



# Looking for a home in Newcastle?

## A guide for customers

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 زبان‌های دیگر با شماره تلفن ۰۱۹۱۲۷۷۲۰۲۰ 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 سوڤانی  
(Kurdish)

ئەم زانیاریانە سەبارەت بە ریزی حەسینی کۆتیی ئێوەیە. ئەگەر حەزتان لە وەرگرتنی ئەم زانیاریانە بە زمانی کوردی یا هەر زمانێکی دیكە هەبە بە زمارە 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.

# CONTENTS

What is Your Choice Homes?	3
Who can join Your Choice Homes?	4-7
Urgent and immediate need	7-8
Finding a home	9-12
Offers and feedback	12-14
Reviews and appeals	14-15
Other types of lettings	16-18
Contact details	19-27

# What is Your Choice Homes?

Your Choice Homes (YCH) is a simple partnership between Newcastle City Council, Your Homes Newcastle and Housing Associations to let their homes in Newcastle. It's designed to give you more choice in looking for a home. Your Choice Homes is a simple and open system which is accessible and easy to understand.

## **Partners in YCH are:**

- Anchor Trust
- Byker Bridge Housing Association
- Cheviot Homes
- Guinness Trust
- Hanover
- Home Housing
- Housing 21
- Johnnie Johnson
- Leazes Homes
- Private Rented Sector
- Methodist homes
- Newcastle City Council
- NomadE5
- Places for People
- Railway Housing
- Riverside North East
- William Sutton Trust
- Two Castles
- Your Homes Newcastle

## Who can join Your Choice Homes?

Anyone aged 16 or over can apply. You don't have to live in Newcastle and it also doesn't matter what type of home you live in.

### How do I join?

You can get an application pack from:

- the YCH Office
- any YHN Housing Offices
- the Housing Advice Centre
- any other partner landlord's offices
- register on-line at **[www.yourchoicehomes.org](http://www.yourchoicehomes.org)**

### You can also:

- use the freephone facilities at any YHN Housing Office
- call the property hotline on **0191 277 2020**
- email **[your.choice.homes@yhn.org.uk](mailto:your.choice.homes@yhn.org.uk)**

We will register you within 5 working days and write to you when we have done this. We will then check the information you have provided.

## What kind of checks will you do?

**We need to check whether you are eligible for YCH. This means that you have to provide some information. This could be:**

- Identification containing your name and address, like a driver's licence, utility bill or bank statement
- Something that shows how long you have lived in your current home, like a tenancy agreement, old item of post, Council Tax bill or NHS Medical Card

If you can't give us this information tell us, as we can write out to the reference you give on your form. If it applies to you, one of these should be your current or previous landlord. This will help us confirm who you are and that you qualify for the property advertised.

**Some customers may not be eligible for YCH such as:**

- Certain people from abroad
- Some people guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour  
We will look at any previous or current rent arrears you might have. If you have any record of property damage, anti-social behaviour or relevant criminal activity we will look at this too.

The details that you give us may be shared with other public bodies, including the police. This is to help with preventing and detecting crime.

## What if I need help?

Don't worry – we're here to help everyone, whatever your needs. If you are unsure about anything ask us.

If you feel that you are not able to use YCH yourself, but want someone else to do it for you, let us know on your application form.

If you are under 18 or need support we can refer you to a Pathways Advice and Support Worker or to our Inline Team. They will look at what support you need and help you find and settle into your home.

## What if I need information in a different format?

If your first language is not English we can provide interpretation facilities. We can also provide information in Braille, large print or on audio tape.

## How do I know if I am registered with YCH?

We will write to you to confirm that you are registered. This letter will also give you a reference number. This number is your number and can be used to bid for properties.

With this letter will be useful information to help you find a home. In your letter will be a guide to what properties you should bid for and how long you might have to wait. We will write to you every 12 months to see if you want to remain registered with YCH.

## What if I'm not eligible for YCH?

If you are not eligible this means that you can't bid for a home. We will write to you and tell you why we have made this decision. This will include:

- what information we have considered
- why you are not eligible
- what you can do to become eligible

We will also pass this information on to any agency working with you.

## What if I think I'm in urgent or immediate need to move?

You can tell us about this when you apply. The Council has statutory duties towards people who have nowhere to live or who are not safe where they live. If you are assessed as being in urgent or immediate housing need there are various ways we can help you with available homes that are suitable for you.

