

YOUR news

Special Edition



Cllr Grant Davey,
Council Leader

Welcome from Northumberland County Council

"As a council we are committed to ensuring that everyone in Northumberland has access to a home that is affordable, safe and

warm. We want to maintain high quality council housing, and provide new affordable homes where we can.

From September 1st, your home will be managed directly by Northumberland County Council, rather than by a separate arms-length company, and I welcome this closer relationship between the council and tenants.

The council reviewed the way houses it owns are managed and, while Homes for

"As a former housing director I am passionate about making sure that housing tenants receive the best possible services.

I have been privileged to work closely with tenants during the process of reviewing housing management, and their input helped to shape the consultation we carried out with you.

The results of a questionnaire which we sent to all tenants showed that, of those who replied, 95% of tenants supported the idea of bringing management directly within the council.

The change is only in 'back-office' management however, and the front line officers you deal with on housing matters will not change. You should still make contact in the same ways as before.

Northumberland has been doing an extremely good job for you, we identified that by managing homes directly we could save the cost of running a separate company, and reinvest this money straight back into council housing.

The council department which provides your services will still be called Homes for Northumberland, and you should still contact housing officers and services in the same ways as you do now.

I want to assure you that the council will strive to be an excellent landlord, and that we look forward to working with you, our tenants, so that you have a good quality home and first-rate services."

It is extremely important to us that tenants have a direct say in how services are provided, and on page 3 you will find information about elections for a new independent tenants' forum. Please consider whether you would like to be a nominee for your area – and respond by September 25th. We would like to hear from you.

I will be working closely with housing officers so that there is a smooth transition to the new management arrangements, and to ensure that the only changes you see will be improvements to the services you receive."



Cllr Allan Hepple,
Cabinet Member for Housing

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

Homes
FOR NORTHUMBERLAND



We're here to help

Have you got a query or an issue with your home that you need help with? Then our friendly customer service team are just a phone call away.



Following Homes for Northumberland's move into Northumberland County Council on September 1st our Customer Services Centre will be based in the council's offices in Cramlington Library. However, the way in which you contact our team will not change.

Our Customer Services Centre number will remain the same, **01670 542424** and it will be the same knowledgeable advisors taking your call. Our team is trained to take your calls on any issue including: booking repairs; taking rent payment; dealing with rent queries; advice on anti-social behaviour and comments about your estate.

There will be no change to our opening times which are 8am till 6pm Monday/Thursday and 8am till 5pm on Friday. If you have an emergency outside of these hours, you would need to ring the same number **01670 542424** where you will be put through to our out of hours helpline.

We will still have a customer service representative in our Alnwick office at Greenwell Lane, for any over the phone or face-to-face enquiries. The opening hours for this office are: 9am-4.30pm Monday-Friday.

The council has a number of Customer Information Centres across the county where tenants can speak with council representatives on a number of issues, including housing. See the list opposite for your nearest office.

You can also contact us by submitting a form on our website www.hfn.uk.com or via our Facebook page www.facebook.com/homesfornorthumberland

Northumberland County Council Information Centres:

Alnwick - Greenwell Lane, Alnwick, NE66 1HB

Ashington - Wansbeck Square, Ashington, NE63 9XL

Bedlington - Front Street West, Bedlington, NE22 5TU

Berwick - Wallace Green, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 1ED

Blyth - Blyth Library, Bridge Street, Blyth NE24 1DJ

Cramlington - Cramlington Library, Forum Way, Cramlington, NE23 6YB

Hexham - Hadrian House, Market Street, Hexham, NE46 3NH

Morpeth - Morpeth Library, Gas House Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TA

Seaton Delaval - Seaton Delaval Library, Astley High School, Elsdon Avenue, NE25 0BW

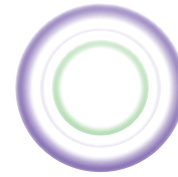
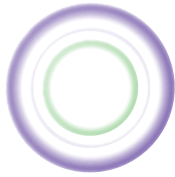
Big Debates

We will be holding two Big Debate events which all tenants are invited to attend. You will soon be receiving a letter giving you further details. On the agenda will be our move into Northumberland County Council, and the impact of Welfare Reform changes on tenants.

