

October 2011



Seghill enjoys a free health event

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Key Contacts

Customer Services Centre
01670 542424

For information on Dog Wardens call
0845 6006400

Northumbria Police
Blyth Neighbourhood Inspector;
Trevor Oakley
03456 043 043 or
blyth.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

Cramlington Neighbourhood Inspector;
Dave Fitzgerald
03456 043 043 or
cramlington.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

Alnwick Neighbourhood Inspector;
Sue Peart
03456 043 043 or
alnwick.npt@northumbria.pnn.police.uk

Northumberland Citizens Advice Bureau
0844 4111309

This information is also available in Braille and audio. Magnifying sheets are available on request. If you would like to receive Your News in another format or language, please contact **Melanie Armstrong at melanie.armstrong@hfn.uk.com or telephone 01670 542424.**

Arabic	يمكننا تقديم هذه المعلومات بتنسيقات ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على هذه المعلومات بتنسيق أو لغة أخرى، يرجى الاتصال بمكتبنا
Bengali	আমরা এই তথ্য বিকল্প কন্সার্ট ও অন্যান্য প্রদান করতে পারি। আপনি যদি এই তথ্য বিকল্প কন্সার্ট বা অন্যান্য সেবে চান, আমাদের অনুগ্রহ করে আবেদন যে কোনো একটি অফিসে যোগাযোগ করুন
Chinese (simplified)	我们可以提供此资料的其它格式和语言版本。如果您希望获取其它格式或语言版本，请与我们的任一办事处联系。
Chinese (traditional)	我們備有此資料的其它格式和語言版本。若您需要其它格式或語言版本，請聯絡我們的辦事處。
Hindi	हम यह जानकारी वैकल्पिक फॉर्मेटों और भाषाओं में मुहैया करा सकते हैं। अगर आप अन्य फॉर्मेट या भाषा में जानकारी चाहते हैं तो कृपया हमारे कार्यालयों में से किसी एक में संपर्क करें

Polish	Możemy udostępnić Państwu te informacje na różnych nośnikach i w różnych językach. Gdyby chcieli Państwo otrzymać informacje na innym nośniku lub w innym języku prosimy skontaktować się z jednym z naszych biur.
Portuguese	Podemos disponibilizar esta informação em formatos e línguas alternativas. Se gostasse de receber informação noutra formato ou língua, por favor contacte um dos nossos escritórios
Punjabi	ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬਦਲਵੇਂ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰੋਗੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਦਫਤਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ
Slovak	Môžeme poskytnúť tieto informácie v ďalších formátoch a jazykoch. Ak budete chcieť informácie v iných formátoch a jazykoch, prosím, kontaktujte jednu z našich kancelárií.
Turkish	Bu bilgileri başka formatlarda ve dillerde sağlayabilmekteyiz. Bilgiyi başka bir formatta veya dilde almak isterseniz, lütfen ofislerimizden biriyile irtibat kurunuz.
Urdu	ہم یہ معلومات متبادل شکلوں اور زبانوں میں فراہم کر سکتے ہیں۔ اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی دیگر شکل یا زبان میں مطلوب ہو تو براہ کرم ہمارے کسی دفتر سے رابطہ کریں

If you have any comments or suggestions for Your News, please contact **Melanie Armstrong, Communications, Homes for Northumberland, Civic Centre, Renwick Road, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 2BX or call 01670 542424.**

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Your News

I want to take this opportunity to inform all tenants about Northumberland County Council's review of housing management arrangements.

Council housing is owned by Northumberland County Council and is managed and maintained by Homes for Northumberland.

The Council is currently looking at whether this is the most cost effective way of managing its housing stock. As a result, they commissioned a Value for Money review of Homes for Northumberland earlier this year. This review included how we are performing and our costs of providing the service. It also looked into whether there was any duplication between the Council and Homes for Northumberland services.

The Review Concluded

- The Housing Revenue Account appears healthy, but shortfalls in capital resources to pay for major investment will occur in the future
- Generally speaking Homes for Northumberland perform well
- In terms of overall Value for Money Homes for Northumberland generally perform well in comparison to other Housing Providers.
- There are areas where there may be duplication between the council and Homes for Northumberland and Value for Money could be improved.
- The need to maintain and improve the quality of service and performance needs to be central to considering the future of the housing service.

At the time of writing this, no final decision has been made. The Council are still in the early stages of a process and tenants' views are particularly important when making this decision. The Council are planning to make an in principle decision in early October.

Before any final decision is taken the Council have stated there will be a full consultation with tenants.

