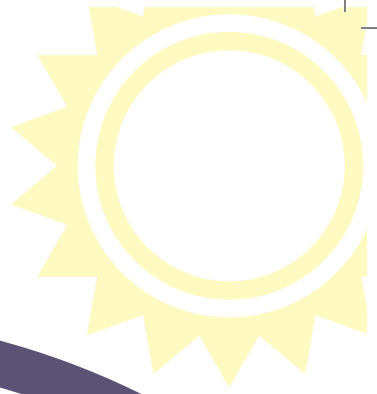




Your Homes  
Newcastle



Living in your  
home

This information is about Your Homes Newcastle, who are responsible for managing council homes on behalf of Newcastle City Council. If you need this in 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 নিউক্যাসলে কাউন্সিলের ঘর বাড়ীর ব্যবস্থাপনার কাজ আমরা কিভাবে করি সে সম্বন্ধে। 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	这是有关我们如何管理纽卡斯尔市政房屋的信息。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	這是關於我們如何管理紐卡素市政房屋的信息。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 شیوه مدیریت مسکن دولتی در نیوکاسل است. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبانهای دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۸۸۶۳۳ تماس بگیرید.
Français French	Ces informations concernent la manière dont nous gérons les logements sociaux de Newcastle. 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 چۆنێتی بەرپۆشەرایەتی خانووکانی شۆرای نیوکاسیلە. ئەگەر حەزتان لە وەرگرتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا ھەر زمانێکی دیگەر ھەبە بە زمارە تیلیفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پێوەندی بکەن.
Português Portuguese	Esta informação refere-se à forma como gerimos a habitação social de Newcastle. Se precisar desta informação em <português> ou noutra língua, queira ligar para o 0191 278 8633.
русском Russian	Информация о нашем управлении муниципальными жилыми домами в г. Ньюкасле. Если Вы нуждаетесь в этой информации <на русском> или другом языке звоните по тел. 0191 278 8633.
Español Spanish	Ésta es información sobre cómo gestionamos las viviendas municipales de Newcastle. Si necesita esta información en español o en otro idioma, llame al 0191 278 8633.

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## Living in your home

Everyone should be able to enjoy living in their home. Making it safe, secure and comfortable is important, and you can help do this. This booklet gives you information and advice to help you enjoy living in your home.

Your property is let to you as a private home and you should only use it for that purpose. You must not use the property for any activities that are likely to cause a nuisance to or disturb any of your neighbours or their families. This includes running a business from your home.

You cannot run a business from your home unless you have our permission in writing. Depending on what the business is, you may also need planning permission. Contact the local planning department for more information (see the 'Useful addresses' booklet).

You must not allow your property to be damaged on purpose or through neglect.

## Who is responsible for decorating the inside of my home?

You are responsible for decorating the inside of your home. You must keep your home in a reasonable condition and keep fixtures and fittings clean. You do not have to ask for permission to redecorate your home.

We understand that some of our tenants may have difficulty decorating their home. We may be able to arrange help for people in this situation. Contact your local community housing team for confirmation of whether you can get help with decoration and, if so, how to apply.

Also see the 'Repairs and servicing' booklet for advice on what to do if your decoration is damaged during repairs carried out to your home.

## Who is responsible for looking after my garden?

You are responsible for keeping your garden clean and tidy. You should cut the grass regularly, and make sure that trees and hedges do not block public footpaths or interfere with your neighbour's property. If you let hedges or trees grow too tall, action may be taken against you under the Anti-social Behaviour Act. The local authority is responsible for larger trees over four metres high. If you need any work doing to trees, please contact Envirocall with the details. All tree work will be carried out in line with Newcastle City Council's tree policy.

See the 'Useful addresses' booklet for Envirocall contact details.

We understand that some of our tenants may have difficulty maintaining their garden to an acceptable level. We may be able to arrange help for people in this situation. We have introduced a Garden Care Scheme. For information about this, please contact your local community housing team or phone the garden administration section on 0191 278 1899.

## Who is responsible for maintaining the grounds around my home?

To help maintain the overall appearance of the area you live in, we are responsible for:

- regularly mowing shared grassed areas;
- keeping shared hedges and shrub beds neat and tidy; and
- pruning the trees.