If you need help or want further information contact your local Community Housing Office, the City Councils Housing Advice Centre, 112-114 Pilgrim Street, telephone **0191 277 1711** or the Your Choice Homes Office; See page 23 for details.

If we think you are in urgent and immediate need to move you will be given a priority. This lasts for three months and may recommend what type of home would be suitable for you. The reasons why we may award a priority are:

- You have substantial disability or health grounds
- You have welfare grounds. For example to give or receive support
- You are suffering domestic violence, harassment or racial harassment
- You are homeless
- Your home is subject to major building work, demolition or regeneration
- You are living in a house that is unsatisfactory because it is insanitary or statutorily overcrowded
- You would suffer hardship if you couldn't move to a particular area. For example to take up employment to get you from relying on benefits

If you have a number of issues that may not be enough to award you a priority in one category we will look at all your issues and may award you a priority.

You may also be eligible for a priority in more than one category.

## How are homes advertised?

We advertise homes every week, except when there is a Bank Holiday. From noon on a Monday you will be able to see them:

- On our website **[www.yourchoicehomes.org](http://www.yourchoicehomes.org)**
- In the Your Choice Homes office in the city centre
- In Community Housing Offices
- In Customer Service Centres
- In partner landlord customer outlets

Properties will then be advertised in the Evening Chronicle on Tuesday.

The advert will close at noon on a Thursday. This means that you will have three days to make your bids. No bids will be taken after this time.

## What do I do if I am interested in a property?

### It's easy to do! Simply:

- Log on to our website **[www.yourchoicehomes.org](http://www.yourchoicehomes.org)**, search for a home and bid
- Call in to the YCH office, any YHN Community Housing Office, Customer Service Centre or partner landlord
- Telephone us on **0191 277 2020** or any YHN Community Housing Office (see contact details on pages 19 and 20)

You can bid for up to three properties each week. A bid is your way of expressing interest in a property. You can only bid for properties when they are advertised.

## What information do you give about the property?

Each property will have a short description. This will tell you:

- how many bedrooms it has
- any special features
- how much the rent is
- who the landlord is
- who is eligible for the property

## Do I have to prove that I meet any special conditions for a property?

We will carry out a further check if we are going to offer you a home. This is to see if the information on your application form has changed or is still the same. These checks may be with other agencies including previous landlords and the police.

## Have I read the description of the property?

Sometimes there are special conditions for the property, such as:

- the number of people who can live in the property
- if cats or dogs are allowed
- the minimum age required of residents
- whether it is suitable for children

## What are properties advertised as 'first come first served'?

This means that we will offer the property to the first person who bids for it. Some special conditions still apply.

## Is there any difference between a home managed by Your Homes Newcastle and another landlord?

**Yes.** The main difference is that a Housing Association may place a different special condition on an advert. For example, they may advertise properties for a certain age group or for a key worker. As with other properties customers would still need to meet the special condition. A Housing Association's rent may be higher than those for homes managed by Your Homes Newcastle.

They may be able to advertise different types of properties. This includes homes where customers could buy a share of the property.

Another difference for customers is the type of tenancy agreement you would sign. Although similar to the agreement you would sign for a Your Homes Newcastle tenancy, there are some differences. Also, you will not be able to exercise your right to buy on a Housing Association property.

Private landlords may also place different property criteria on an advert. For example, they may advertise properties for sharers or their rent may be per room instead of for the whole property. As with other properties you would still need to meet these special conditions.

A private landlord may also ask you for a deposit or bond. This is usually equal to one months rent but this may vary from landlord to landlord. They may also ask you for a months rent to be paid in advance.

You may be able to get help with either of these through the Newcastle Rent Deposit Scheme, which can be contacted through the Private Rented Project on **0191 273 6103**.

The tenancy agreement you will sign is likely to be an assured shorthold tenancy. This means that it would need to be renewed either on a 6 or 12 month basis.

For any further information about these or any other type of tenancy contact the City Council's Housing Advice Centre or Tenancy Relations Team on **0191 277 1711** or the Private Rented Project on **0191 273 6103**.

## Does my bid guarantee an offer of the property?

Most of our homes are very popular. This means a lot of people bid. We will usually offer the home to the person who has lived longest in their current home. This is what we use as a tie-break.

You may have a priority. If you have you will be considered before other customers. If more than one customer with a priority bids for a home we will usually offer the home to the person who has had their priority the longest.

We will contact the successful customer within six days after the deadline.