We want this review to be carried out in an open and transparent way that is focused on what is best for tenants. We will ensure that the service to tenants will not suffer during this change and we will aim to build on our existing high standards.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 01670 542424, if you have any queries on this important matter.

Best Wishes,
Ray Boycott




Ray Boycott – Managing Director

Providing excellent services

Blyth Area Board Update

The Blyth Area Board met in August and were provided with an overview of the good work of the neighbourhood housing teams by Louise Patterson, Neighbourhood Housing Manager.

The Board also agreed that work would begin on a resident led self regulation framework.

A Member praised the performance of staff in the Information Centres and it was agreed that a complimentary letter be sent to them on behalf of the Board.

A report provided the Board with feedback regarding the actions and outcomes from three Service Panels.

The Board was also provided with an update on progress of the HFN capital programme during the first quarter of 2011/12.

Alnwick Area Board Update

The Alnwick Area Board considered a number of reports at its meeting on 24 August.

The Board heard how we are performing in relation to gas safety and were pleased to hear that through our pro-active approach neither the Council nor Homes for Northumberland are placed at any statutory breach of regulations.

A report explained why tenancies were coming to an end and the Board recognised the many different reasons why this occurs

The Board took the opportunity to congratulate staff in achieving or exceeding targets for carrying out repairs on time and tackling rent arrears.

We updated the Board on the excellent progress in meeting promises made to tenants. Finally, the Board heard about the major improvements made to tenants' homes and what we have planned for the future.

Performance to 31st June 2011

Indicator	Blyth	Alnwick
Amount of rent outstanding	£361,762	£220,605
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	19	2
Average time taken to let an empty home	39.8 Days	10.5 Days
Total number of repairs jobs completed	4,735	1,471
Total number of complaints received	36	11
Total number of compliments received	3	3
Number of tenants involved in Homes for Northumberland service panels and meetings	853	

You Can Still Enter Into The Spirit



There is still time to get your nomination form in for the Spirit of the Community Awards.

Our brand new tenants' awards scheme aims to recognise the achievements of those who are going the extra mile.

The Spirit of the Community Awards will look to find the people who have helped their fellow residents enjoy life more or made a difference to others. Winners will be presented with an award at an event in November 2011.

The awards are split into the following five categories:

- **Good neighbour award**
- **Young person of the year award**
- **Getting involved award**
- **Best community group**
- **Garden of the year award**

To make a nomination, simply call 01670 542424 and ask for a Spirit of the Community application form.

The deadline for nominations is 28 October 2011.

All applicants must be a Northumberland County Council tenant or living in a Northumberland County Council property.

Improving quality of life

Seghill residents enjoy a free family day out



Our latest Breath of Fresh Air event took place in Seghill last month.

Local people ventured out into the sunshine to enjoy an action packed day with members of their local community, while learning about ways they could adopt a healthier lifestyle. Some of the many exciting activities on the day included:

- **Bouncy castle**
- **Tea cups ride**
- **Bicycle MOTs**
- **Zumba**
- **Health checks**
- **Healthy food demonstrations**
- **Sports taster sessions**

The event was opened by Allan Hepple, director of Neighbourhood Services at Homes for Northumberland, alongside local resident Stephen Stanners. Stephen works

tirelessly in the local community and was recognised this year by being shortlisted for a Young Tenant of the Year award by two national bodies: the TPAS Awards and the National Housing Federation Awards.

Thanks to our partners who all made a great contribution to making the event possible. These include, Northumberland County Council, Sustrans, Surestart, CVA Blyth Valley, BVAL, Northumbria Police, Real Food Works, Groundworks, Age UK and Northumberland Care Trust.

A special thank you also goes to the following organisations for their kind donations towards this event: Proctor and Gamble, Flower Cabin, Borley's Cafe, Food for Thought, Co-op store, Seaton Delaval Hall, Harbour View Restaurant, Kings Arms, Melton Constable and Astley Arms.

The next Breath of Fresh Air event will take place on Tuesday 25 October from 10am at Amble Boy's Club.

More tenants get involved in John Muir Awards

The John Muir Awards is a national project that aims to teach young people about their environment and why they should look after their local area, including how to explore and conserve it.

Recently, Homes for Northumberland became an official John Muir provider after we helped nineteen young people complete their John Muir bronze award.

Following on from this success, five more John Muir projects are in the pipeline in Cowpen, Cramlington, Hodgesons Road and Isabella. These new groups will see an additional 45 tenants receive a John Muir award and learn about the importance of their local environment in the coming months.