If there are any problems with the shared areas around your home, please let us know by contacting any of our community housing teams (see the contact details in the 'Useful addresses' booklet) or phone Envirocall on 0191 274 4000 (textphone: 0191 277 3687), between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday.

## What should I do with my household rubbish?

You must not store rubbish or old furniture in your garden. Never dump rubbish in shared areas or on open land – this is called fly-tipping and is illegal.

Tenants who live in most types of property usually have a wheelie bin provided for ordinary household rubbish. If you do not have a wheelie bin and you think you should have, phone Envirocall.

There is information about the bin collection days in the information pack that we give to all new tenants. You can also ask your local community housing team or phone Envirocall.

### **Getting rid of rubbish if you live in a flat or maisonette**

All multi-storey flats, and some other blocks of flats or maisonettes, have rubbish chutes on the landing or staircase. If you use a rubbish chute, please wrap all your rubbish carefully or use tied bin bags. Please be considerate when using the rubbish chutes. Do not use them at hours which may affect others. In some blocks, residents have agreed not to use the chutes after 8pm or before 8am.

Some low- to medium-rise blocks in the city have large shared wheelie bins. Tenants of these blocks should be considerate when using these facilities.

### **What about bulky items?**

Large or bulky items can be removed for you free of charge, depending on the number of items, and how many collections you have had. For more information, call into any of our offices or phone Envirocall.

## Can I keep a pet?

If you live in a house, bungalow or flat with its own entrance, you can keep small caged birds (not pigeons), small caged animals or a small aquarium, and one dog and one cat, without having to ask for permission.

### **Pets in flats, sheltered blocks and maisonettes**

If you live in a property with a shared entrance, you can keep small caged birds (not pigeons), small caged animals or a small aquarium without permission. However, you are not allowed to have a dog or cat unless there are very special circumstances (for example, if you have an assistance dog such as a guide dog). Even in these circumstances, you must have written permission from your community housing team. If you do keep a dog or cat without our permission, you will be breaking your tenancy agreement and we may take legal action against you.

You and your visitors must not take a cat or dog into the shared areas of the block without our permission in writing. If you do, you will be breaking your tenancy agreement and we may take legal action against you.

You cannot keep farm animals on any of our premises.

You must keep your pets under control at all times. If dog or cat mess is likely to cause a health hazard, we will refer the matter to an Environmental Health Officer.

## What should I do if I have a problem with vermin?

The city council's pest-control team are qualified to help in your home. They can give free advice and are able to deal with:

- rats and mice;
- insects, including bees, wasps, cockroaches, fleas and others; and
- bird-proofing – including anti-perch spikes and netting.

All homes receive free treatments for rats and mice. Council tenants also receive free treatments for insects as part of their rental agreement. If you have a problem with any of the pests above, phone Envirocall.

You should contact your local community housing team if you need wild cats or birds removing.

## Can I fit a satellite dish or TV aerial to my home?

If there is no TV aerial it is your responsibility to get one. We do not normally provide TV aerials unless you live in:

- a multi-storey block;
- sheltered accommodation; or
- Byker Wall.

In these types of property, a shared aerial will already be fitted for you to use.

If possible, you should use an indoor aerial or one inside the loft or roof space. If you really need an outside aerial, talk to your Housing Services Officer about how and where it could be fixed.

You must not put up a satellite dish without permission. Please ask your local community housing team for details of how to get permission. If you want to have cable TV installed, and this would involve running cables across land owned by the city council, you will also need permission.

## How can I make my home more secure?

You should have been given two sets of keys when you moved in. If you need extra keys you will need to get them cut. If you live in a block where there is a fob entry system on the main door, we will give you a fob for each person who is registered as living in the property.

We encourage you to fit extra security features such as door chains, window locks and spy holes, but you should get our permission first. (See the 'tenants' improvements' section of the 'Repairs and improvements' booklet.)

If you receive state benefits, you may be able to have some security measures fitted free of charge. You can get more details about this scheme from your local community housing team.

