



# Lettings policy summary



Your Homes  
Newcastle





## Our aims and objectives

### We aim to:

- encourage customer choice
- generate interest in renting houses in Newcastle
- increase housing options for people in Newcastle
- encourage choice and opportunities for housing in other areas of the region
- increase our customers commitment to their homes
- help build strong communities
- promote wider social inclusion by helping vulnerable people to choose

### We do this by:

- customers choosing homes in which they are interested, as they would in an estate agent
- marketing what we have to offer, particularly to vulnerable groups
- making sure our customers know about every vacant home in Newcastle, our own and our partner landlords. Our customers can then bid for the ones they want
- improving housing options by developing partnerships with other neighbouring landlords including accredited private landlords
- develop local lettings plans to respond to the social needs of particular neighbourhoods





## Your Choice Homes: How to use our service

We manage the choice based lettings policy on behalf of the council and its partner housing associations through the Your Choice Homes (YCH) scheme. Anyone aged 16 and over can register to join the scheme regardless of current housing circumstances. However we may make some exceptions, such as:

- some people subject to immigration control or from some other countries
- some people guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour

We advertise properties every week. Customers can bid for up to 3 properties a week. Some properties may only be suitable for particular tenants. An example of this would be a home for a single disabled person.

A customer would have to match the type of property to be considered. Where more than one person is interested in the same property we will normally let it to the person who has lived in their current home the longest.

We may give people who are experiencing immediate and urgent need limited priority. We consider a range of circumstances, such as:

- medical and welfare grounds
- domestic violence
- harassment or racial harassment
- homelessness





- a customer who is living in a home where there is major building work, demolition or regeneration
- a customer who is living in a home that is unsatisfactory because it is insanitary or statutorily overcrowded
- a customer who would suffer hardship if they could not move to a particular locality. For example to take up employment to get them out of relying on benefit

Customers given priority status have this for 3 months.

## Other types of lettings

There will be certain circumstances when vacant homes will not be advertised in the normal way through the YCH scheme. These include:

**Housing Management Lettings:** where any partner landlord needs to use a vacant property for a specific or exceptional reason such as emergency rehousing, national priorities or some homeless cases.

**Local Lettings Plans:** a future development where Your Homes Newcastle (YHN) Area Boards draw up local plans following a review of lettings in the area.

**Succession:** when a secure tenant dies it may be possible for a member of his or her family (including a same sex partner) to take over the tenancy.

**Exchanges:** council tenants are encouraged to consider direct exchanges with other council tenants and tenants of other landlords.

**National Mobility Schemes:** to help those people who want to move to another area of the country.



**Garages:** YHN lets council lock-up garages to a range of priority categories in various locations throughout the city. Disabled people may be entitled to a rental allowance.

## Your Choice Homes: How to access our service

YCH and the participating landlords share the responsibility to raise customer awareness and understanding of our policy and process.

YCH can be accessed through:

- any partner landlord outlet
- the YCH website [www.yourchoicehomes.org](http://www.yourchoicehomes.org)
- freephone facilities at any YHN Community Housing Office
- our property hotline 0191 277 2020
- our e-mail [your.choice.homes@yhn.org.uk](mailto:your.choice.homes@yhn.org.uk)
- Housing Advice Centre

**YHN Community Housing Offices** deal with a large proportion of customers who use YCH and all who sign up for a new tenancy with YHN. They are ideally located to carry out home visits, give advice on availability, make sure homes reach the lettable standard, carry out accompanied viewings, work with local agencies to support vulnerable customers and respond to cases of urgent and immediate need.

**The YCH Property Shop** is based in the city centre and operates like an estate agent by advertising homes, helping visitors to use the scheme and advising of how to make bids. It also has specific responsibility for



medical and disability assessment and recommendation, and for verifying applications.

**Staff at the Housing Advice Centre** aim to help people who are at risk of becoming homeless and those who have already lost their accommodation. They give advice which might help customers to keep their home and give help to people who are worried about losing their owner-occupied home. They carry out homeless assessments where people have already become homeless or are close to doing so and help to find emergency accommodation where it is needed. They also help customers apply to join the YCH scheme and find permanent accommodation through YCH or with other landlords.

**Advice and Support** workers based across the city work with customers with support needs. They find appropriate accommodation, services, funds or care packages to maintain independent living through YCH or other providers.

## Your Choice Homes: What happens if you disagree with a decision

A customer can request a review or an appeal if they disagree with a decision relating to:

- how long they have continuously lived in their home
- their eligibility for YCH
- not being given a priority, an extension of a priority or a Housing Management Let
- the reasonableness of the offer made to a customer with a priority or as Housing Management Let





If a customer wants to ask for a review they need to tell us within 21 days of the original decision. They need to tell us why they feel the decision is wrong.

The review will be based on what a customer tells us in their letter. In cases of eligibility this should include information about what they have done to rectify any unacceptable behaviour.

For decisions relating to council property a panel of at least two Senior Independent Officers who have not been involved in the original decision will carry out the review. This will be dealt with within 21 days of the review request being received. We will write to a customer confirming the review decision within five working days.

If a customer still thinks the decision is wrong they can request a further appeal. This further appeal to the Housing Appeals Panel (elected members) will only be referred at the discretion of the Chief Executive of Your Homes Newcastle. This will only be done if they show that there are unusual or exceptional circumstances or raise points of principle or policy not covered by the existing scheme.

Where the appeal relates to decisions made by a Housing Association you must seek information about the appeals procedure for that organisation.



This information is about our lettings service.  
If you need this in your language or a different language  
phone **0191 277 2020**. 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 আপনার রেন্ট একাউন্ট (ভাড়ার হিসাব নিকাশ) সম্বন্ধে। এই তথ্য যদি <বাংলায়> অথবা অন্য কোন ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে এই নাম্বারে ফোন করুন- ০১৯১ ২৭৭ ২০২০
国语 (Chinese simplified)	这是有关我们的出租服务的信息。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 277 2020 索取。
粵語 (Chinese traditional)	這是關於我們的出租服務的信息。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 277 2020 索取。
فارسی (Farsi)	این اطلاعات در مورد اجاره بهای شماست. در صورت نیاز به این اطلاعات به زبان فارسی یا زبان های دیگر با شماره تلفن <u>۰۱۹۱۲۷۷۲۰۲۰</u> تماس بگیرید.
français (French)	Ces informations concernent votre loyer. Si vous avez besoin de ces informations en français ou dans une autre langue, téléphonez au :0191 277 2020.
کوردی سوورانی (Kurdish)	ئەم زانیاریانە سەبارەت بە ریزی حەسینی کۆتیی ئێوەیە. ئەگەر حەزتان لە وەرگرتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا هەر زمانێکی دیگەر هەبە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 0191 277 2020 پێوەندی بکەن.
português (Portuguese)	Esta informação refere-se à sua renda. Se precisar desta informação em português ou noutra língua, queira ligar para o 0191 277 2020.
Русско (Russian)	Информация о Вашем арендном счете. Если Вы нуждаетесь в этой информации на русском или другом языке звоните по тел. 0191 277 2020.
español (Spanish)	Ésta es información sobre la cuenta de su renta. Si necesita esta información en español o en otro idioma, llame al 0191 277 2020.