Some of the projects these groups are already involved in include:

- **Taking part in Big Tidy events at the Isabella Heap, Buffalo Centre, Eastfield Lea, Blyth Beach and Mayfield Cemetery**
- **Creating a wild garden at Eastfield Lea**
- **A big clean up by the Blyth River, including lifting a tree canopy to open the view of the river**

Homes for Northumberland is also set to establish our first all adult group for John Muir - watch this space for further information on this exciting development.

For more information on how you can get involved in the John Muir Awards, speak with Aileen Barrass on 01670 542424.



Providing excellent services

Tenants are Bowled Over with Community Spirit

Concorde House Residents' Association has received £500 from Homes for Northumberland's community fund to buy a carpet bowls set, darts equipment and enjoy a day trip.

The funding was awarded so residents could arrange bowling and darts matches and meetings together. This not only gives them a chance to exercise, but is also a good way of boosting confidence and meeting new people.

Twelve residents also enjoyed a day trip to Hexham, Corbridge and Kingston Park using the funds. This has helped to make the tenants feel part of the community in an enjoyable way.

Homes for Northumberland is happy to support events such as these which promote health and mobility amongst our older residents and we work closely with all our resident associations to encourage this.

If any Homes for Northumberland Residents' Association has a project which they can demonstrate would benefit their community, you can apply for community funding of up to £500 from Homes for Northumberland by telephoning 01670 542424.



Trio Complete Free Course

Three tenants have successfully completed a pilot course designed to help improve their employability skills.

Homes for Northumberland is working alongside the Housing Employment Network (HEN) and Northumberland College to offer Council tenants the opportunity to gain an Award in Employability Skills Level One. This training is designed to help those taking part to get the skills they need to find a job and stay in employment.

This recognised qualification covered key topics including, how to get an interview and how to perform well in an interview. It also provided training on ways to keep a job and will offer information on specific job areas, including retail and care work.

Ray Boycott, managing director at Homes for Northumberland, said: "This is an excellent opportunity for our customers to gain new skills or brush up on knowledge which hasn't been used for a while. We are delighted to be working alongside the HEN who is able to offer advice and guidance around how best to get into work, volunteering or self-employment."

The housing company is looking to run similar courses in the coming months following on from the success of the pilot.

To be eligible, participating tenants must be a Council tenant, over 18 and in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA). If you would like to register your interest for the upcoming courses, please call Homes for Northumberland on 01670 542424.

Two Young Tenants Enjoy a Royal Visit

Young carers Aaron Purdy and Ella Ruvino received a special invitation from the Duchess of Northumberland to see the Queen during her recent visit to Alnwick.

Both 11 years old, Ella and Aaron care for their brother and sister who suffer from cerebral palsy. The pair are members of Carers Northumberland and were invited to see the Queen to recognise their hard work and commitment to their siblings.

More than 8,000 specially-invited guests attended from a variety of organisations, including the Royal British Legion as well as a host of individuals who look after friends, family or provide foster care.



Our support

New Respect ASB Charter for Housing

Homes for Northumberland has signed up to the Respect ASB Charter for Housing.

The Charter replaces the Respect Standard for Housing Management, which was introduced by the government in 2006. It has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing, HouseMark and the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group following wide consultation with landlords, tenants and communities.

Our Safer Neighbourhoods Unit works hard to prevent and effectively tackle anti-social behaviour in Blyth and Alnwick communities. The new charter consists of seven key commitments for the team:

1. **Demonstrating leadership and strategic commitment**
2. **Providing an accessible and accountable service**
3. **Taking swift action to protect communities**
4. **Adopting a supportive approach to working with victims and witnesses**
5. **Encouraging individual and community responsibility**
6. **Having a clear focus on prevention and early intervention**
7. **Ensuring a value for money approach is embedded in the service**

By signing up to the Charter, we are showing our commitment to providing a high quality ASB service.

An important requirement is that we must consult with you, our residents, about what the Charter means, locally, for you and the services you expect.

For more information, please speak with Colin Blackett Safer Neighbourhoods Manager on 01670 542424.



400 Northumberland Homes Fitted with Life Saving Smoke Alarms

Homes for Northumberland has joined forces with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service to install smoke alarms and provide tailored fire risk assessments for tenants in 400 Northumberland County Council homes in Blyth and Alnwick.

Following the completion of the initial 400 properties, Homes for Northumberland will continue to work closely with the fire service by identifying any other properties which do not have smoke alarms already installed. Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service will also highlight any tenants who are identified as a high risk during their assessment, offering six monthly fire safety reviews in their home.

Councillor Anita Romer, executive member for public protection at Northumberland County Council, said: "This is a prime example of organisations working together to help keep residents safe and well informed about fire risks in their homes. It is also commendable that Homes for Northumberland and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service are working to help those most in need, or at risk, in the first stages of this worthwhile project."

