

April 2011



In this issue:

Health event in Alnwick
Page 5

Money Matters
Pages 12 and 13

Allendale Update
Page 20

Contents

| | |
|------------------|---------|
| Welcome | 3 |
| Services for you | 4 |
| Getting involved | 5 – 7 |
| Our support | 8 – 9 |
| Getting Involved | 10 – 11 |
| Our support | 12 – 13 |
| Your homes | 14 |
| Services for you | 15 – 18 |
| Your homes | 19 |
| Our support | 20 |
| Your homes | 21 – 24 |

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. 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 بتسقيقات ولغات أخرى. إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على هذه المعلومات بتسقيق أو لغة أخرى، برجاء الاتصال بمكاتبنا

Bengali আমরা এই তথ্য বিকল্প ফরম্যাট ও ভাষায় প্রদান করতে পারি। আপনি যদি এই তথ্য বিকল্প ফরম্যাট বা ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের 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，请与我们联系。请与我们的任一办事处联系。

Chinese (traditional) 我們備有此資訊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 फार्मेटों और भाषाओं में मुहैया करा सकते हैं। अगर आप अन्य फार्मेट 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 ਬਦਲਦੇ ਫਾਰਮੈਟਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਪਸੰਦ ਕਰੋਗੇ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਦਫਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ 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.

Front cover: Residents enjoy a Yesteryear Tea thanks to our community fund

Welcome to the Spring edition of Your News

Spring time is traditionally a time of new beginnings and as we move into our third year, I am delighted to say that Homes for Northumberland has many exciting plans in the pipeline for the next 12 months.

Looking back, the last year has certainly been a busy one, with some of our highlights including:

- Each estate now has a named Neighbourhood Housing Officer responsible for your local area and offering face to face contact.
- A new customer services centre was launched to give you one single telephone number for all of your queries.
- We hosted two Question Time events, giving you the opportunity to ask the questions which matter to you direct to our management team.
- A Breath of Fresh Air health event was such a great success in Blyth, we are holding a second event later this month in Alnwick.

As you are all aware, there is a lot of financial pressure placed on all public sector service providers in the present economic climate. However, I want to take this opportunity to reassure you that we will do all we can to continue the excellent quality service that we provide to all of our tenants and leaseholders.

In the year ahead, we will continue to dedicate a great deal of our time into engaging and empowering our tenants. Our resident involvement team is always keen to hear from tenants who would like to get more involved in the housing company.



Some of the things to look out for over the next 12 months are:

- 22 families will get the keys to a brand new, eco friendly home in Allendale.
- Neighbourhood Improvement Plans will improve the quality of our estates and encourage our residents to feel proud of where they live.
- You will be given the opportunity to have even more say as we develop further resident groups.
- We will be launching a programme of health walks, helping you to get active in your local area.
- Estate focused health events will take place right on your doorstep.
- We will be working in partnership with the Housing Employment Network to help you get the skills you need to find a job.
- Events will take place to help tenants find out more about volunteering opportunities.

It is with great enthusiasm that I look forward to seeing what the next year will bring.

**Best Wishes,
Ray**

Providing excellent services

Blyth Area Board Update

The Blyth Area Board discussed the Rent First campaign in their January meeting. The campaign was carried out in December and targeted tenants in rent arrears – a more detailed report on the impact of the campaign is currently being produced.

The Board reviewed the success of Neighbourhood Teams in improving the time taken from repairing empty properties to handing keys to the new tenants. They also acknowledged the hard work of the Safer Neighbourhoods Unit as they have recently handled an increased number of Domestic Violence cases. Prior to Christmas, the Safer Neighbourhoods Unit were also involved in working with pupils at a local school after they were involved in a racial incident with a local shop owner.

The severe winter weather was discussed – as cold temperatures led to an increased number of repairs. The Board recognised that staff had gone the extra mile to ensure all priority repairs were done on time.

Alnwick Area Board Update

The Alnwick Area Board met at the end of January and passed on their appreciation to staff in that area for the work they carried out over the bad weather at the end of 2010.

