



NFS newsletter

Issue 8 - Autumn 2010



Please note: pictures are for illustration purposes only.



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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 نیومانی Your Homes Newcastle ٤- که ساباتی نیومانی دەخاتە بەردەستی کرێشینان. ئەگەر حەزتان لە وەرگرتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا ھەر زمانێکی دیگەر ھەبە بە ژمارە تیلیفۆنی 0191 278 8633 پێوەندی بکەن.
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 поставляет 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 eighth newsletter, especially produced 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 we receive will be entered into a draw and one lucky person will receive a special prize.

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What is Newcastle Furniture Service (NFS)?



Newcastle City Council set up the service in 1989 with the aim of helping council tenants settle into their homes by providing some essential items of furniture.

The service is available to tenants when they first start a tenancy with Your Homes Newcastle (YHN). The furniture is leased to tenants for a weekly charge which is added to their rent account.

Our "Menu Options" allow tenants to choose key items of furniture from our catalogue to enable them to live comfortably in their home. Each item has a points value and once you have chosen all the items you require

the points are added up to give your points total. This will then determine which option size you fit into, and which charge you will pay. There are currently four "Option" sizes.

Everything we supply is maintained by us. If there is a fault with any of the items we have supplied or they need replacing because of wear and tear we will repair or replace them. Since the service started it has expanded into the largest furnished tenancy provider in the UK, supporting almost 9,000 tenancies, and continues to grow.

Frequently asked questions

Can I choose what items of furniture I get?

When you sign up for a part-furnished tenancy you can choose which items of furniture you want. The local housing office will show you the range of items available and explain the charges that you may pay depending on the items you choose.

Will I get new furniture?

We spend a large amount of money each year on buying new furniture. However we also try to make sure that if we can reduce waste by reusing items we will do so. We will make sure that any item we give out is in excellent condition.

Is there a charge for the service?

Yes. The service charges vary depending on the amount of furniture you choose. If you get Housing Benefit, this may increase to cover the cost of the service. If you are unsure about this, please contact us or your local housing office. We will let you know about any changes in the charges and we will try to keep the charges as low as possible.

How do I return the furniture when I no longer need it?

If you have signed up for a part-furnished tenancy and you want to return all of your

furniture, you should get in touch with your local housing office to end the agreement. They will contact us to arrange for the furniture to be collected. If you are behind with your rent payments you may not be able to end the agreement.

What do I do if my furniture becomes faulty or is worn and needs replacing?

You should get in touch with us if you have a problem with any item that we have given you. We will arrange for it to be checked and, if necessary, repair or replace it.

Can I take the furniture with me if I move home?

If you are moving from one part-furnished tenancy to another within YHN you can take your furniture package with you. The housing office will contact us and we will change our records.

Can I have furniture if I have had it at a previous address?

Anyone can have furniture as long as all of the furniture provided at a previous address has been returned in good condition.

Can I buy the furniture from you?

The furniture belongs to us, and government rules prevent us from selling it to you.

What is YHN Garden Care?

The YHN Garden Care service was introduced in 2007 to provide council tenants with a low cost garden maintenance solution, reducing tenants' uncertainty and reliance on unrecognised providers.

The service conducts a wide range of basic maintenance tasks including grass cutting, hedge trimming, hedge reductions, border work, pruning, bulb planting and litter picking. We can also carry out various other garden tasks on request such as planting and re-locating shrubs. Any additional work carried out, especially in the summer months, must not have an impact on the service's



basic maintenance responsibilities. The citywide service looks after more than 1,000 tenants. The Garden Care team will visit you 11 times during a 12 month period.

We currently have four teams carrying out the work which consist of one Supervisor, one Gardener and two Horticultural Trainees.