Fence is Taken Down to Cut Crime

Homes for Northumberland and Northumbria Police have removed a fence on Kentmere Close in Seghill following a series of complaints.

The fence was located near a secluded area of the street and attracted young people who would cause anti social behaviour for tenants living locally. Some of their disruptive activities included shouting, swearing, under age drinking and littering.

It was agreed by Northumbria Police and Homes for Northumberland that the fence was of no benefit to the street and simply acted as a place young people could hide and cause anti social behaviour for tenants.

Homes for Northumberland organised the removal of the fence as part of its small scale estate improvements scheme.

Ray Boycott, managing director at Homes for Northumberland, said: "Any Council tenant can

put forward an idea for a small improvement on their estate, from repairing a communal wall to tidying a landscaped area, and we were pleased that the residents of Kentmere Close told us about this problem as we were able to act on their concerns.

"Homes for Northumberland does not tolerate any form of anti social behaviour and we worked closely with Northumbria Police on this project. We were pleased to be able to support tenants in this way by taking down the fence."

Tenants experiencing anti social behaviour should contact Homes for Northumberland on 01670 542424 or email snu@hfn.uk.com

Tenants who would like to suggest an idea for making a small scale improvement in their estate can do so by attending their next estate walkabout or speaking directly with their Homes for Northumberland Housing Officer on 01670 542424.



Improving our existing properties

First Home Captures the Sun with New Solar Panels

The first tenant has had solar panels installed as part of a project led by Northumberland County Council to fit panels on 400 homes in the county.

400 tenants have received letters from Homes for Northumberland, which manages and maintains housing on behalf of the council, letting them know that their homes have been identified as most suitable for solar PV panels.

Solar panels fitted to the roof of a property capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity that can be used to run household appliances and lighting. The panels don't need direct sunlight to work – they can still generate some electricity on a cloudy day – although the panels work most effectively when they are fitted on a south facing roof.

Andrea Trask, who lives in Seaton Delaval, is the first tenant to get solar panels installed on her roof.

Councillor Tom Brechany, executive member responsible for housing at Northumberland County Council said: "The council is committed to reducing carbon emissions across Northumberland, and the installation of Solar PV on council owned homes and properties will make a major contribution to this. The project will help residents to keep their energy costs down while also supporting the local economy by creating jobs for local people."



Helping to Make Homes Energy Efficient

Homes for Northumberland is working with Narec (the National Renewable Energy Centre in Blyth) to make 54 homes in the Cowpen area more energy efficient.

As part of this project, a range of improvements will be made to these properties, including low energy lighting and more efficient central heating systems. Smart meters will also be installed to display how much energy is being used at any point in time. This will help residents recognise how much energy they use at different points in the day.

In addition, a specialist insulated rendering system will be applied to the external walls of these homes. Up to 45% of heat can be lost through poorly insulated walls, so this rendering will help tenants to retain their heat, which will in turn help save money at a time of increasing energy prices.



EUROPEAN UNION
Investing in Your Future
European Regional
Development Fund 2007-13

A selection of the properties will also be generating their own electricity using solar panels which will be fitted on their roof.

An important part of the scheme is to monitor and measure the improvements to these homes. This will include monitoring energy efficiency, the reduction in energy bills and improvements in the warmth of these homes.

Information will be collected before the work starts and again after the work has been completed to measure improvements which will be shared with the residents involved.

Resident engagement is key to the success of the project and regular updates will be made through Your News and the local press.

This project has attracted funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Competitiveness Programme 2007-2013 to match Homes for Northumberland funds.

Walk This Way...

Homes for Northumberland's walk your way to health project is now striding ahead.

We have set up walking groups in Alnwick and Amble – with 13 walks already taking place to date. There are nine members of each group, who meet weekly for a leisurely stroll and chat, followed by a coffee morning. The walks are designed to help tenants meet new people, catch up with old friends, enjoy some fresh air and speak with Homes for Northumberland

staff with any queries they may have.

Walking is a great form of exercise and Homes for Northumberland has launched the walk your way to health project alongside the Department of Health and Natural England.

We are keen to start more walking groups across both Alnwick and Blyth – please contact our Resident Involvement Team on 01670 542424 if you would be interested in taking part in a walk in your local area.

Providing excellent services

Money Matters Loan sharks

Over three thousand families across the UK use loan sharks.

Loan sharks prey on the most vulnerable members of our community, charging extortionate interest rates - up to a whopping 131,000%. They rarely offer paperwork, so 'customers' are in the dark about how much they still owe. People are often left in a position where they are unable to pay and other expenses such as rent and bills fall by the wayside; this is when the loan sharks resort to any means to reclaim what they believe is theirs.

