

A MAGAZINE FOR NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL TENANTS

YOUR news

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SUMMER

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TENANTS'
GUIDE**

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FRONT COVER IMAGE:
Couple enjoying the beach.

FOREWORD

**John Riddle,
Cabinet member
for Planning, Housing
and Resilience**



Following the success of the conservative party at the County elections in May, I would like to introduce myself as the new Cabinet member for Planning, Housing and Resilience.

I have been County Councillor for Bellingham since 1988, not only the largest geographical ward in Northumberland but in England, in fact bigger in square miles than some English counties.

I am a born and bred Northumbrian, and having taken over the family farm on the outskirts of Bellingham in my 20s, coupled with my work as a councillor I know very well the sense of community which is at the core of life in Northumberland, and how important it is to those who live and work here.

As a former chairman of Northumberland National Park Authority for 14 years, partnership working was key to achieving results for the good of the community, and as a council we are committed to working with you to ensure your experience is as positive as can be.

We are committed to maintaining the housing stock and where possible we will be looking to carry out improvements both through the capital programme and otherwise as appropriate through the Housing Revenue Account .

I would like to see more local people in local housing, to give priority to people who have grown up in a community, to make a future life for themselves in the area they know. I will be working with the Housing

Service and with other housing providers to ensure we make the best use of the housing stock across Northumberland.

One of the main issues in the county is the availability and provision of affordable housing, whether that be to rent or buy. To try and tackle part of this challenge we will be encouraging community-led housing projects to help provide local housing for local people. We will also continue to support our existing communities by continuing to promote schemes such as Newsham Community Matters, which help to empower residents to lead the way in making a positive change for their future.

At this time, I would also wish to assure all tenants, following the tragic event of the Grenfell Tower fire, in my capacity as Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Resilience, that the council is committed to ensuring the safety of all tenants. To that end, whilst we have existing arrangements in place, we are currently undertaking a review of the management of fire safety risks, across the housing stock to ensure that they remain appropriate.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as I can in the coming months and years to continue to ensure Northumberland is a great place to live and work.

FIRE SAFETY IN YOUR HOME

Following the recent tragic events arising from the Grenfell Tower fire in London, we have been working with our colleagues in the Fire and Rescue Service, to review the management of fire safety across our housing stock.

We do not have any residential tower blocks in Northumberland, but there are a number of low rise premises of up to 4 storeys, comprising of flats and maisonettes, either as part of general purpose housing or sheltered accommodation. Whilst we will be reviewing the current fire safety risk assessments for each of those blocks, associated evacuation policies and the general information we provide to tenants, we wanted to take the opportunity to reassure all tenants that in the event that any changes are required we will keep tenants informed.

In the interim, irrespective of the type of accommodation you live in, it is timely to provide advice and guidance to all tenants on the steps you can take to prevent a fire in your home and what to do in the event of a fire.

Paul Hedley, Chief Fire Officer at Northumberland Fire and Rescue said: "I would like to reassure Northumberland residents that we are unaware of any concerns about the safety of any multi-storey residential premises within the county."

SO WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREVENT A FIRE IN YOUR HOME:

- △ Ensure you have a working smoke alarm. Test it regularly and never remove batteries.
- △ Never leave cooking unattended & turn off kitchen appliances when finished. Avoid cooking while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- △ Never leave candles unattended, keep them out of reach of children and away from flammable material.
- △ Put your cigarette out - right out. Take care when drinking alcohol or tired. It's easy to fall asleep while a cigarette is still burning and set furniture alight.
- △ Don't overload sockets - ensure only one plug per socket. Always turn off plugs when they are not in use, except those that are designed to be left on, like freezers.

IF THERE IS A FIRE IN YOUR HOME:

- △ Do not tackle the fire yourself.
- △ Keep calm and act quickly – get everyone out as soon as possible.
- △ If there is smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- △ If a door is warm, don't open as fire is on the other side.
- △ Call 999 as soon as you are out of the building.
- △ Make an escape plan now! That everyone in your home knows about.

"I would like to reassure Northumberland residents that we are unaware of any concerns about the safety of any multi-storey residential premises within the county."