Dates of the Big Debates

Monday 21st September, Northumberland Hall, Alnwick – 6-8pm

Monday 9th November, Civic Centre, Blyth – 6-8pm



Your Housing Service Needs You!



Do you want to have your say about the service you receive, or help shape decisions and plans in the future? We want to hear from you!

We are developing an Independent Forum to work closely with us to make sure that tenants and leaseholders living on estates have good homes and pleasant surroundings.

This influential group will also work with town and parish councils on issues that affect communities, such as community safety and ground maintenance, working with other agencies such as the police, housing agencies and the voluntary sector.

We are looking for representatives from across our estates and from all groups, including those with disabilities, under 25s and minority groups.

Karen Bailey, Chair of the Shadow Forum said: "We are looking for a diverse group of people to represent tenants and help shape the future of their homes.

"It will make sure that the service continues to improve once it is transferred into Northumberland County Council. For instance, the group will monitor and have a say on how budgets are spent, as well as helping to set clear annual service standards.

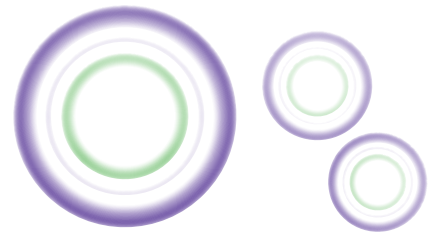
"This group will appeal to people who want to have a voice on the bigger picture issues, and who have the time to give to making sure tenants and leaseholders get the service they have been promised."

What you need to do next

We need to know who is interested no later than 25th September 2015.

If you think you could make a difference and want to be part of the forum please contact Julie or Aileen in the Resident Involvement Team: Julie.Turner@hfn.uk.com, 01670 623493 or aileen.barrass@hfn.uk.com, 01670 623492.

www.hfn.uk.com



Your Housing Management Team

Your Housing Management Team is here to help with questions on a range of housing services including, rent, estate management or your tenancy.

We have a dedicated Housing Officer for each estate. Find out who your officer is below and contact them on **(01670) 542424**.

Area Housing Manager

Blyth North and Alnwick Area
Philippa Storey

Area Housing Manager

Blyth South
Christine McGregor



Pearl O'Hare

Team Leader

Blyth North and Alnwick



Sarah Thorpe

Team Leader

Blyth South

Your Housing Officer

The Alnwick Officers

Our Alnwick officers are based at Greenwell Lane, Alnwick and cover: Alnwick, Amble, Shilbottle and our other rural properties in the north of the county.



Simon Crosthwaite

Simon covers:

- Alnmouth
- Boulmer
- Craster
- Embleton
- Elsdon
- Felton
- Glanton
- Harbottle
- Longframlington
- Loughoughton
- Netherton
- Newton by the Sea
- Powburn
- Rothbury
- Shilbottle
- Thropton
- Whittingham



Julian Whitley

Julian covers:

- All Amble estates
- Hauxley



Andrew Howstan

Andrew covers:

- Alnwick

The Blyth Officers

Our Blyth officers are based at the Civic Centre, Blyth and cover a range of patches including: Cramlington; Seghill; Seaton Delaval and Blyth.



Caroline Hedley

Caroline covers:

- The Poet's Estate,
- Seaton Sluice,
- New Hartley (she also covers Allendale and Haltwhistle)



Graeme Harwood

Graeme covers:

- Eastfield Lea,
- Collingwood Grange
- Mayfield
- Cowpen Estate Flats



Sitara Choudhury

Sitara covers:

- Cowpen Estate



Jacqueline Finlay

Jacqueline covers:

- The Avenues,
- Solingen
- Blyth Town Centre



Joanne Walker

Joanne covers:

- East Hartford
- Cramlington
- Eastfield Grange
- Cramlington
- Mayfield Grange
- Cramlington
- East Cramlington,
- Allensgreen/ Allerhope



Kayley Atkinson

Kayley covers:

- Newsham and New Delaval



Jane Gair

Jane covers:

- North Farm
- Bebside
- Cowpen Farm
- Hodgsons Road
- Cowpen Quay



Kevin Bradley

Kevin and Jeff share a patch. They cover:

- Seaton Delaval



Jeff Baker