



Newsletter Issue 4

May 2006

Contact us

This edition of the Concierge Service Newsletter was published in May 2006.

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Other languages

If you want this information in your language we will arrange an interpreter for you.

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. ☎ 0191 278 8633

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

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

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。

در صورت احتیاج به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی، لطفاً برای ترتیب حضور یک مترجم تلفنی با ما تماس حاصل نمایند.

Si vous désirez ces informations dans votre langue, veuillez nous téléphoner pour que nous puissions vous trouver un interprète.

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ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹਦੇ ਵਾਰੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਲਈ ਇੱਕ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦਾ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਮ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

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

Welcome

Welcome to our fourth newsletter, which is especially for people who are customers of Your Homes Newcastle's Concierge Service. In it you'll find information about how we've performed over the past year and what improvements we've made to the service.

If you want to comment on a particular article or anything in this newsletter, please use the form at the back of the newsletter.

Or you can use the contact details on the back page.

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Your Homes Newcastle

The Concierge Service is one of the services provided by Your Homes Newcastle for tenants and leaseholders of Newcastle City Council.

Your Homes Newcastle is an independent company set up by the Council in April 2004 to manage their housing stock.

The company's headquarters are in YHN House, Benton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7LX, telephone number, 0191 278 8600. The website address is www.yourhomesnewcastle.co.uk

Feedback from our roadshows

You may remember that between October 2004 and March 2005, concierge staff visited all of our service sites. The main purpose of the roadshow was to meet with you, our customers, to seek your views on the service we provide.

It was also an opportunity for staff to tell you about the way in which the service had developed over the previous few months and what you can expect from your concierge service. During the visits we asked customers to complete a questionnaire to tell us how they felt we were performing and how we could improve the service. A total of 2000 customers completed the questionnaire.

Customer satisfaction

91% of the people who completed the questionnaire said they were happy with service, 7% said they were not happy with the service and 2% did not comment.

Other findings

Analysis of the questionnaire showed that the area of most concern was building cleaning with 29% of customers saying that they thought cleaning services could be improved.

Your top ten issues were

1. **Cleaning**
2. **Security**
3. **Repairs and maintenance issues**
4. **Customer service**
5. **Staff Resources**
6. **Freephone service**
7. **Access control / trespassing**
8. **Window cleaning**

9. **Service charge**

10. **Anti Social Behaviour**

Because of your feedback we have:

- revised the cleaning specifications
- introduced a floor buffing programme, from May 2005
- purchased machine cleaning equipment
- introduced a bin cleaning programme from April 2005
- arranged training for staff in Cleaning and Support Services – 137 gained the NVQ Level 2 qualification (find out more about this on page 7)
- completed Security Industry Training Organisation (SITO) training of staff in May 2005
- upgraded existing or installed new CCTV systems at all resident concierge sites
- extended safety and security inspections to resident concierge sites and increased their frequency at all sites from April 2005
- carried out staff briefing sessions in April 2005 on general site security and trespassing
- filled 12 staff vacancies in September 2005
- and we've carried out some more roadshows during February and March this year. We will analyse your comments and let you know how you've helped us improve the service in our newsletter next year.

What you can expect from us!

If you've become one of our customers since our last newsletter you may not know what you sort of service you should expect from us. In 2004 with the help of our customers and staff we produced a set of service standards to tell every customer and possible customer what this is.



You can pick up a copy of our service standards from the reception area of your block, any YHN housing

office or city council customer service centre.

We monitor all service standards and publish the results of our monitoring in 'Homes and People' (Your Homes Newcastle's general newsletter that all tenants and leaseholders receive), on notice boards and the Your Homes Newcastle website.

We review all service standards at least once a year, and involve customers in this process.

If you'd like to be involved in our next review, please tell us in the feedback coupon at the end of this newsletter or phone us on 0191 278 8688 or email us at conciergeservice@yhn.org.uk.

Citywide Services Awareness Day

The Concierge Service hosted a Citywide Services awareness day in October 2005. Inviting partners including Community Care Alarms Service (CCAS), Asylum Seekers Unit (ASU), Newcastle Furniture Service (NFS), Shaw Trust, Caring Hands Charity and Safety Works.

Each service gave a presentation to YHN tenants and members of the Living in Flats Group. The purpose of the awareness day was to promote the joint working with internal and external partners.

How we have performed

Cleanliness

Cleanliness inspections are conducted every 3 months. Results of the inspections are published and displayed at all sites. During the three months ending 31 December 2005, cleanliness was of a good or acceptable standard at 96% of sites.

Complaints

During 2004/2005 we received 5 formal complaints. One was withdrawn, two were about members of staff and two

were about quality of service.

Following consideration of three of the complaints it was felt appropriate to issue relevant instructions to staff. However, only one of the complaints was found to be justified.

Safety and security inspections

We have now introduced safety and security inspections at all sites.

We completed 94% of scheduled inspections during the three months ending 31st December 2005.

Did you know?

24 hour Freephone Service

You can contact the Concierge Service via our 24 freephone service which you can use if you have any problems or queries in relation to our service. The number is 08000 731 389.

Service webpages

We now have service webpages which gives details of our services and gives you the opportunity to comment on our service on-line. You can access the pages at www.yhn.org.uk and click on the section called 'Your Services'.