## If I am offered a property, will I be able to view it before making up my mind?

**Yes.** You will be able to view the property. Someone will show you around the property and answer any questions. You will be asked to tell us within 48 hours of viewing the property whether or not you will accept it. If you like it, we will set a date for you to sign the tenancy agreement and start your tenancy.

## What if I don't like the property when I've seen it?

If you view the property and decide it's not for you, don't worry. If you are eligible you will remain registered with YCH. You will be able to bid for other properties in the future.

If you are homeless or in urgent need and have a priority, we may feel that this offer meets this duty. This means that your priority could be removed or not extended after three months.

## How will I know what has happened to the properties advertised?

We publish the results of all completed lettings every month. This is in our 'Feedback Report'. You can get one from any YHN Housing Office, the YCH Office or our website [www.yourchoicehomes.org](http://www.yourchoicehomes.org)

## How will this information help me?

It will help you see where you may be successful in finding a home. It will give you:

- a better idea of how popular a particular area or type of property is
- whether you would be successful if you bid

You may then decide to look for other types of property or areas where you may not have to wait as long.

## What if I am not happy about a decision that you make?

You can request a review or an appeal if you disagree with a decision relating to:

- how long you have continuously lived in your home
- your 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 you as a customer with a priority or as Housing Management Let

If you want to ask for a review write to us within 21 days of the original decision. Tell us why you feel the decision is wrong.

The review will be based on what you tell us in your letter. In cases of eligibility this should include information about what you 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 you confirming the review decision within five working days.

If you still think the decision is wrong you 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 you show that there are unusual or exceptional circumstances or you 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.

## Are there any properties that won't be advertised?

**Yes.** In some cases properties will not be advertised in the normal way through the YCH scheme. These cases include:

**Housing Management Lets:** where any partner landlord needs to use a vacant property for a range of specific or exceptional management purposes, such as emergencies like fire or flood, asylum seekers, other national priorities or some homeless cases.

**Some Adapted Properties:** where we have installed a high level of adaptations we may choose not to advertise these homes. Instead we may make a direct offer to a customer who we know has an urgent and immediate need for those specific adaptations. This is to ensure that we make best use of stock and meet housing need.

**Succession:** where a secure tenant dies, it may be possible for a member of his or her family (including a same sex partner) to claim their tenancy. These cases should be discussed with the local housing office or partner landlord who will provide more detailed information about who can succeed your tenancy.

**Exchanges:** where a Council tenant is allowed to consider a direct exchange with other Council tenants and tenants of other landlords. This should be discussed with the local housing office or partner landlord before any further arrangements are made to bring about the exchange.

**National Mobility Schemes:** where customers wish to move from or 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.

## Do I have any other housing options?

**Yes.** You can apply directly to a Housing Association by completing their own application form and going on to their waiting list. A list of Housing Associations can be found at the back of this leaflet.

You can apply to **Private Landlords** through any lettings agent. You can also contact the Private Rented Project for information. This Project will help you find a property through private landlords and will also explain your rights and what to look for in a tenancy agreement.

The Private Rented Project is open between 10am and 12pm then 2pm and 4pm, Monday to Friday at 91 Tamworth Road, Arthur's Hill, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Their telephone number is **0191 273 6103**.

**Shared Ownership** schemes let you buy half of a property if you are able to afford it. You would rent the other half from the landlord until they can afford to buy the full property. You may also choose to sell your half or buy the remaining half. Housing Associations generally operate these schemes.

**Keyworker Housing** are homes that have been built for specific groups of people. You must meet the special conditions before you are considered. An example of this may be where homes are built in an area and a percentage is put aside for people who work within the community.

**Student Housing** means accommodation that is specifically designed for students. Rent is often paid for per room and in some cases have to be of a minimum standard to comply with Health and Safety legislation.

**Other Local Authority Housing** can be available to you. Most authorities now have open waiting lists so

people from outside the area can apply. You may be given less preference than other customers. The relevant authority will have a published Lettings Policy which will tell you what you are entitled to.

## A final reminder

If you are interested in a property, you must let us know by noon on Thursday after the Monday advert.

You can only bid for up to three homes in any one week.

We will let you know within six days after the deadline if you have been successful.

If you don't hear from us within six days you haven't been successful. Please try again!