There was a detailed discussion about performance. Customer satisfaction will be presented to the meeting in March 2011 including customer satisfaction on capital works and repairs. The Board discussed the current rent arrears performance and agreed that a lot of good work had been done, but they wanted to continue to closely monitor the situation.

A report was presented on the Out of Hours Repairs process as there had been some difficulties experienced by tenants in the Alnwick district. These issues had now been resolved and the Board were notified that work was underway to harmonise the Out of Hours process by April 2011.

Performance to December 2010

| Indicator | Blyth | Alnwick |
|--|----------|----------|
| Amount of rent outstanding | £341,461 | £227,175 |
| Tenants evicted for rent arrears | 13 | 1 |
| Average time taken to let an empty home | 27 Days | 14 Days |
| Total number of repairs jobs completed | 18,907 | 4,725 |
| Total number of complaints received | 90 | 3 |
| Total number of compliments received | 11 | 9 |
| Number of tenants involved in Homes for Northumberland service panels and meetings | 1,790 | |

Inhale a breath of fresh air



Come along and enjoy a free health event on Saturday 16 April at Alnwick North Community Centre, Howling Lane, between 11am and 2pm.

The Breath of Fresh Air health event is designed to help you to think about new ways of improving your diet and lifestyle and has something for people of all ages. On the day you can take part in a variety of fun activities, including:

- Nordic walking
- Summer bulb planting, plus bird and bug boxes
- Bike maintenance
- Sports coaching
- Face painting
- Cookery demonstrations
- Zumba

Homes for Northumberland has joined forces with a number of partners to make the event possible, including Alnwick Community Centre, Alnwick Community Development Trust, Alnwick Lions, RealFood Works, Groundwork North East, Sustrans, Health Trainers, Surestart, Northumberland County Council, Age UK and Northumbria Police.

A special thanks also goes to Alnwick Lions for their generous donation towards the event. Come along and enjoy the fun!

For more information, please call 01670 542424.

Improving quality of life

Coming soon... health walks

Homes for Northumberland will soon be launching a programme called Walking for Health – giving you the chance to take part in regular walks around your local area.

These are designed for those tenants wishing to increase their fitness and socialise with people from the same area.

Anyone can join in, no matter what your current fitness level and walks will be tailored to suit various needs.

Further details and walk dates will be confirmed in the next edition of Your News.

For an informal chat about the health walks, please contact our Resident Involvement Team on 01670 542424.

Young resident is recognised at awards ceremony

A Homes for Northumberland resident received a highly commended award in the Young Tenant of the Year category in the 2011 Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) awards.

Stephen Stanners, who is 20 years old, was nominated by Homes for Northumberland to recognise his invaluable contribution to his local area of Seaton Delaval. TPAS specialises in tenant involvement at a national level and its annual awards acknowledge outstanding residents who go the extra mile.

Stephen commits around five days a week to his local community. His achievements include the launch of an online community radio station called Seaton Valley Radio.

He also helped to bring the Seaton Delaval community together by setting up a local website, www.seatondelaval.org. The site is dedicated to news in the Seaton Delaval area and has grown to become an invaluable resource for the community.

Stephen played a key role in raising funds to save Seaton Delaval Hall, a key historical landmark in his local community. He was also instrumental in the regeneration of Astley



Park and helped organise Teen Drop In sessions on Friday evenings to help reduce anti social behaviour in his area.

Ray Boycott, managing director at Homes for Northumberland, said: "Stephen is an outstanding resident who is enthusiastic about being involved in his housing company and committed to making a real difference in the area he lives. He is a willing volunteer who is involved in Homes for Northumberland and shows real dedication and strong entrepreneurial skills.

"The website and radio station are particularly ground breaking achievements and show Stephen's commitment to his local community. I am thrilled he was recognised as highly commended at this prestigious awards ceremony."

Providing excellent services

Capital works exhibition

Homes for Northumberland was praised by tenants attending our Annual Exhibitions in Blyth and Alnwick.

Over 850 tenants who are scheduled to get capital works completed on their homes were invited to come along and view the choices on offer to them - from bathroom suites and tiles, to new front doors and kitchen units.

