, Westerhope, NE5 5HH

# Compliments, Complaints and Comments

In 2008/09 we received 5 formal and 19 informal complaints.

We also received over 50 compliments. All complaints were dealt with in the appropriate way.

The compliments we received were from a variety of people including Sherburn House Charity, the Brownies, East End Football Club, various work placements, staff and customers. All of our staff received individual praise from the service manager in our team meetings.



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

## How we value our staff

We spend a lot of time and money on developing our staff to make sure we provide the best possible service to you.

Some of the qualifications we achieved in 2008/09 included:

- NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration
- NVQ Level 2 in Warehousing
- NVQ Level 3 in Business Administration
- ILM Level 3 in First Line Management
- NVQ Level 4 in Management
- NVQ Level 5 in Management.

As Your Homes Newcastle is the only housing provider in the North East with a three star rating from the Audit Commission, we feel it is very important to continue to encourage our staff to develop and enhance their skills.

The benefits of having staff that feel valued and are highly skilled will only strengthen the organisation's ambitions of being one of the best housing providers in the country, along with making sure that our customers receive the best service available.



## Service expansion

Due to the number of additional contracts we have secured this year we have increased the number of staff we have along with the number of vehicles we operate.

We now employ 68 staff and have 6 x 7.5 tonne vehicles along with 2 x Luton vans, 2 x transit vans and 8 smaller vehicles. All of our service vehicles run on biodiesel which helps to protect our environment.

**NFS now provides the service to the following:**

- Cestria Community Housing Association
- Derwentside Homes
- Durham County Council
- East Durham Homes
- Erimus Housing
- Home Group
- Homes for Northumberland
- North Tyneside Council
- ISOS Group
- South Tyneside Homes
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Wakefield District Housing.

## Future developments

We are always trying to improve the service we offer you and in the coming year we will be introducing and exploring the following improvements:

- Relocation to our new warehouse.
- Continual expansion to other organisations.
- More efficient ways to deliver the service.

## Service improvements

We continue to improve the services available to you. We have added to the list of items in our 'Options' furniture packages so you can choose from a range of products and colours.

We have extended our delivery times to include some evening and Saturday morning deliveries, for customers who cannot arrange delivery during the working day.

## We want your views on the service that we offer you!

**Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter; remember we want to provide you with an excellent service that meets your needs and by completing the feedback form you are helping us to achieve this.**

We are offering one lucky customer the chance to win a 19" LCD television. All completed questionnaires will be entered into a draw and the lucky winner will be drawn in March 2010.

We will personally notify the winner and put their details on our website at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk)

Last year's winner of a 19" LCD TV was Kath Whitton from Walker. Here is Kath receiving her TV from Ann McIntyre, one of NFS's Senior Business Support Officers.

Kath said of her win "I cannot believe I've won, I never win anything. I would encourage everyone to complete the survey and pop it in the post, you never know."

Kath also commented on the service provided by the NFS. "The service is second to none, it makes a huge difference and the staff are always helpful."



## Tell us what you think!

We want to give you the best service we can, and in order 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 continue to give you a high quality service.

Just fill in the form, including your name and address, and put it in the post using the pre-paid envelope provided.

You don't need a stamp!



## We want your views

### 1. Please answer these questions about how we communicate with you

Did you understand the information in this newsletter?  Yes  No

Would you be interested in joining our group of service users to join in discussions on the service we provide?  Yes  No

If you ticked Yes how would you like us to get in touch with you?

Phone  Letter  In person  E-mail

How useful have you found this newsletter?

Very useful  Useful  Not very useful  Not useful at all

What would you like to see covered in future newsletters?

Updates on our service  How we are doing  Local stories  Events

### 2. Let us know how satisfied you are with the service you get from us

How satisfied are you with the service you get from us?

Very satisfied  Satisfied  Not very satisfied  Not satisfied at all

How do you find our staff?

Helpful  Neither helpful or unhelpful  Unhelpful

How satisfied are you with the furniture we supply?

Very satisfied  Satisfied  Not very satisfied  Not satisfied at all

How satisfied are you with the way we deliver the furniture?

Very satisfied  Satisfied  Not very satisfied  Not satisfied at all

Do you feel we treat you fairly?

Yes  No

### 3. Tell us about yourself

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

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel number:



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