

Tell us what you think!

3. Tell us about yourself:

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

Newcastle Furniture Service

Including YHN Garden Care/Child Safety Equipment Scheme



Newsletter – Issue 5

Summer 2007

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone number: _____



CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Newsletter - Issue 5 Summer 2007

This edition of the Newcastle Furniture Service Newsletter was published in August 2007

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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 large print, Braille and audio tape.

We can also arrange for you to see a British Sign Language interpreter.

এই তথ্য হল ইউই হোম নিউকাস্টল- কাউন্সিলের ফার্নিচার সার্ভিস সম্পর্কে যারা টেন্যান্টদের ঘর বাড়ী সাজাতে সাহায্যের জন্য ফার্নিচার সরবরাহ করে। এই তথ্য যদি <বাংলায়> অথবা অন্য কোন ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে এই নম্বরে কোন কল- ০১৯১ ২৭৮ ৮৬৩৩

这是有关 Your Homes Newcastle (您的纽卡斯尔住房) 纽卡斯尔家具服务的消息, 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。

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讓他們安頓。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。

این اطلاعات در مورد بخش وسایل خانه در سازمان «خانه‌های شما در نیوکاسل» است که مبلتان و وسایل خانگی مورد نیاز مستأجران را تأمین می‌کند. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبان‌های دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۸۸۶۳۳ تماس بگیرید.

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.

تم زانیاریک سپاروت به خزیمه‌گانی هابین گرنی ساتی نیویاسی که ساتی نیویاسی دهخاک پردهستی گرتیشیان. فکرتیوان که ویرگونی به زمانی کورنی یا هر زمانگی دیکه هبیه به ژماره تلفنی 0191 278 8633 پۆندی بکرن.

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

Информация о службе по обеспечению мебелью Your Homes Newcastle, которая поставяет мебель квартиросъемщикам с целью их обзаведения в домах. Если Вы нуждаетесь в этой информации -на русском> или другом языке звоните по тел. 0191 278 8633.

Ésta es información sobre el Servicio de Muebles Your Homes de Newcastle, que muebles a los inquilinos para ayudarles a establecer sus casas. Si necesitas información en otro idioma, llame al 0191 278 8633.

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Welcome to our fifth newsletter, which is especially for people who are customers of Newcastle Furniture Service. 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 appreciate if you could 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 enable us to make improvements to the service we provide to you.

All response forms will be put into a draw and one lucky person will win £25 of Eldon Square vouchers.

Contents

Consultation	4
Awards and nominations	4
You said we did	4
How we perform	5
Service standards	5
YHN Garden Care	6-7
Child Safety Equipment Scheme	8
Compliments, complaints and comments	9
Future developments	9
Service expansion	9
Service improvements	9
How we spend our money	9
Supporting charities	10
Working with the community	10
2006 newsletter feedback	10
2007 feedback form	11-12

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



Consultation

We have continued to improve our methods of consultation based upon your suggestions. We currently carry out several surveys for the Furniture Service, including new customer, eight week visit, five year visit and again when you end your tenancy.

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

We have been attending local community housing offices to ensure any issues are dealt with immediately and we have been continuing to visit you in your home, if you have any issues you want us to deal with.

Awards and nominations

This year was a significant year as far as awards and nominations were concerned. In November 2006 the Furniture Service was short listed for a UK Housing Award, in the category "Excellence for Support and Care Solutions". This award is given by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), which is the professional body for people who work in housing.

Several members of staff attended the awards ceremony, which was held in The Hilton Hotel in London. We are very pleased to tell you that we were successful in winning this category, which is awarded to housing service providers, for showing commitment to helping people live independently and making their houses into homes. Everyone connected with the Furniture Service is extremely proud of this award.

In December we were also short listed for the Guardian newspaper Public Service of the Year Award. These awards were again held in London but this time at the Royal Horticultural Society. We again are very pleased to tell you that on this occasion we were runner up in the Housing Services category.

These awards help us identify that Newcastle Furniture Service is recognised as market leader in the field of furnished accommodation. We will continue to apply for future awards and hopefully be informing you of further successes.

You said - we did

You wanted more choice

We regularly review all the furniture available on the Options scheme and have included various different products for 2007

You wanted more flexible delivery times

We have introduced deliveries on Tuesday evenings between 4pm and 7pm, as well as



introducing alternate Saturday morning deliveries

You asked for shower attachments
We added shower attachments to the towel set pack in 2007

You asked for larger wardrobes

We have given customers the option of additional wardrobes if needed

How we perform

Our service performance last year includes:
2482 deliveries with 85% within five working days
1782 collections with 88% within five working days

We visit all our customers after eight weeks and ask them several questions about the service we provide. We received 112 responses:

- 96% say having a furniture pack has helped them to live in their home
- 84% described the furniture quality as good. 13% indicated neither good nor poor
- 89% would recommend a furniture pack to a friend. 11% failed to comment.

“It is a pleasure to receive such great help after much complication and worry. The furniture that I have been provided with is of excellent quality and well appreciated.”
Your Homes Newcastle customer.