You may also be able to have extra security improvements, such as security alarms, window locks, door chains, mortise locks and floodlights, fitted under the Rechargeable Works Scheme.

See the 'tenants' improvements' section of the 'Repairs and improvements' booklet or contact any community housing team for more details.

For your day-to-day security, we suggest that you do the following.

- Always ask anyone who calls at your home to show you ID. If you are still not completely sure, tell them to wait outside, close the door and contact their company, your Housing Services Officer or Sheltered Housing Officer for confirmation.
- Always lock your windows and doors when you go out.
- Do not leave keys under doormats or notes on your door telling people you are out.
- Cancel your milk and newspapers if you go away for a few days.
- If you have a door-entry system, never allow someone into the building as you are entering or leaving, unless you know them.
- If you live in sheltered housing, let your Sheltered Housing Officer (if you have one) know if you are going away, even if it is only for one night.

## How are you helping to make my home more secure?

### Secured by Design

'Secured by Design' is a police scheme to encourage the building industry to adopt crime-prevention measures to reduce the opportunity of crime and the fear of crime. We and the city council are committed to improving the safety and security of your home and, as a result, all replacement doors and windows are high security and meet 'Secured by Design' standards.

We are working closely with the crime-prevention officer to make sure designs are always of the highest standard and highest level of security.

### **Our concierge service**

Our concierge service provides security and reception services to people who live in multi-storey blocks in the city. The extra safety, security and peace of mind, with reduced risks that technology offers, have meant that blocks have become more stable environments in which people want to live. There is more information about this service in the 'Extra support for tenants' booklet.

## **What about household insurance?**

You are responsible for insuring your home contents and personal belongings.

We strongly advise you to take out your own household insurance.

Your policy should cover you and your belongings in case of theft, fire or other accidents, and any damage caused by you to other people and their belongings.

### **Can you arrange insurance for me?**

We can usually arrange for you to pay for your belongings to be insured under our Household Contents Insurance Scheme.

You can get information about this scheme, the current charges (depending on the amount insured and your age) and application forms from your local community housing team and from our website at [www.yhn.org.uk](http://www.yhn.org.uk).

## What fire safety precautions should I take?

Smoke detectors are very good for warning you about fire. We have put smoke detectors in many properties in the city. Some of these detectors are connected to the mains electricity and some have 10-year batteries. It is important to regularly check the alarm in your home. Over the coming years we hope to fit an alarm in all properties.

In the meantime, as smoke alarms are cheap, easy to fit and sold in most DIY shops, you should install one or more yourself.

To reduce the risk of fire:

- never keep petrol or paraffin in your home;
- do not use paraffin heaters or bottled-gas heaters;
- never leave chip pans on the stove when you are not in the room;
- never pour water onto a burning chip pan. You should smother flames with a damp cloth, fire blanket or a lid;
- put out cigarettes and matches and take care with ashtrays;
- make sure children cannot reach matches;
- put a fireguard around fires;
- do not hang clothes around fires, cookers or storage heaters; and
- make sure you know how to get out in a hurry.

If you find a fire, get out of the building and dial 999. Do not try to fight it yourself.

**Never use a lift if there is a fire. Always use the stairs.**

## How can I improve the energy efficiency of my home?

Everyone wants to heat their homes effectively and save money on their heating bills. The following tips may help you to do this.

- You can reduce your yearly heating bill by 8% by turning the thermostat setting down 1°C.
- The ideal temperature setting for water in your hot water tank is 60°C.
- The ideal room temperature is between 18°C and 21°C.
- Turning the thermostat up will not heat the room faster.
- Where you can, set radiators in different rooms at different levels (for example, living rooms warmer than bedrooms).
- Low-energy light bulbs cost more to buy but last longer and are cheaper to run.

## What is Newcastle Warm Zone?

Newcastle Warm Zone (NWZ) is a not-for-profit partnership between Newcastle City Council, Your Homes Newcastle, Scottish Power, National Grid and other organisations such as the primary care trust and voluntary groups. The partnership aims to improve energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty (when a household cannot afford to keep warm at a reasonable cost) across all homes in the city.