Paul Hedley, Chief Fire Officer

For more information go to www.northumberland.gov.uk/fire

Making improvements TO YOUR HOME

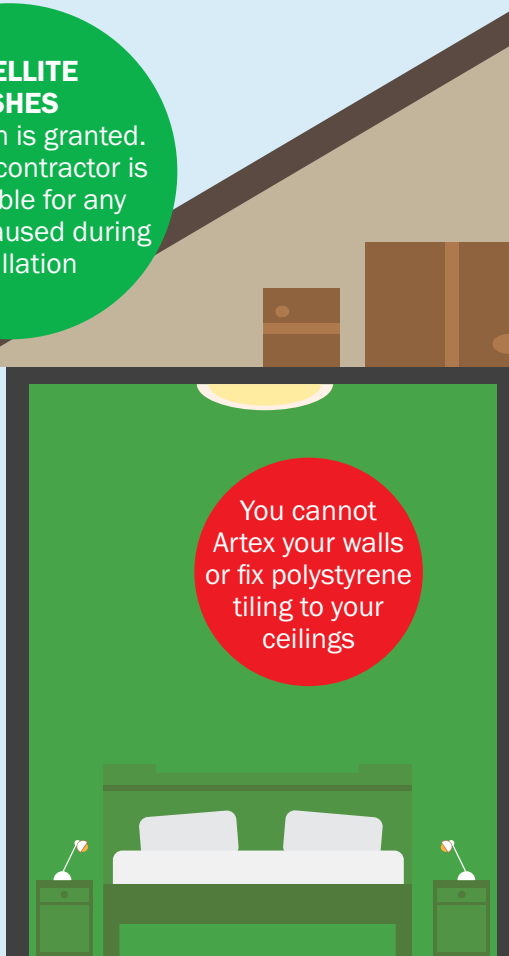
If you want to make changes to or improve your home (apart from decorating), you must get our written permission before any work starts.

To apply for permission, complete a home improvement application form available from our offices or download it from our website.

Here are some examples of things you need permission for. For a full list go to www.northumberland.gov.uk



SATELLITE DISHES
Permission is granted. Tenant or contractor is responsible for any damage caused during installation



You cannot Artex your walls or fix polystyrene tiling to your ceilings



You need permission to put up a shed or greenhouse, or making a driveway or pavement crossing



You are **NOT** permitted to build Brick/block outbuildings, conservatories, lean to canopies, garages or carports



GARDEN SHED/ GREENHOUSES
Max size restrictions apply (8ftx6ft - shed & 12ftx8ft - greenhouse)



FENCING
Front fence - 4ft max height.
Back fence - 6ft max height (Not permitted on communal land)



You need permission to fit a new kitchen, bathroom, shower, gas fire or heating system.

Remember

you are responsible for maintaining any new fixtures and fittings you have installed for the first 12 months. If you leave your home, you will be able to remove the new fittings but we will charge you the full cost of putting the property right if you do not leave it in its original condition.

You need permission to paint the outside of your home



You need permission to fit a new front door or windows

You need permission to install electrical sockets or new light fittings.



You are **NOT** permitted to install a log burner due to future maintenance and repair costs.

Compensation for Improvements

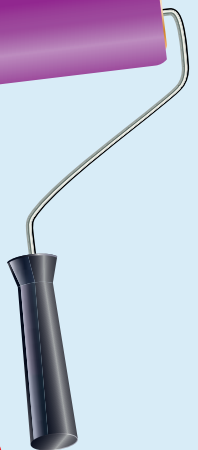
You have the right to compensation for improvements to your home (if they were started on or after 1st April 1994) when you leave your property, except if you are buying your home through the Right to Buy scheme. Only improvements for which you have our full permission can be compensated.

You can claim for the cost of materials such as fixtures and fittings and reasonable labour costs. It does not cover appliances such as cookers or fridges, or your own labour costs.

You can claim a minimum of £50 and up to a maximum of £3,000 for each improvement you make. We may deduct money owed to us when your tenancy ends.



You are **NOT** permitted to install a cat flap on an external door. Warranty on our doors will become void if modifications are carried out. You will face a recharge if you have installed a cat flap



NETWORK AND NATTER CELEBRATES ITS FIRST BIRTHDAY

A group aimed at bringing elderly and vulnerable people in Blyth together is celebrating its first birthday.



The Network and Natter group is organised by Northumberland County Council's resident involvement team and meets monthly, at the Blyth Civic Centre.

At each meeting representatives from services within the council attend to offer tenants advice and information which may help with their tenancy. Activity sessions and craft sessions are also part of the group and presentations from organisations such as the Police, Trading Standards and The British Red Cross.