“I was surprised that such a service exists. It has made such a big difference to my life. I have depression and have been really bad of late but this has given me such a big boost. I look forward to getting up in the morning instead of dreading it.”
East Durham Homes customer.

“It was a relief to have a service so good and very easy to access.”
Blyth Valley Housing customer.

Service standards

We have produced service standards so that every tenant or possible service user is clear about the level of service they can expect to receive from us. We review all service standards every two years and we will involve service users in this process. We will monitor all service standards and report to Area Boards every two months and publish these in "Homes and People", our newsletter for all tenants and service users.

Set out below is a list of the proposed service standards for the services we provide. You can pass on your comments and suggestions on these in the feedback form at the back of this newsletter.

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
- We will collect furniture from you within five working days of your request; we aim to do this with 93% of all collections
- We will visit you within eight weeks of delivering your furniture to make sure everything is acceptable
- We will repair or replace any faulty cooker we have supplied to you within two working days of you telling us about it.

Child Safety Equipment Scheme

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

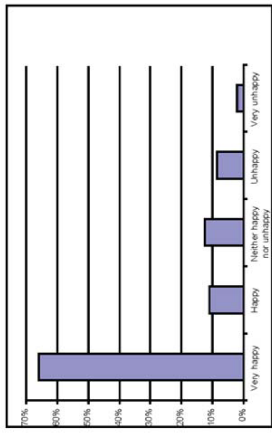


YHN Garden Care Scheme

- We will visit you eleven times per year (eight summer visits and three winter visits)
- We will answer any queries within two working days.

Garden Care survey

In May this year a survey was carried out to obtain customer feedback on the Garden Care service. We received some constructive feedback and ideas as to how we might improve the service provided. In total it received an 89% satisfaction level. This is a great achievement for a new service. A positive outcome from the survey was the approval of our expansion plans. YHN intend to recruit an additional supervisor, two full time gardeners and 15 trainees to commence employment in Autumn 2007.



Garden Care Annual Maintenance Programme

MONTH	PLANNED WORK
Visit 1 March	Hedge trimmed/borders to be sprayed with weed control/grass cutting/litter picking
Visit 2 April	Grass cutting/borders weeded/litter picking
Visit 3 May	Grass cutting/borders to be sprayed with weed control/litter picking
Visit 4 June	Grass cutting/borders weeded/litter picking
Visit 5 July	Grass cutting/hedge trimmed/litter picking
Visit 6 August	Grass cutting/litter picking
Visit 7 September	Grass cutting/borders to be sprayed with weed control/litter picking
Visit 8 October	Grass cutting/hedge cut back/litter picking
Visit 9 November/December	Borders weeded and turned over/bulb planting/pruning/litter picking
Visit 10 January	Cutting back/general maintenance/litter picking
Visit 11 February	Cutting back/general maintenance/litter picking

Eight Summer visits indicated in YELLOW, three Winter visits indicated in PURPLE.



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 Newcastle Furniture Service, part of Your Homes Newcastle. Since its launch in January 2007, the Garden Care Scheme has continually grown and we now assist over 500 tenants to maintain their gardens. At present the service is offered to tenants who live in the following Housing Office areas:

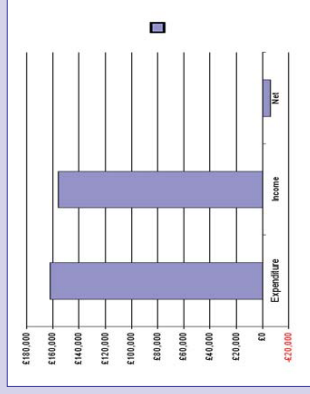
- Newburn
- West Denton
- Blakelaw/Cowgate
- North Kenton.

The service provides an all year round maintenance programme (indicated opposite). The Garden Care teams will visit you on 11 occasions throughout a twelve month programme (March - March).

The scheme provides the following services: Grass cutting, weed control, hedge trimming, pruning, border maintenance, litter picking and spring bulb planting.



Operating costs



Overview

The Garden Care team consists of:
 1 x Co-ordinator, 2 x Supervisors,
 1 x Administrator, 9 Trainees (studying for their NVQ Level 2 in Horticulture in partnership with Newcastle College).

“ I wish to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the team who worked in my garden. They do a first class job. They were pleasant and nothing was a trouble to them. Their manners were impeccable at all times. When they finished, they tidied up and I didn't have to do anything. ”

Tenant in West Denton.

“ Just a line to say a big thank you for the service you provide to my garden. The lads were very good. As always they are polite and clear up after them. ”

Tenant in Throckley.

Child Safety Equipment Scheme

As well as providing furniture our service operates a Child Safety Equipment Scheme for families on low income and with children under the age of five.

The scheme is currently delivered by two fitters and an administrative assistant.

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

We supply and fit a Child Safety package that includes fire guards, cupboard locks, door stoppers and smoke alarms. A safety gate is also available for families with children aged under 24 months. Each year we aim to install 1,400 packages of equipment within eight weeks of us receiving a request. In 2006/07 we fitted 1,621 packages, our average time to fit the equipment was 33 days and in total we visited 100% of all referrals within eight weeks.