Maintaining the quality of your homes is really important to Homes for Northumberland and the exhibition was our opportunity to show you the work that will be completed on your home in the coming year, if you have received a letter to notify you that work will be taking place. It is also your chance to see the options available, so we can give tenants a final product they are happy with.



If you have received a letter to say you will be getting work completed on your home, the contractor will be in touch with you prior to work starting to discuss dates and choices (if appropriate)

ons are a huge success



The drop-in session also gave tenants the opportunity to speak to staff or ask any questions.

Other departments within Neighbourhood Services were on hand at the exhibition to answer tenants' queries and promote their service area. This included Resident Involvement, Neighbourhood Housing Teams, Safer Neighbourhoods Unit, Homefinder and Welfare Benefits Advice.

At the event, we asked residents to give us their feedback. Here's a selection of your comments:

- Very well presented and plenty of information
- All staff were extremely helpful and the exhibition was set out well
- Very good help from staff
- Everyone very helpful, all questions answered
- The exhibition has been excellent
- Very helpful and the day answered a lot of my questions

We were delighted with the results from our customer satisfaction surveys:

97% found the exhibition helpful

98% rated the event as either "good" or "excellent"

If you have any queries in the meantime, please call
01670 542424.

Community Fund Update

The Homes for Northumberland community fund is available to Resident Associations who would like to set up a project that could help their local community.

A number of tenants have benefited from our Community Fund recently:

- Astley Park Community Partnership was awarded £300 to pay for Groundwork North East to build bird boxes at their Christmas Fayre, the bird boxes will be placed in the park to encourage wildlife in the area.
- Seghill Institute Community Centre was awarded £500 to host a senior citizens Christmas party, providing hot food and entertainment to older people who may otherwise not get a chance to get out and about.
- Newsham Friendship Club was awarded £328 to take members of the group on a theatre trip to see White Christmas and enjoy a traditional Christmas Lunch at Newsham Pavilion. The project was a great success, with the members socialising with each other and enjoying the Christmas festivities.
- Solingen Residents Association was awarded £500 to carry out a "Yesteryear Tea". With a war time theme, tenants enjoyed tea, with bunting, war time music and quizzes.
- Seaton Sluice Community Association was awarded £400 to refurbish an office in the building in order to set up a Credit Union drop in session. We will keep you posted on the progress of this.

If you would like more information on the Community Fund, please speak with our Resident Involvement Team on 01670 542424.



Young tenants reap rewards from the outdoors

Twenty three young people aged between 7 and 14 years old are all working towards a John Muir Award.

The project is being led by Homes for Northumberland as a way of teaching young people about their environment and why they should look after their local area, including how to explore and conserve it.

The group has already been involved in a number of activities, including learning about animals and insects living in their local area. They will also be clearing nettles and thorn bushes and planting wild flowers, while learning why you should conserve your environment and clean up rubbish.

Those taking part are set to receive their awards shortly. The project has been so successful that we will be looking to run further schemes in the future.

If you would like more information, please speak with our Resident Involvement Team on 01670 542424.



Providing excellent services

Changes to your rent

All tenants should have now received a letter regarding their rent increase for 2011.

These letters included information on the individual rent due for your home and detailed your rent free weeks (commencing 19 December 2011, 26 December 2011 and 26 March 2012).

Tenants already in receipt of housing benefit will automatically have their benefit adjusted to meet the new rent payment.

What if I have difficulties paying my rent?

It is important that you contact us as soon as you start having problems paying rent. Don't ignore the problem – help is available. You should contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible by calling 01670 542424 for further advice.

Drop by for a benefit check

Homes for Northumberland and Blyth Citizens Advice Bureau are holding a free benefit advice day aimed at everyone who relies on benefits to help make end's meet.

The session will take place on 6 May 2011 at Blyth Citizens Advice bureau, the Eric Tolhurst Centre, Quay Road, Blyth between 10am and 2pm.

A benefit check can be the best way to ensure you are receiving all the income you are entitled to. This is particularly important if you, or any member of your household, is in receipt of Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance (middle/higher rate care component).

Pop by for free advice from our Money Advisor if you are already claiming benefits, or you are having financial difficulties. The session is designed to help ensure you are claiming everything you are entitled to.