Have you or anyone you know:

- **Been offered a cash loan without paperwork?**
- **Been threatened when you couldn't pay?**
- **Had your benefit or bank card taken from you?**
- **Had a loan which keeps growing even though you are making payments?**

If you have borrowed money from a loan shark and need confidential help and advice, you can call the Illegal Money Lending Team, a national support line on 0300 555 2222. Alternatively:

- **Text 'loan shark + your message' to 60003**
- **E-mail reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk**
- **Log-on to www.direct.gov.uk/stoploansharks**

Your local credit union can offer support on borrowing and saving. Speak with our Money Advisor on 01670 542424 for further details and advice.



An important change is coming - the transfer of private drains and sewers.

From Saturday 1 October 2011, the Government will transfer the ownership and maintenance of many private drains and sewers to water and sewerage companies.

In this area, the change will see Northumbrian Water take responsibility for private sewer pipes that take rainwater and wastewater away from your property, in addition to the public sewers the company already looks after.

The transfer is good news for customers. It will make ownership and responsibilities much clearer, and lead to fewer disputes. It will be a fairer system with maintenance and repair costs shared across all customers.

The Government estimates average bills may increase by between 25p and £1.17 a month. Northumbrian Water has some of the lowest charges in the country and aims to keep bills as low as possible. The company does not expect to see any increase in bills as a result of the transfer until at least 2014.

You or your landlord will remain responsible for drains that serve your property and are within its boundary, as well as gutters and downpipes.

Northumbrian Water is now writing to all households with more information about this change, and you can also find out more about the transfer and what it means for you at www.nwl.co.uk.

There is no need for you to take any further action at this time.

Before transfer



After transfer



Key

- Owner/occupier responsibility
- Northumbrian Water's responsibility
- ▶ Direction of flow
- Property boundary