## A simple guide to Your Choice Homes

- Anyone over 16 can apply no matter where you live
- Checks will be made to make sure you are eligible
- We will tell you if you are eligible and give you a reference number
- Available properties are advertised each week
- You can bid for up to three properties from noon on Monday until noon on Thursday
- All eligible bids will be considered - but the bid with the longest time in their current home will be successful unless a customer bids with one or more priorities
- Regular feedback will be available to customers who are not successful

## Contact details

YHN Office Name	Address	Telephone Number	Fax Number
Blakelaw/ Cowgate	Sheriff Leas Springfield Road Blakelaw Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 3DS	0191 277 1000	0191 277 1011
Benwell & Scotswood	West End Customer Service Centre Condercum Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 9JU	0191 277 1484	0191 277 1494
Byker	45-47 Brinkburn Street Byker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1QN	0191 278 1555	0191 278 1533
Cruddas Park	Cruddas Park Shopping Centre Westmorland Road Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7RW	0191 277 1066	0191 277 1088
Fenham	199/201 Two Ball Lonnen Fenham Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 9RS	0191 277 1200	0191 277 1211
Gosforth	Council Offices High Street, Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1JL	0191 277 1166	0191 277 1177
Newbiggin Hall (satellite office)	1 Yetholm Place Newbiggin Hall Estate Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 4ED	0191 277 1400	0191 277 1388
North Kenton	The Kenton Centre Hillsview Avenue North Kenton Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3QJ	0191 277 4360	0191 277 4377

## Contact details

YHN Office Name	Address	Telephone Number	Fax Number
Shieldfield	Stoddart House, Clarence Walk Shieldfield Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 1AB	0191 278 1566	0191 278 1570
St Anthony's	172/174 St Anthony's Road Walker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 2ND	0191 278 1600	0191 278 1611
Walker	Walker Centre Church Walk Walker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 3HR	0191 278 8455	0191 278 8466
Westgate	Prospect House Prospect Place Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 6DQ	0191 277 1300	0191 277 1299
West Denton	Outer West Customer Service Centre West Denton Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 2QZ	0191 277 7940	0191 277 7925
YCH Office	6-8 Saville Row Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JE	0191 277 2020	0191 277 2022

## Contact details

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Fax Number
Affinity Sutton	Holme House Manor Lane, Holmes Chapel Cheshire CW4 8AF	0845 217 8601	
Anchor Trust	Burbank House Balliol Business Park Benton Lane Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 8EN	0845 775 8595	0191 270 1645
Cheviot Homes	Beaminster Way East Kingston Park Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 2ER	0191 238 3800	0191 238 3900
Guinness Trust	West 3 ASAMA Court Amethyst Road Newcastle Business Park Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 7ED	0191 273 6233	0191 273 6063
Hanover Housing Association	Thomas Duggan House Manor Lane Shipleigh BD18 3RB	01274 599 686	01274 531 021
Home Housing	270 Stanhope Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 5JT	0845 606 3031	0191 272 3681
Housing 21	Unit 9, Avril Court Ermine Business Park Huntington PE29 6WG	0845 606 6363	0870 192 4430
Johnnie Johnson	16 Telford Court Morpeth Northumberland NE61 2DB	0845 604 1095	01625 870115
Methodist Homes	Brooksland Court Tunstall Road Leeds LS11 5HL	0113 271 5805	0113 271 5848
NomadE5	5 Gosforth Park Avenue Gosforth Business Park Newcastle upon Tyne NE12 8EG	0191 268 4800	0191 229 7373

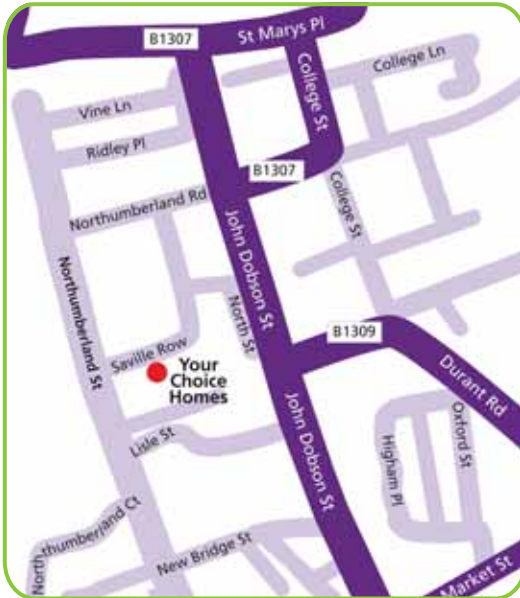
## Contact details

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>Fax Number</b>
Places for People	4th Floor Maybrook House, Grainger Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5JE	0191 211 3100	0191 232 3976
Riverside North East	6 The Staithes Gateshead NE11 9SM	0191 461 8110	0191 461 8149
Railway Housing	Bank Top house Garbutt Square Neasham Road Darlington DL1 4DR	01325 482 125	01325 384 641
Two Castles	154 New Bridge Street Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 2TE	0191 261 4774	0191 261 9692