For more information, please call 01670 542424.

Money



The Government has proposed a number of changes to housing benefit which you need to be aware of. The following may affect you:

Under occupation

Working age tenants who are occupying a larger property than required for their household size will, from April 2013, have their housing benefit restricted so that it only covers the size of property they are judged to need.

Payday

Payday lending is advertised as a short term way of solving an immediate financial problem or 'plugging a gap' before the next pay day.

Tenants are warned to be careful with this type of borrowing as it can leave you short for the next month due to the high interest rates. Also, repayments are often taken direct from your bank account, which can be difficult to stop if you are unable to afford the payment.

Payday loans can be a useful tool when needing a short term, quick payment in an emergency, if you are not able to access credit in any other way. However, if you require more than one loan, this would

Matters

Benefit Changes – Government Proposals

Non-dependant deductions

Non-dependent deductions are expected to increase significantly from April 2011. These deductions are made to housing benefit for non dependent members of your household, typically your adult children who are working or claiming benefit in their own right.

For more information on these changes and how they may affect you, please call 01670 542424.

Loans

usually suggest that you are struggling with budgeting or finance and you should seek advice as soon as possible so your situation does not escalate.

Credit Unions can offer low interest loans and savings accounts. These organisations are owned and run by their members, for their members. The Credit Union for South East Northumberland (CUSEN) covers the whole county and can be contacted on 01670 522779.

If you are having financial difficulties and need advice, you can also contact Homes for Northumberland on 01670 542424.

Other ways to get advice on your benefits

If you would like to speak with someone about your benefits, you can contact any of the following for support:

Homes for Northumberland – Money Advisor

We have a Money Advisor who can meet with you to ensure you are claiming all of the benefits you are entitled to. For further information, speak with your Housing Officer on 01670 542424

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

CAB can provide independent advice on many issues, including benefits. You can contact Northumberland Citizens Advice Bureau by calling 0844 4111309 or visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Age UK Northumberland Advice Line

Call 08450 950150 between Monday and Thursday (10am – 1pm) for free, confidential and impartial advice for over 50s, their families and carers.

This includes advice on welfare benefits, community and residential care, care plans and personalisation, housing, home adaptations, disability issues, money advice, local leisure, health and educational activities.

Proposed Government reforms to Social Housing

There has been a lot in the news recently about the Government's plans to change the way social housing is managed (this includes council housing managed by Homes for Northumberland) and the type of tenancies given to council and housing association tenants.

These proposals are still being discussed in Parliament, so they could change as the discussions go on.

If you are currently a council tenant these changes will not affect you. Your existing rights such as Rights to succeed or Right To Buy will stay the same.

However, the Government is proposing that for new tenants, we may consider offering new 'Flexible Tenancies'. The proposal is that a Flexible Tenancy will be for a minimum period of 2 years. When the minimum period ends we will review the tenant's

circumstances and decide whether to extend the tenancy for a longer period of time or ask the tenant to find other accommodation.

As a Landlord we will be expected to help these tenants to find new accommodation. If we want to use Flexible Tenancies we will be able to decide on what length we wish to offer them for, this could be from the minimum of 2 years or longer. This will allow us to make better use of our stock to respond to increasing waiting lists.

Other social landlords, such as Housing Associations, will also be encouraged to charge higher rents for new tenancies to help raise money to build new homes. This will not affect council tenants.

We will continue to keep you informed on any Government reforms as appropriate.

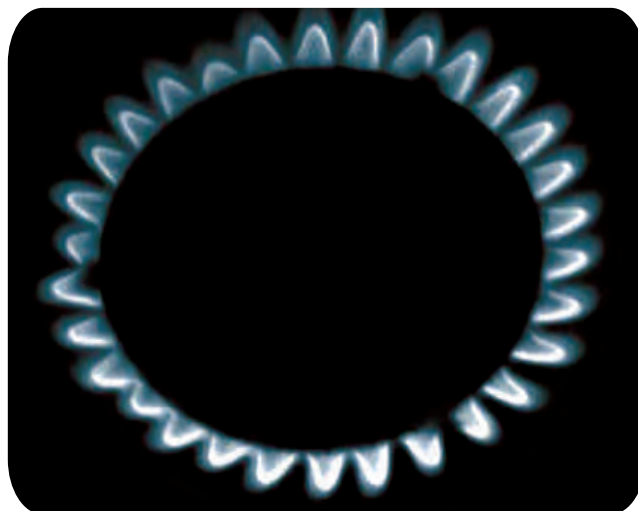


Gas service and safety

It is important to make sure all of your gas appliances are working safely and correctly.