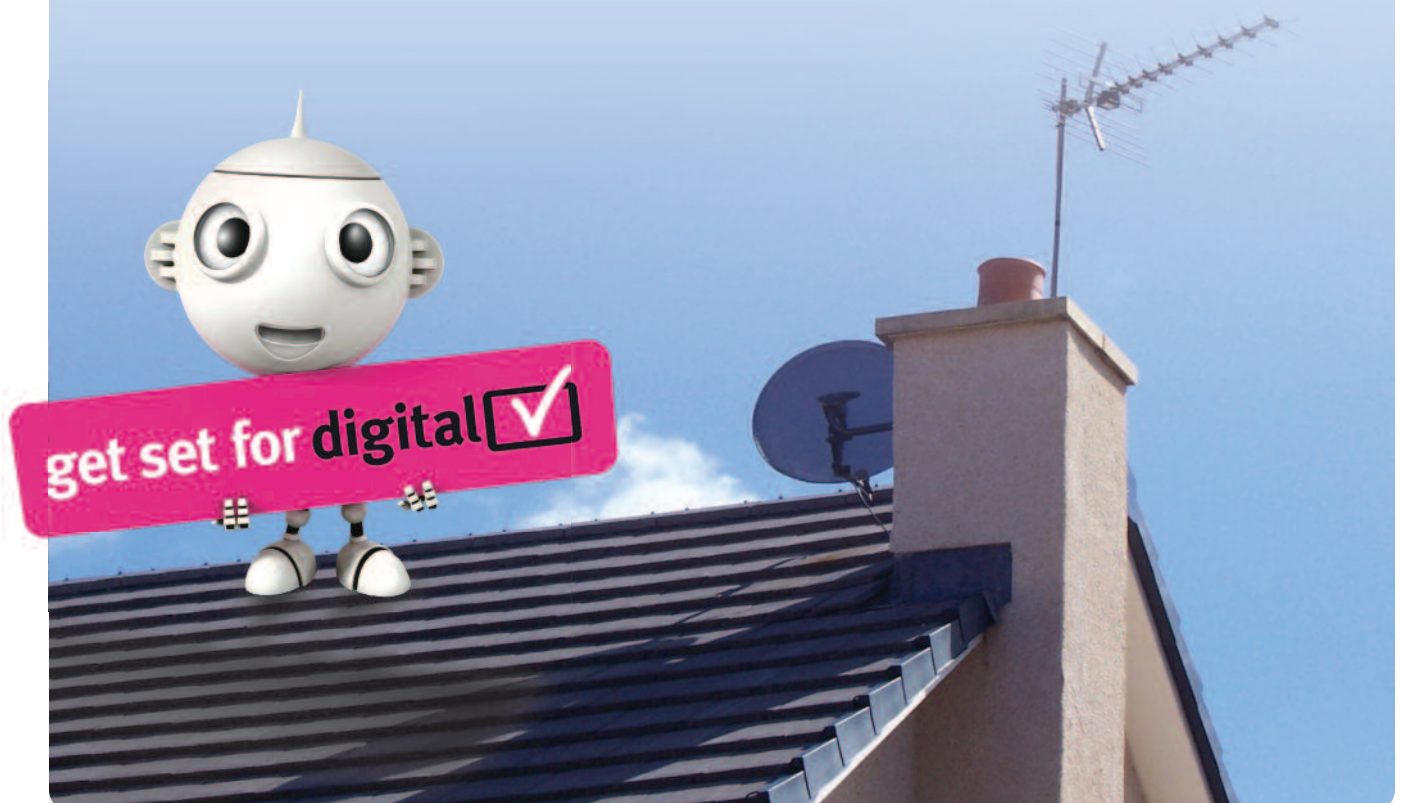
Residents are Switched on to Digital TV

Homes for Northumberland has helped prepare all residents living in Northumberland County Council flats or sheltered accommodation for the digital age.

As part of the nationwide Digital Switchover, analogue TV will be turned off in the North East in 2012. Homes for Northumberland has a responsibility to ensure that all tenants and leaseholders, who share communal TV aerials, don't lose their TV signal after the switchover. We have therefore worked closely with over 800 residents to install new digital aerials in their homes to meet the demands of modern broadcast technology.

Homes for Northumberland has installed new roof-mounted communal aerials, which will give access to all digital terrestrial TV services such as Freeview, as well as providing access to satellite channels (including SKY and Freesat) via new communal satellite dishes. As a result of this project, all Council tenants and leaseholders living in a flat or sheltered accommodation can continue to access all of their favourite TV channels before, during and after the analogue switch off.

If you have any queries about the Digital Switchover and need further advice, please call 08456 50 50 50 or visit www.digitaluk.co.uk



Leaseholder Matters

Services for Leaseholders

Homes for Northumberland has a number of excellent services available for our leaseholders.

We are committed to going the extra mile and we are offering the following services to leaseholders:

- **Gas Servicing and Repairs (price is subject to survey)**
- **Gas Safety Checks and Landlord Certificates (£65 plus VAT)**
- **Electrical Periodic Inspection and Testing (£126 plus VAT)**
- **Estimates on Building Fabric Services – this includes carpentry, joinery, plumbing etc (A free estimate of costs is available)**

These services have all been designed to help you to keep your home well maintained and safe.

Our trades' people will carry out the work to statutory requirements and relevant codes of practice. You will be provided with either a certificate or guarantee on completion.

Payment will be upon invoice, after you have received the services provided.

Should you wish to arrange work or have an estimate please contact our customer services centre on 01670 542424.



“If In Doubt - Keep Them Out”

is the message from Northumbria Police for people faced with cold callers and dubious doorstep tradesmen.

Over recent months, police have had reports of people pretending to be from organisations, such as the water board or utility companies, to get access to homes and steal from inside.

In other cases people have knocked on the door saying building work needs doing to their home and then charging extortionate prices.

These people can often seem very believable and use all sorts of stories to trick their way into people's homes and either con them out of money or steal from them.

Offenders often target the elderly and vulnerable and people really need to be on their guard against this sort of activity.

The best advice is to never hand money over to someone who cold-calls at your home, and never let them inside. Anyone calling from an official organisation will happily wait or come back while you check their identification.

Look out for your relatives and neighbours and if you do see any suspicious vehicles or people in

your neighbourhood you should report this to police as soon as possible.

The rules also apply to fraudsters who target the public via email and over the phone. If you have any doubt about a suspicious phonecall or an email - don't give any personal information out. Play it safe, don't give bank details out without carrying appropriate checks and if you're concerned then contact the police.

For more crime prevention information or to speak to your local Neighbourhood Policing Team (Alnwick and Blyth) ring 03456 043 043 ext 69191 or visit www.northumbria.police.uk



Pictured Trevor Oakley, Blyth Neighbourhood Inspector and Sue Peart, Alnwick Neighbourhood Inspector



Providing excellent services

Adaptations

Since November 2010, the County Council's housing responsibilities have been managed by Daljit Lally, who is also responsible for adult social services. This gives us a chance to plan jointly the way the Council supports vulnerable people with housing needs, including meeting the housing needs of older people and people with disabilities. This month,

we have also been joined by Kevin Lowry as interim Head of Housing, who will be supporting Daljit in making the connections between services.