Compliments

Obviously customers are entitled to expect our staff to be professional and helpful at all times in carrying out their duties. Occasionally, however customers take the time to express their thanks for the service in general or in specific instances when staff have dealt with a problem or been particularly helpful.

Over the past year staff have been thanked for setting up community flat at Waverley Road / Mather Road, helping to organise a social event for Tynedale House residents and, most recently for help given to a resident who needed emergency Services.

Staff are top of the class

Last year 137 staff undertook Level 2 National Vocational Qualification training in Cleaning and Support Services. All staff obtained the qualification.

The qualification covered the following areas of work:

- ensure staff actions reduce risks to health and safety
- promotion and maintenance of service delivery
- supporting the work of a team
- maintaining positive working relationships with customers
- controlling resources
- manual cleaning of toilets and washrooms
- cleaning and protecting floors
- cleaning carpets and soft furnishings
- walls and window washing
- graffiti removal

Local training organisation 'B Skills' provided the training and assessment.

The training was mainly funded by a government initiative that aims to provide a formal qualification for employees in work.

This training programme for concierge staff demonstrates the commitment of everyone in the service to delivering excellent service to our customers through professionally trained staff.

It is also a real achievement by the 137 members of staff who have successfully gained the qualification. Well done everyone involved.



Service improvements

Service expansion

Security improvements at 13 Resident Concierge sites with the introduction of a basic CCTV package.

Introduction of a 24 hour concierge service at Mather / Waverley Road flats, linking into the Cruddas Park House scheme.

Installation of Rapid Deployment Camera relay points at two tower blocks, enabling cameras to be monitored centrally at both locations by concierge staff.

Introduction of the Safety Works (Older Persons Scheme)

A pilot scheme was implemented in September 2005. The scheme was funded

by YHN and Tyne Wear Fire Service with the aim of introducing high risk tenants to potential risks of fire in their homes. 150 YHN tenants attended the Safety Works Project accompanied by resident concierge staff and resident wardens.

Shaw Trust Charity

The concierge service has worked closely with the Shaw Trust Charity. Over the past 12 months the service has accommodated two work placements to clients of the Shaw Trust, both placements lasting 13 weeks.

Service charges

There is a charge for the concierge service.

For the 24 hour concierge the charge is currently £11.05 a week (over 52 weeks)

For resident concierge service the charge is currently £7.62 a week (over 52 weeks)

The charges are taken into account when working out housing benefit. We will let you know when we change the charges.

Future developments

During the next 12 months we are looking to develop the service in these ways:

- complete service roadshow by March 2007
- conduct customer satisfaction survey by March 2007
- review extension of accompanied viewing times to 24 hour sites
- investigate business opportunity /cost effectiveness
- 15% reduction in sickness absence
- training for security licence & CCTV legislation
- review the level of service we give

What we've spent

In 2004/2005 we spent £ 5,908.682 as shown below.

Item	Amount
Staffing	£3,983,688
Premises	£ 95,014
Supplies and services	£ 833,741
Central recharge (personnel, finance, administration)	£ 996,239
Total	£ 5,908,682

We continue to save money by doing certain jobs ourselves instead of Neighbourhood Services such as cleaning blocked chutes and changing bulbs and tubes.

We have recently introduced a 24 hour concierge service at Waverley Road / Mather Road and are saving money there by doing the cleaning ourselves instead of Neighbourhood Services.

Charter Mark Award

Since our last newsletter the Concierge Service has received the government's Charter Mark award. The award recognises excellence in customer service and was made in February 2005 following an inspection carried out over two days by an independent assessor. The assessor visited a number of sites, met with staff, customers and other partners and studied 124 pieces of evidence in support of our application.

Charter Mark applications are assessed against a wide and detailed range of criteria and we will be regularly re-assessed to ensure that we are maintaining our high standards.

A formal presentation of the award was made at YHN House on 7 April which was attended by staff, residents and other partners.

You can help us check how we are performing by completing the feedback form at the back of this newsletter.



Left: Members of the Living in Flats Working Group, Charter Mark presentation April 2005.

Tell us what you think!

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 about anything in this newsletter, so that we know that you are getting all the news from us that you need. Just fill in the form opposite, including your name and address and put it in the post using the pre-paid envelope provided. You don't need a stamp!

Please use this space to comment on the service we provide or anything in this newsletter, about, or give us an idea that would help us improve.

1. How useful have you found this newsletter?

Very useful	Yes		No	
Useful	Yes		No	
Not very useful	Yes		No	
Not useful at all	Yes		No	

If you have filled in "Not very useful" or "Not useful at all" please tell us why:

2. What would you like to see covered in future newsletters?

Updates on our service	Yes		No	
How we are doing	Yes		No	
Local stories	Yes		No	
Events	Yes		No	

3. What do you think of our service standards?

Are they relevant to our services? Yes / No

Will they help provide good services? Yes / No

Please tell us of any changes you would like to see in our service standards or of any new standards:

4. Is the information we provide clear and easy to understand?

Yes / No

5. Please use this space to comment on anything in this newsletter, about the service we provide, or give us an idea that would help us improve.

6. Tell us about yourself

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____

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Registered office: Newcastle Civic Centre, Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8PR.
A company controlled by Newcastle City Council.