Annual servicing not only helps keep your heating and hot water working properly, it helps keep you safe in your home.

Homes for Northumberland carries out annual safety checks on the appliances installed in your home.



This check will take around one hour (depending on the number of appliances). We will send you an appointment date for about six weeks prior to the anniversary date of the last safety check.

If you have any queries about your next gas safety check, please give us a call on 01670 542424.

You Said We Did...

“

YOU SAID

Residents told us that our void standard should be clearer

WE DID

We worked with a tenants' panel to update the void standard.

”

“

YOU SAID

Residents on the Solingen Estate complained about damage caused by vehicles.

WE DID

We arranged for the installation of a bollard at the site to stop vehicles damaging pavements and verging.

”

Leaseholder Matters



Homes for Northumberland manages around 250 leasehold properties, where residents have bought the long lease of their home in a Council owned building.

Insurance Cover

Did you know that as a condition of your lease, Northumberland County Council takes out insurance for your building, which you pay towards with your leaseholder service charge.

The Council's building insurance policy insures your building for the amount it would cost to bring the building back to the condition it was in, before any damage occurred.

You can get a written summary of your building insurance cover, which gives the name of our insurers and the risks covered by your policy. Each year we will send you a statement of your building insurance cover.

There is an excess of £50 on this insurance policy. This means that if you want to claim for damage to your property, depending on the cause of the damage, you may need to pay the first £50. If you need to make a claim, please call 01670 534024 for further details.

Contents Insurance

Leaseholders do need to ensure that they have their own contents insurance.

You are strongly advised to take out insurance to cover your personal possessions and furnishings.

Homes for Northumberland has a special arrangement with a reputable insurance company and can provide a special, low cost contents insurance scheme for our leaseholders.

For more information, please contact our customer services centre on 01670 542424.

Getting to know you

Tenants who haven't already returned their Profile Form, will soon be contacted.

This short questionnaire should not take longer than 10 minutes to complete, but the information provided helps Homes for Northumberland to shape our housing services around your needs and generally get to know you better.

Why should I complete the form?

We know that everyone is different and we want to find out more about you so that we can provide you with a service that suits your needs and helps ensure that you have equal access to our services. So if English is not your first language, we need to know so we can send you information in your preferred language. Or, if you have difficulty getting to the door, you can tell us this and we will be aware of this when we call to carry out a repair.

How will we use this information?

Any information you give us will only be used by us and is confidential. If there is a section of the form that you would prefer not to complete, just fill out as much as you can. We will only use the information to improve our services for you.

Homes for Northumberland can make things easier for you and provide a better service, but to be able to do this, we'd like you to tell us a little about yourself – so please take the time to complete and return your Profile Form to us.

If you have any queries on your Profile Form, please contact Pat Walker on 01670 542424.



Improving quality of life

Blyth Active Travel Town



You may have noticed the walking and cycling routes currently under development around Blyth.

These are part of the Northumberland County Council funded Blyth Active Travel Town project that will be running over the next few years

The Blyth active travel town project aims to support individuals that currently are, or wish to travel actively (walk or cycle) to work, school, training or recreation. The scheme will deliver a broad range of walking and cycling programmes to help the residents of Blyth to be active.

They would love to talk to you about...

- Lunchtime walking groups
- Business bicycle loan programme
- Free Bike MOTs and repair
- The cycle to work scheme
- Commuter cycle loans
- Active travel at your workplace (and active staff welfare events)
- Free bicycle security

If you wish to get in touch about your walking or cycling, call Mark on 01670 353 827 or email

mark.curr@sustrans.org.uk



Northumberland Homefinder has moved

If you have applied for new housing with Northumberland Homefinder, you need to know that from 1st April 2011 the main office moved to:

Northumberland County Council
Front Street West
Bedlington
Northumberland
NE22 5TU.