We know that housing managers and social workers have always tried to work closely together, but we think there are likely to be opportunities to make still closer links - and we know that

Adapting Your Home

If you have a disability or chronic illness which makes life more difficult, you may benefit from changes to your home to make it easier for you to carry on living independently. Homes for Northumberland can make these adaptations, using funding from the County Council, if an assessment confirms that you need them.

Examples of the types of adaptations that some people need include:

- **Stair lifts to help you get upstairs**
- **Shower areas without steps**
- **Wheelchair ramps at the main entrance**

If you need help, you should contact your care manager if you have one. He or she will arrange for an occupational therapist to visit you to assess your long term and short term needs. If you do not have a care manager, you should phone Community Services on 01670 536400.

If the Occupational Therapist recommends an adaptation, they will make a referral for the work to be done.

Community Services can also arrange the loan of disability equipment. Once again you will need an assessment of your needs, usually carried out by an occupational therapist, before you can access equipment. You can ask for this in the same way as for adaptations. Equipment available includes:

- **Alarms and door entry systems**
- **Special beds and accessories**
- **Bathing and showering equipment**
- **Toileting aids**
- **Hoisting equipment**
- **Chairs and accessories**
- **Kitchen aids**
- **Personal aids such as walking aids**
- **Pressure relieving equipment**
- **Moving and handling equipment**
- **Equipment to help you see and hear better**
- **Special equipment for children.**

people expect public services to work together, not least in these days when efficiency and economy are especially important. We already have a good record in Northumberland of close joint working between adult social services and the NHS.

Housing and social services already provide a number of services together

– for example providing equipment and adaptations for disabled people. We have also been working together to develop plans for older people. What we would like to do in the next editions of this magazine is tell you about other joint work we do, developments we are planning and how we'd like to involve you in shaping them.

Case Study

Bill Ferry, a tenant living in Blyth, had a new shower fitted in his home recently due to ill health.

Bill said: "I am over the moon with my new shower as it meets all of my needs. I now feel a lot steadier in the shower as I previously struggled without a seat, but can now sit if necessary. There is also a grip to hold onto and even a non slip floor.

"The shower is of excellent quality and the lads fitting it were brilliant. I felt included every step of the way and am very pleased with the results as it makes a real difference to my quality of life."



Providing excellent services

Two Bedroom Apartments For Rent

Ropery Court, Alnwick



A modern development in the heart of this popular market town.

The 42 apartments in Ropery Court are finished to an extremely high standard, with modern fitted kitchens, stylish fixtures and fittings and individual storage space that is plumbed for appliances. Living room areas feature full length French doors and are wired for satellite TV.

Communal areas are landscaped to complement the development's attractive ironmongery and external timber feature doors. There is parking on the site, which is gated for extra security

Ropery Court is owned by Northumberland County Council and let by Homes for

Northumberland through Northumberland Homefinder. Suitable for households of two adults or those with one child aged 13 or over they will be allocated in line with the council's common allocation policy.

For an application pack or further information about the homes please phone 01670 542424 or visit: www.northumberlandhomefinder.org.uk

Applications through Homefinder should be returned to the Ropery Court Allocations Team, Homes for Northumberland, Clayport Street, Alnwick, NE66 1LA



You said, can you include bathroom and kitchen paint in the paint packs.

Bathroom and kitchen paint are now included in the paint packs.

You said, tenants living in properties that are having solar panels fitted need to be given an appointment for the work.

All tenants now have a pre-arranged appointment sent in advance of the work.

We Want to Hear Your Complaints

Homes for Northumberland aims to provide you with the best possible service.

We try our best to make sure nothing goes wrong, but we want to hear from you if it does. If you are unhappy with the service you have received from us, please get in touch. Your complaint will help us put things right and improve our service to you and to others in the future.

Homes for Northumberland take complaints very seriously and we will deal with them as quickly as possible. You can make a complaint in the following ways:

Phone: 01670 542424

Email: info@hfn.uk.com

Website: www.hfn.uk.com

Post: Homes for Northumberland, Blyth Civic Centre, Renwick Road, Blyth NE24 2BX

We are always open to new ideas, so if you have a suggestion on how we can improve our services then please tell us.