The partnership does this by providing a package of energy-efficiency measures and advice, together with advice on state benefits. All homes in the city qualify for help through Warm Zone.

Since the partnership was formed in 2004 it has insulated over 30,000 homes across the city, provided 300,000 low-energy light bulbs, and helped residents claim over £6 million in benefits. This work has helped Newcastle residents save energy, save money and enjoy warmer, healthier homes. It has also helped to reduce harmful carbon emissions – helping the environment as well!

### **What does this mean for you and us?**

All Newcastle City Council tenants qualify for free cavity-wall or wall insulation improvement (if it is possible to install these).

By making sure that your home is fully insulated you can save up to £300 a year on your fuel bills.

All households can also get four free low-energy light bulbs. These can save you up to a further £28 off your annual electricity bill.

All tenants are also entitled to a free and confidential review to make sure they are claiming everything they are entitled to. There are many council tenants who are now thousands of pounds a year better off as a result of this service.

Newcastle Warm Zone is now working with us to contact all the remaining homes that could benefit from its services. Make sure you don't miss out – phone Newcastle Warm Zone on 0191 277 7373 or send an email to [warm.zone@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:warm.zone@newcastle.gov.uk).

## Where can I get more information and advice on energy efficiency?

The Newcastle Energy Centre can give free advice on how to reduce the amount of energy you use in your home. You can also get an information pack which includes up-to-date information on what financial help you may be able to get, how you can make your home energy-efficient, current projects aimed at improving energy efficiency, and useful contacts.

As a Newcastle City Council tenant, you can ask for a visit from an energy officer who will be able to give you advice and information in your own home.

You can phone the Energy Centre on 0191 281 1303.



## How can I avoid frozen or burst pipes?

Frozen pipes can cause a lot of damage if they burst. To avoid the problem:

- insulate all pipes that could freeze;
- keep your home warm; and
- keep the heating on low when you are away from home in the winter.

### If your pipes freeze:

- turn off the stopcock and the heating system;
- thaw out the pipes gently using a hairdryer or cloth soaked in hot water (do not use a naked flame); and
- check for leaks as the pipes thaw.

### If your pipes burst:

- turn off your heating system and immersion heater;
- turn off the stopcock and turn on all the taps to drain the water quickly; and
- phone the Repair Centre on 0191 277 8888 (lines are open 24 hours a day).

There is more information in the repairs manual which you can get from any community housing office or from the property maintenance section at YHN House (see 'Useful addresses' for contact details).

## What can I do about condensation?

There is always moisture in the air of any home. This is caused by normal household activities such as cooking and bathing. Condensation is caused when warm moist air reaches a cold surface like windows or walls.

Condensation can cause mould to grow, and that can damage decorations, furniture and clothing. You can reduce condensation by doing the following.

- Keeping your home warm so there are no cold surfaces for water vapour to settle on.
- Leaving some heating on in cold weather. (Most homes take quite a long time to warm up and it may cost more if you try to heat your home quickly in the evening.)
- When cooking, keeping lids on pans as much as possible, keeping the kitchen door closed, and opening a window.
- When bathing or drying clothes, opening windows to allow steam to escape.
- Not drying clothes on radiators or elsewhere indoors. (If you have a tumble dryer you must make sure you vent the dryer directly to the outside to avoid a rapid build-up of damp air.)
- Always using your extractor fan if you have one.
- Not blocking up air bricks or vents.
- Not using paraffin heaters or bottled-gas heaters as they produce a lot of moisture and are dangerous.

## What about dampness?

Brown staining (damp patches) may appear in the inside of your home. Damp patches result from water seeping into your home because the protection provided by the roof, walls, windows or floors has failed. If you think your home is suffering from damp, contact any community housing team or phone the Repair Centre on 0191 277 8888.

## How do I give you a compliment, complaint or comment?

We are committed to providing an excellent service to our customers. We would like you to tell us any compliments, complaints and comments you have about our services. Your feedback helps us to find ways to improve services.

For information about how you can give us a compliment, comment or complaint, please see the 'What to do if I have a complaint' section in the 'Welcome to your new home' booklet.



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