# Your Choice Homes

**If you would like to find out more write to:**

John Urwin  
Your Choice Homes Office  
6-8 Saville Row,  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8JE



- Tel 0191 277 2020
- Fax 0191 277 2022
- Minicom 0191 278 1896
- Email [your.choice.homes@yhn.org.uk](mailto:your.choice.homes@yhn.org.uk)
- Website [www.yourchoicehomes.org](http://www.yourchoicehomes.org)

## Office opening hours

Monday 8.30am to 16.30pm  
Tuesday 8.30am to 17.00pm  
Wednesday 8.30am to 17.00pm  
Thursday 8.30am to 16.30pm  
Friday 10.00am to 16.30pm

## Community Care Alarm Service

For any customer living in Newcastle.

If they have worries about:

- Falling at home
- Feeling unwell
- Strangers or other callers at their door

You can call for help. They are fast, reliable, friendly and affordable.

### **To find out more contact:**

Alyson Bell, YHN House, Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7LX

- Tel            0191 278 8699
- Fax            0191 278 7755
- Minicom    0191 278 7754
- Email        commcarealarmservice@yhn.org.uk

## Newcastle Furniture Service (NFS)

Helps customers to settle or remain in their homes by supporting them with the furniture they need. Anyone who takes up a tenancy with the council can apply for a furnished tenancy.

The furniture is leased to customer who will pay a weekly charge. This is added to their rent.

### **To find out more contact:**

Jason Wylie, Newcastle Furniture Service, Unit 1,  
Wincomblee road, Walker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 3PF

- Tel            0191 278 1888
- Fax            0191 278 1884
- Minicom    0191 278 1896
- Email        furniture.service@yhn.org.uk

# Young People's Service

We work with young people looking for housing and support. Through staff based at the City Councils Housing Advice Centre we see young people aged 16 to 17 years old and assess their need for accommodation.

Through our Inline staff we help young people aged 16 to 25 years old who are in housing need and living in tenancies in Newcastle. This could be council, housing association or private tenancies. This support is there to help young people to manage their tenancy successfully.

For those young people who are not yet able or ready to manage a tenancy we support them in our direct access hostel where they can remain for 3 to 6 months or non-direct access flats in Kenton where they can remain for 12/18 months.

Through the Family Intervention Project we also work with families who have been homeless or threatened with homelessness due to anti social behavior and support them to over come any issues. This involves working closely with families in a structured way to change things for the better so that they can stay in their home.

## **To find out more contact:**

Kim McMaster  
Young People's Service Manager  
1st Floor Council Offices  
High Street  
Gosforth  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE3 1JL

- Tel 0191 277 1190
- Fax 0191 277 1198
- Minicom 0191 278 1896
- Email [youngpeopleservice@yhn.org.uk](mailto:youngpeopleservice@yhn.org.uk)

## Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour and Enforcement Team

We are committed to taking clear steps to deal effectively with anti-social behaviour, nuisance and harassment so that residents can enjoy a comfortable and safe environment to live in.

### **To find out more contact:**

Nick Dodgeon  
Housing Anti-Social Behaviour and Enforcement Team  
YHN House  
Benton Park Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE7 7LX

- Tel            0191 278 8740
- Fax            0191 278 8758
- Minicom     0191 278 1896
- Email        [newcastleasbunit@yhn.org.uk](mailto:newcastleasbunit@yhn.org.uk)

You can also contact the team by calling in at your local housing office.

## Advice and Support Service

We give customers that extra help to find accommodation and set up and run their home.

### **To find out more contact:**

Suzanne Halliwell, Advice and Support Team, Your Homes Newcastle, Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7LX

- Tel 0191 278 8621
- Fax 0191 278 8604
- Minicom 0191 278 1896
- Email [yhn@yhn.org.uk](mailto:yhn@yhn.org.uk)

## Housing Advice Centre

Can help provide information and advice about housing to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. They may be offered temporary accommodation or a permanent home.

### **To find out more contact:**

Gill Simm

Housing Advice Centre, 112-114 Pilgrim Street  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6SQ

- Tel 0191 277 1711
- Fax 0191 277 1722







May 2010