Their new telephone number will be 0845 600 6400.

The move will not affect your application for housing and you do not need to do anything other than note their new contact details.

The Homelessness and Housing Options services have also moved to Northumberland County Council from the 1st April 2011. If you require these services contact 0845 600

Homes are lit up with solar energy

A number of Homes for Northumberland properties have recently been fitted with solar panels.

Solar panels are fitted onto the roof of a property to capture the sun's energy and convert it into electricity to run household appliances and lighting.

Allerdean Close, Seaton Delaval

Three homes on Allerdean Close, Seaton Delaval were fitted with solar panels recently, thanks to Homes for Northumberland working together with Narec and Northumberland County Council.

The solar panels generate electricity which will significantly reduce the electricity bills of the residents. Homes for Northumberland will be monitoring just how much the tenants have saved over the next twelve months.



Concorde House

Solar panels have also been installed at Concorde House sheltered housing unit (consisting of 29 flats and communal areas) in Holywell.

The panels, which can provide up to two thirds of the building's hot water needs, have been installed to work alongside two new condensing boilers and more efficient radiators throughout the building.



Improving our existing properties

Allendale New-Build Scheme Update



The new-build scheme at Allendale is due to be completed in the first week of June 2011.

The 22 properties are being built to a high standard (Code Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes), and will benefit from excellent insulation levels, solar panels (which can provide up to two thirds of occupant's hot water needs), as well as rain water harvesting systems which help reduce water consumption.

Homes for Northumberland has been working hard on communicating with the local school, residents and Parish Council with regards to progress and timescales, as well as receiving input from them on the creation of the play space on site.

If you would like further information on the properties available at Allendale, please call 01670 542424.

Dos and Don'ts to reduce repairs

To maintain your home to the best possible standard and help us to cut down the number of repairs you need to report, follow these simple guidelines:

- 1) Do keep your home in good decorative order.
- 2) Do unplug any electrical appliances not in use.
- 3) Do always try to keep your house heated during the winter to avoid frozen or burst pipes.
- 4) Do get prior permission from us if you intend to do any alterations to your home.
- 5) Do allow us access to carry out the annual gas safety check to your property.
- 6) Do try to keep appointments to carry out any repairs you have requested.
- 7) Do allow us in to carry out our electrical periodic testing to your home.
- 8) Don't artex walls or affix polystyrene tiles to ceilings.
- 9) Don't put cooking fat down the kitchen sink or drain.
- 10) Don't put wet laundry on radiators to dry as this will cause condensation problems to your home.

If you need to report a repair, please call us on 01670 542424

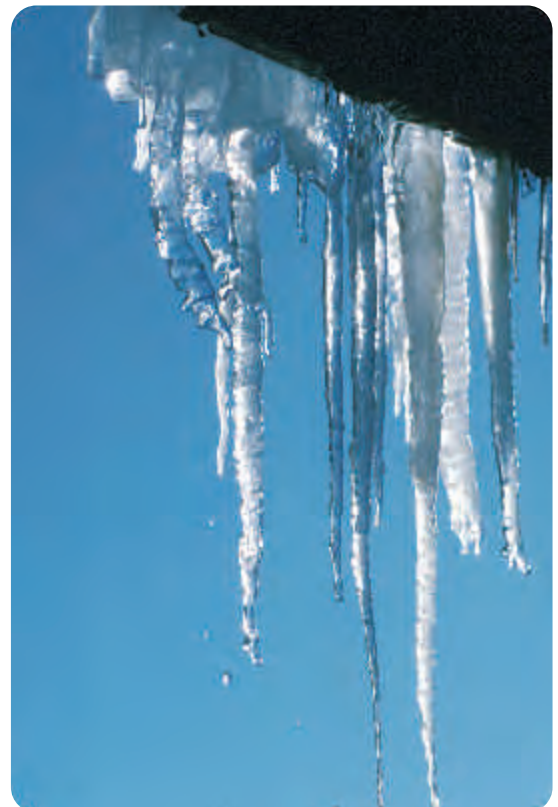
Winter weather repairs

Following the severe snow conditions at the end of 2010, a number of properties required repairs to gutters and soil pipes.