Improving quality of life

Blyth Estate Walkabouts

Street/s	Meeting Place	Dates
Cramlington Area Start time 10.00am		
Eastfield Lea	Eastfield Community House	24 November 2011
Eastfield Lea	Eastfield Community House	15 March 2012
Eastfield Grange	Entrance of Cairnglass Close	22 February 2012
East Cramlington	Lanercost Park flats (3 storeys)	20 October 2011
Mayfield Glade	Barrasford Road next to car park	28 October 2011
Seghill, Seaton Sluice Start time 10.00am		
The Crescent	Outside 1 Stanley Gardens	14 February 2012
Deneside	Outside 1 Burnlea Gardens	11 October 2011
Seaton Delaval Start time 10.00am		
New Hartley	Hartley Court	13 October 2011
Blyth South Area Start time 10.00am		
Benridge/Cottingwood	Entrance to Benridge	1 November 2011
Blyth North Area Start time 10.00 am		
Hodgson's Road Estate	Asda Car Park	28 March 2012

Alnwick Estate Walkabouts

Alnwick North (Area 1) Start time 10.00 am

Street/s	Sycamore Avenue, Beech Grove, Cedar Grove, Upper Barresdale, Lower Barresdale, Alwynside
Meeting Place	Entrance to Alwynside
Dates	30 November 2011

Alnwick North (Area 2) Start time 10.00 am

Street/s	Windsor Gardens, Clayport Gardens, Howling Lane, Clayport Street, Westgate House
Meeting Place	Junction of Howling Lane/Windsor Gardens
Dates	2 November 2011

Alnwick Town Centre Start time 10.00 am

Street/s	Dovecote Lane, Hotspur Place, Hotspur Street, Narrowgate Court, Dukes Memorial Cottage, Bowburn Cottages, Pottergate, Monkhouse Terrace, King Street, Lisburn Street, Lisburn Court, Howick Street, St Pauls Garth
Meeting Place	Pottergate Tower
Dates	19 October 2011

Alnwick South (Area 1) Start time 10.00 am

Street/s Augur Place, Victoria Crescent, St Georges Crescent, York Road, York Crescent, Cornhill Estate, Sea View Terrace, St James Estate

Meeting Place Co-op, Victoria Terrace

Dates 21 December 2011

Alnwick South (Area 2) Start time 1.30 pm

Street/s Cawledge View, Tanners Garth, Glovers Green, The Cordwainers, Farriers Court

Meeting Place Entrance to Cawledge View

Dates 14 December 2011

Amble (Area 1) Start time 1.30 pm

Street/s Ivy Street, Leslie Drive, St Lawrence Avenue, St Cuthberts Avenue Melrose Gardens, Holywell, Crescent, Kennedy Road, Churchill Avenue, Davis Drive, Burton Road, Links Avenue, Links Road, Philip Drive

Meeting Place Junction of Ivy Street/Leslie Drive

Dates 2 November 2011

Amble (Area 2) Start time 1.30 pm

Street/s Andrew Drive, Anne Crescent, Charles Road, Coquetdale, Glendale, Alndale, Redesdale, Cheviotdale, Dandsfield Square, Straffen Court

Meeting Place Car Park at Andrew Drive

Dates 23 November 2011

Rothbury (Area 1) Start time 10.00 am

Street/s Jubilee Crescent, Beechcroft, The Pinfold

Meeting Place Entrance to Beechcroft

Dates 9 November 2011

Rothbury (Area 2) Start time 11.00 am

Street/s Addycombe Gardens, Woodlands

Meeting Place Outside 1 Addycombe Gardens

Dates 9 November 2011

Shilbottle Start time 1.30 pm

Street/s Cheviot Road, Farne Road, St James Road, Selby Road, Middle Road, The Haven, Grange Road, Lee Avenue, Kiln Lonnen, Widdrington Cottages, The Crescent, Fallodon Avenue, Beech Estate, Fairfield View

Meeting Place Selby Road Garages

Dates 26 October 2011

Smaller villages and settlements will be inspected on a periodic basis and tenants in these locations will be notified separately of the date/s of inspections in their area. Please contact the Estates and Tenancy Services Team on 01670 542424 for further information.

Improving quality of life

Dates for Residents/Community Association Meetings

Seaton Delaval and Holywell Residents Association

Old Church Hall, Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval

Thursday 17th November 2011, 7 pm - **AGM**

Involvement Questionnaire

If you are interested in being involved, please complete the following questionnaire and return it **FREE OF CHARGE** to Homes for Northumberland, **FREEPOST RLYG-CCTU-THB2**, Blyth Civic Centre, Renwick Road, Blyth NE24 2BX.

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone No _____ Mobile Telephone No _____

E-mail address _____

How would you like us to involve you?

Face to face (meetings etc)

Postal questionnaire

Telephone

E-mail

Please tick all you are interested in

Join our mystery shopping panel

Attend one of the local tenant and residents groups

Sit on one of our service panels

Help with estate walkabouts

Armchair involvement

Join our editorial panel

Be part of a community fund panel



Follow us on Facebook

If you have a Facebook account, you can stay up to date with news from us. Simply search for Homes for Northumberland and click to like our page.