Garden Care annual maintenance programme

Visit Annual maintenance programme

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Grass cutting/hedge trimming/border weed control/litter picking |
| 2 | Grass cutting/border weed control/first pruning/litter picking |
| 3 | Grass cutting/hedge trimming/border weed control/litter picking |
| 4 | Grass cutting/hedge trimming/border weed control/second pruning/litter picking |
| 5 | Grass cutting/hedge trimming/border weed control/litter picking |
| 6 | Grass cutting/border weed control/litter picking |
| 7 | Grass cutting/hedge trimming/border weed control/litter picking |
| 8 | Grass cutting/border dug over and bulb planting/third pruning/litter picking |
| 9 | Cutting back/hedge cut or reduced/border weed control/litter picking |
| 10 | Cutting back/hedge cut or reduced/general maintenance/litter picking |
| 11 | Cutting back/general maintenance/litter picking |

If you are interested in this scheme or would like further information please cut out this coupon and return it in the freepost envelope provided.



Need help to keep your garden tidy? YHN's Garden Care service can help!

Sign up to the YHN Garden Care service and your garden will receive grass cutting, weeding, hedge trimming, planting, cutting back, pruning and removing litter.

Interested? Fill in this information request form and return it as soon as possible in the freepost envelope. Before you can join the scheme we will visit you to assess what you need. Soon after that we will let you know if we can offer you this service. Please note we may not be able to offer the service to all tenants straight away. There is a limited number of places so don't miss out!

Your name:

Your address:

Postcode:

Tel:

E-mail:

What is the Child Safety Equipment Scheme?

The scheme 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 reduce the number of accidents caused in the home.

We supply several items of safety equipment such as:

- Safety gates
- Fire guards
- Cupboard locks
- Window restrictors
- Bath/shower mats
- Corner cushions
- Cord shorteners



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

The scheme's satisfaction survey is given to all customers who have safety equipment fitted. A total of 499 surveys were returned in 2009-10, approximately 32%.

Their responses showed:

- 98% said the equipment was fitted in the location they asked for.
- 99% said it was fitted at a time and day convenient to them.
- 100% said they felt they were treated fairly and with respect.
- 100% said the fitter fully explained how to use the equipment.
- 99% said they were satisfied overall with the service we provide.

Quotes from some of our customers:

"excellent, paramount to mothers who are on a budget"

"the delivery men were very polite and very friendly"

"the staff member that came out was exceptionally kind and had a lovely attitude and had a lot of pride in his job"



Important pointers for parents.

- Keep your household chemicals and medication stored in a secure place out of the reach of children.
- Keep your pan handles turned inwards and out of the reach of children.
- Make sure that hot drinks are kept out of the reach of children.
- Always run the cold water first then add the hot water when filling your child's bath.
- Never leave your iron switched on or unattended.

'Working together to make Newcastle's homes safer for our children'

Remember – safety equipment is not a substitute for parental supervision

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

Palatine Beds

Quality craftsmanship

What makes Palatine unique?

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

We now employ almost 50 staff, 70% of which have some form of 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 Beds 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 Beds 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, to any size and specification.



Bed scrappage scheme

Palatine Beds are offering customers the opportunity to "trade in" their old bed and receive up to £200 off the cost of a new bed.

Not only that but they will remove your old bed free of charge and dispose of

it in an environmentally friendly way with 100% landfill avoidance.

The scrappage scheme applies to all Palatine Beds products, so why not pop along and see how much you can save?

Palatine Beds, Factory Shop, Stamfordham Road, Westerhope, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 5HH.

The shop is open Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4pm and 10am to 4pm on Saturday.

Sales: 0191 277 2559. General enquiries: 0191 277 2544.

Fax: 0191 277 2550. www.palatinebeds.co.uk

The North East's leading bed manufacturer

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.

Below you will find the service standards for each of the services we provide along with their results for 2009/10.

Newcastle Furniture Service

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 we have supplied to you within two working days of you telling us about it.

In 2009/10 we:

- made 5795 deliveries and 96% were within five working days of your request.
- made 5098 collections and 95% were within five working days of your request.
- visited 100% of tenants within eight weeks of them receiving a furniture pack.
- repaired or replaced 100% of faulty cookers within two working days.

Garden Care Scheme

We will:

- visit you 11 times within a 12 month period.
- answer any queries within two working days.

In 2009/10 we:

- visited 100% of tenants 11 times within a 12 month period.
- answered 100% of queries within two working days.