Despite the bad weather, all high priority repairs were completed and we are currently working hard to ensure all other repairs caused by the snow are made as quickly as possible. For instance, we are working street by street to complete all gutter repairs at present.

Our team went the extra mile in what were extreme weather conditions, and residents on the whole have been very supportive and understanding about the work taking place. We would urge any of our tenants who have not already reported repairs to let us know as soon as possible, so we can ensure this is dealt with as quickly as possible.

Please call 01670 542424 if you need to report a repair.



The Customer Services Centre is available to take your call on 01670542424.

Our opening times are:

**Monday to Thursday 8.00am to 6.00pm
Friday 8.00am to 5.00pm**

Please call (01670) 540501 if you have an emergency outside of these hours.

Maintaining and improving properties

Estate Walkabouts

Cramlington Area Start time 10.00am

| Street/s | Meeting Place | Dates |
|---|--|---------------------|
| Eastfield Lea | Eastfield Community House | 28 July 2011 |
| Eastfield Lea | Eastfield Community House | 24 Nov, 15 Mar 2012 |
| Eastfield Grange | Entrance of Cairnglass Close | 10 Aug, 22 Feb 2012 |
| East Cramlington | Lanercost Park flats (3 storeys) | 20 October 2011 |
| Nelson Village/Sunnyside | Arcot Ave shops | 17 August 2011 |
| Hall Close, Cramlington (Anton/Akeld) | Entrance to Adderstone Avenue | 23 June 2011 |
| Hall Close, Cramlington (Allensgreen/Allerhope) | Outside 1 Allensgreen | 2 June 2011 |
| Collingwood Grange | Car park at estate entrance | 27 July 2011 |
| Mayfield Dale | Entrance to Thirston Drive | 13 July 2011 |
| Mayfield Grange | Entrance to Ave. op Village Road | 15 Sept 2011 |
| East Hartford | Entrance between Stephen/Ormston/Wrightson | 31 August 2011 |
| Mayfield Glade | Barrasford Road next to car park | 28 October 2011 |

Seghill, Seaton Sluice Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| The Crescent | Outside 1 Stanley Gardens | 11 August 2011, 14 February 2012 |
| Deneside | Outside 1 Burnlea Gardens | 11 October 2011 |
| Seaton Sluice | Outside 1 Southward | 24 August 2011 |

Seaton Delaval Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Holywell Estate | Outside 1 Holywell Avenue | 14 April 2011 |
| Hallington Drive | Outside 1 Mindrum Way | 16 June 2011 |
| Woodside Avenue | Outside 1 Woodside Ave | 14 July 2011 |
| Blyth Street Estate | NCC info Centre, Council Offices | 15 September 2011 |
| New Hartley | Hartley Court | 13 October 2011 |

Blyth South Area Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|--|--|-------------------|
| Solingen Est, Seafeld Area | Entrance to Solingen Est | 13 July 2011 |
| Avenues 1 st – 14 th | Entrance to 1 st Avenue | 17 August 2011 |
| Avenues 15 th – 26 th and South View | Outside 1 x 15 th Avenue | 14 September 2011 |
| Blyth Town Centre | Beside St. Wilfreds Catholic Church, Bowes Court | 14 July 2011 |
| New Delaval Estate | Newsham Co-op | 24 August 2011 |
| Benridge/Cottinghamwood | Entrance to Benridge | 1 November 2011 |
| Poets Estate | Co-op on Wordsworth Avenue | 30 June 2011 |