When we fit your equipment we will ask you to complete a survey form, which helps us to improve our service to you.

Some of the outcomes from 64 responses in 2006/07 include:

- 93% rate the scheme as between either very good or excellent
- 100% reported that the fitting was carried out at a time and day convenient to them
- 95% were happy with the overall way the fitting was carried out; the remaining 5% were neither happy nor unhappy
- 100% reported that they were happy with the way the person making the referral carried out the request.

“The fitter was friendly and very efficient. He explained where he was going to put the items and then explained how they worked afterwards.”

“Everything was fitted very well and did not take long to do. It was explained where the items were to be fitted and how to use them.”

Remember Safety equipment is not a substitute for parental supervision

In partnership with



‘Working together to make Newcastle’s homes safer for our children’

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.

Compliments, complaints and comments

We welcome your compliments, complaints and comments.

In 2006/07 we received three formal complaints and four informal complaints. We also received 16 compliments.

The 16 compliments we received came from a variety of people including St Oswald’s hospice, the Brownies, Walker Central Football Club, various work placements, staff and customers. All staff received individual praise in our team meetings from the service manager.

Service expansion

Following on from last year’s newsletter, I am pleased to announce that we have expanded our staff and vehicles; this will enable us to give all of our customers a better service.

We now employ 56 staff and have four 7.5 tonne vehicles along with two Luton vans and nine smaller vehicles. All of our vehicles run on environmentally friendly Bio diesel.

We are currently negotiating with Erimus Housing who is based in Middlesbrough and Tristar who are based in Stockton, about the possibility of them using the Furniture Service. We are also in discussions with Wakefield District Homes in Yorkshire.

Future developments

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

- Review our warehousing
- Continued expansion to other organisations
- Cleaning of fully furnished properties
- Archiving
- Sale of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Service improvements

Following on from last year we are continuing to improve the services available to you! We have expanded the list of items within our ‘Options’ furniture packages where you can choose from a list of products and colours.

We have added stair climbers in each of our vehicles to assist the staff in delivering your furniture.

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

How we spend our money

In 2006/07 we spent a total of £2,534,000 on running this service for you. This includes £950,000 spent on purchasing new furniture.

Capital expenditure	£950,000
Supplies and services	£234,000
Salaries	£740,000
Premises costs	£108,000
Transport costs	£155,000
Internal support services	£347,000



Supporting charities

In 2003 we set up a partnership with several charities in the local area including – William Moulton Charity, Greggs, Vicars Relief Fund, Families First, Newcastle Independence Network and the Learning and Skills Counselling Service. In 2005 the Sherburn House Hospital Charity was also included.

The purpose of the partnership is to ensure that their clients receive high quality and value for money furniture items. We receive a referral form from the charity and deliver the goods within five working days. The charity pays for the furniture that has been requested.

In 2006 we carried out over 300 deliveries to our charities, supplying almost £75,000 worth of furniture.

“It’s a pleasure to do business with Newcastle Furniture Service. The service provided is second to none. They promptly deal with delivery of goods as soon as referrals are sent; liaising with social workers and clients as necessary.”
Sherburn House Charity

Working with the community

We have continued to work with the community since last year and have been working with Shaw Trust, Connexions, the Brownies, Oakfield College and Walker Central 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.

In total, over the last year we have supported five local groups and worked with around 26 people, which has allowed them to gain valuable work experience. This has resulted in two people gaining full time employment with NFS.

More importantly we have built up a partnership with all five organisations and will continue to offer placements in the future.

“I would particularly like to thank your staff and yourself for the assistance you gave to our May Bank Holiday BBQ. The event was a huge success and it would not have been possible without your generosity and support.”
Walker Central Football Club

2006 newsletter feedback

We sent our fourth newsletter to over 5500 of our service users in the summer of last year, 115 customers responded and the feedback we received included:

- 90% said they were either satisfied/very satisfied with the service we offered
- 89% said the service newsletter was useful/very useful
- 94% said they were either satisfied/very satisfied with the furniture we supply.

Overall our performance has improved from the previous year. Help us to improve further by completing the feedback form in this edition of our newsletter.

“The Furniture Service is quick and reliable, providing safe and clean equipment.”
“Thank you so much, I am very happy for the help I received from your department. Thanks once again.”
“The service is excellent as it alleviates a lot of stress from the service users in times when they are settling in. You are doing a splendid job supporting people in times of need.”

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 £25 Eldon Square voucher. All completed questionnaires will be entered into a draw with the lucky winner being chosen at the end of September. We will personally notify the winner and they will feature on our web site at www.yhn.org.uk

Tell us what you think!

We want to give you the best service we can. To do that we need your views. Tell us what you think about how well we do our job as your views will help us to plan ahead and to 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!

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 participate in discussions on the service we provide? Yes No

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

Phone Letter In person

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



WE WANT
YOUR VIEWS