Child Safety Equipment Scheme

We will:

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

In 2009/10 we:

- fitted 55% of equipment within eight weeks of their request (due to staff shortages and tenants not being in for visits).
- answered 100% of queries within two working days.

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.

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

Service expansion

Since the service was set up in 1989 it has grown into the largest furnished tenancy provider in the UK, supporting almost 9,000 tenancies.

We currently employ 68 staff to deliver all of the services we provide.

The furniture service operates with 6 x 7.5 tonne vehicles, 2 x Luton vehicles, 4 x transit vans along with 6 smaller connect vans.

We deliver to approximately 5,500 tenants and over 3,000 external tenants.

Our external tenants are made up from:

Homes for Northumberland / Home Group / Cestria Community Housing Association / Derwentside Homes / Erimus Housing / ISOS Group / East Durham Homes / Durham County Council / Kindstream / South Tyneside Homes / Wakefield District Housing.



Number of tenancies

Working with the community

Throughout the year we have continued to work within the local community with organisations such as Shaw Trust, Connections, Future Jobs Fund, Oakfield College, Mental Health Matters and the local Brownies group.

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.

Supporting charities

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

These charities included: The William Moulton Charity, The Vicars Relief Fund, Families First, Newcastle Independence Network and the Learning and Skills Counselling Service. In the last couple of years we have expanded the number of charities we work with to include the Sherburn House Charity and the Tyneside Cyrenians.

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.

In 2009/10 we carried out over 600 deliveries to these charities, supplying over £125,000 worth of furniture.

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:

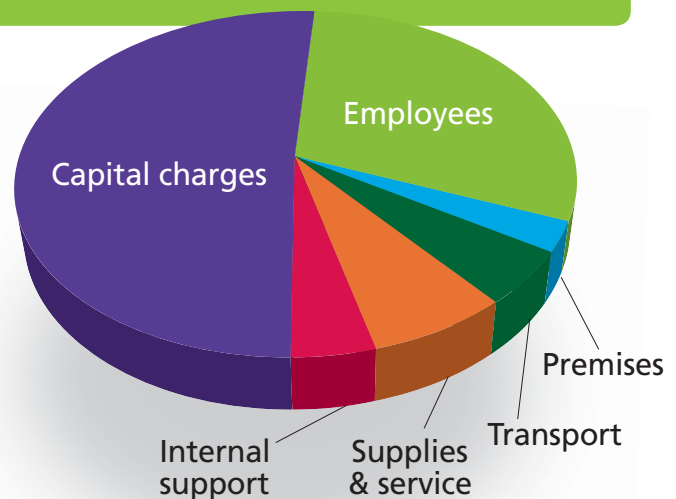
- Continual expansion to other organisations.
- More efficient ways to deliver our services.



How we spend our money

In 2009/10 we spent a total of £4,235,234. The graph opposite shows how this money was spent:

Employees:	£1,281,559
Premises:	£112,135
Transport:	£210,111
Supplies and service:	£291,868
Internal support:	£185,785
Capital charges:	£2,153,776
Total spending	£4,235,234



Compliments, Complaints and Comments

In 2009/10 we received 3 formal complaints and 43 informal complaints.

All complaints were dealt with in the appropriate way.

We also received over 100 compliments. The compliments we received were from a variety of people including Sherburn House Charity, the Brownies, other housing authorities, various work placements, staff and customers.

All of our staff receive individual praise from the service manager in our team meetings.

Make a compliment, complaint or comment:

- By completing an online form on our website
- In person at any local housing office
- By phone on 0191 278 8600
- In writing
- By e-mailing yhnccc@yhn.org.uk

When you contact us, please make sure you:

- give your name, address and phone number.
- tell the person you speak to what your compliment, complaint or comment is.

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 achieve this.

We are offering one lucky customer the chance to win a 19" television*.

All completed questionnaires will be entered into a draw and the lucky winner will be drawn in March 2011.

TV shown is for illustration purposes only.*



We will personally notify the winner and put their details on our website at www.yhn.org.uk

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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