Blyth North Area Start time 10.00 am (except Hodgson's Road on 13 July 2011 is at 5.30 pm)

| | | |
|--|---|----------------------|
| Hodgson's Road Estate (5.30 pm start on 13 July) | Netto Car Park | 13 July, 17 Nov 2011 |
| Hodgson's Road Estate | Netto Car Park | 28 March 2012 |
| Cowpen Farm Estate | Isabella Community Centre | 24 August 2011 |
| North Farm Estate | Phone box at junction of Temple/Walton Avenue | 7 September 2011 |
| Hodgson's Road Estate | Netto Car Park | 28 March 2012 |
| Bebside Estate | Kitty Brewster Pub Car Park | 28 September 2011 |
| Brierley (Hallside) | Blyth North Office Brierley Road | 21 July 2011 |
| Edendale | Junction of Edendale Ave/Deneview drive | 19 May 2011 |
| Briardale (Dales) | Post Office on Briardale Road | 7 September 2011 |
| Briardale (Ravensworth) | Post Office on Briardale Road | 1 June 2011 |

Estate Walkabouts

Alnwick North Start time 10.00 am

| Street/s | Meeting Place | Dates |
|--|-----------------------|-------------|
| Sycamore Avenue, Beech Grove, Cedar Grove Upper Barresdale, Lower Barresdale, Alwynside | Entrance to Alwynside | 1 June 2011 |

Alnwick North Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|--|--|------------|
| Windsor Gardens, Clayport Gardens, Howling Lane Clayport Street, Westgate House | Junction of Howling Lane/ Windsor Gardens | 4 May 2011 |
|--|--|------------|

Alnwick Town Centre Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| 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 | Pottergate Tower | 20 April 2011 |
|---|------------------|---------------|

Alnwick South Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|--------------|
| Augur Place, Victoria Crescent, St Georges Crescent York Road, York Crescent, Cornhill Estate, Sea View Terrace, St James Estate | Co-op, Victoria Terrace | 22 June 2011 |
|--|-------------------------|--------------|

Alnwick South Start time 1.30 pm

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|
| Cawledge View, Tanners Garth, Glovers Green The Cordwainers, Farriers Court | Entrance to Cawledge View | 15 June 2011 |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|

Amble Start time 1.30 pm

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 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 | Junction of Ivy Street/Leslie Drive | 4 May 2011 |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------|

Amble Start time 1.30 pm

| | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|
| Andrew Drive, Anne Crescent, Charles Road Coquetdale, Glendale, Alndale, Redesdale Cheviotdale, Dandsfield Square, Straffen Court | Car Park at Andrew Drive | 25 May 2011 |
|---|--------------------------|-------------|

Rothbury Start time 10.00 am

| | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Jubilee Crescent, Beechcroft, The Pinfold | Entrance to Beechcroft | 11 May 2011 |
|---|------------------------|-------------|

Rothbury Start time 11.00 am

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Addycombe Gardens Woodlands | Outside 1 Addycombe Gardens | 11 May 2011 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|

Shilbottle Start time 1.30 pm

| | | |
|---|--------------------|---------------|
| 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 | Selby Road Garages | 27 April 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**

- Thursday April 21st - Mustard Seed Church Hall - 7pm
- Thursday May 19th - Mustard Seed Church Hall - 7pm
- Thursday June 16th - Mustard Seed Church Hall - 7pm
- Thursday September 15th - Mustard Seed Church Hall - 7pm
- Thursday October 20th - Mustard Seed Church Hall - 7pm
- Thursday November 17th AGM - Mustard Seed Church Hall - 7pm

Further meeting dates will be announced shortly. Please visit our website or call our Resident Involvement Team on 01670 542424 for more information.

Telephone Number for Emergency Repairs Between 10pm on 11 April and 1am on 12 April 2011

Due to some routine maintenance, the electricity at Blyth Civic Centre will be down between 10pm on 11 April and 1am on 12 April.

If you need to get in touch with us during the above times for emergency repairs, please call Valley Care on (01670) 540501 where someone will be able to take your call.

If you have any queries or concerns about this, please don't hesitate to contact our customer services centre on 01670 542424.

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 Number | Mobile Telephone Number |
| E-mail address | |

How would you like us to involve you?

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Face to face (meetings etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Postal questionnaire | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Telephone | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please tick all you are interested in

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Join our mystery shopping panel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Attend one of the local tenant and residents groups | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sit on one of our service panels | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Help with estate walkabouts | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Armchair involvement | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Join our editorial panel | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Be part of a community fund panel | <input type="checkbox"/> |