To mark the anniversary the group celebrated with a birthday tea and cake. Tenant Lead of the group Michael Sanderson: "It's fantastic to see this group still going strong a year later.

"It's now something that people in the community look forward to coming to and has brought people together. It gives those most vulnerable tenants a place to come where they will be welcome and can make new friends and learn new skills."



If you would like to find out more about future events please contact the Resident Involvement team at HfN on **01670 542424**.

Community project goes from STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The community-led project Newsham Community Matters has been going from strength to strength with young and old taking advantage of the activities on offer.



A community group has now been set up as a charitable trust to take the project forward, being chaired by Tony Stewart.

As part of the project weekly courses on IT skills, help with job searches and benefits advice have been held to help residents.

Lunch clubs and exercise classes have been organised to encourage people within the community to get to know each other, whilst learning a new skill or getting fit.

Youngsters from the community have also had the opportunity to team up with the British Army and learn team building and personal development skills.

There have also been family day trips to places such as Beamish museum.



Mr Stewart said: "This project has had a really positive impact on the area, and it's fantastic that now as Charitable Trust we can take it forward and develop it further.

"The whole idea behind the project was creating activities that all ages could get involved in and feel positive about. The project with youngsters has been really good, I think those involved feel like someone is listening to them now and hopefully this can help on to the right path in the future."

"The project with youngsters has been really good, I think those involved feel like someone is listening to them now."

Tony Stewart,
Chairman of the Newsham
Community Group



The Newsham Community Matters scheme was developed after the council canvassed opinion in the community about what they would like to see developed to help improve the lives of people living there.

This will be followed up by a second survey in the summer, to get people's opinion on the project and how to take it forward.

YOUNG TENANTS' GUIDE LAUNCHED



This guide gives you practical advice on things to do once you get your new tenancy, e.g. setting up utilities such as gas, water and electricity

Are you aged between 18-25 and have just taken on your first tenancy, or do you know someone who is?

Then our new Young Tenants' User Guide could be just the thing you need.

Developed in partnership with Blyth-based Silx Youth Project, the guide has information on everything you may need to make sure your tenancy is a positive experience.

Managing your own home for the first time can be daunting, there are bills to keep on top of, general house maintenance issues as well as needing the skills to look after yourself.

"We hope that this guide will give young people the information and support they need to understand what is involved in running their own home."

With the help of young people at Silx Teen Bar this guide gives you practical advice on things to do once you get your new tenancy, e.g. setting up utilities such as gas, water and electricity. It also gives you advice about ways you can save money, tips on budgeting, practical cleaning tips and safety in your home.

Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing at Northumberland County Council, said: "We're delighted to have been able to work with Silx on this invaluable project."

"We're keen to support young people in being able to take that next step into adulthood, by moving into their new home."

Chris Antony, trustee of Silx, said: "We were finding that more and more young people in the Blyth area were struggling with all the different aspects that come with managing and surviving in a social or private rented accommodation."

"However, they can find themselves in a vulnerable position and at risk of losing their tenancy, if they don't have the skills or knowledge of what is involved. This guide covers everything they need to know to have a positive experience and to fulfil their potential as a home owner in the future."

"Issues such as getting into debt, or anti-social behaviour in their home, were leading to young people not be able to progress with their tenancy."



To get a copy of the guide please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01670 542424.



Cllr Glen Sanderson, cabinet member for environment and local services and local county councillors Susan and Grant Davey with other members of Northumberland County Council's local services team marking completion of the improvement scheme on Cowpen Road

COWPEN ROAD UPDATE

A comprehensive scheme to improve one of Northumberland's most congested roads is now complete.

The £740,000 scheme to reduce congestion on Cowpen Road in Blyth was carried out in three stages consecutively, speeding up the work and improving the traffic flow.

The project involved the removal and improvement of traffic lights, road widening and the creation of an additional lane on the exit from the Asda roundabout.

New road markings are also in place on the A189 roundabout and approaches, along with improved road signs.

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Environment and Local Services, said: "This scheme is a great credit to our staff who worked tirelessly to get the various stages of the work done as quickly as possible.

"We did everything we could to minimise disruption and it's important we bear in mind why this work was done in the first place - to improve safety, reduce congestion and improve journey times for the thousands of people who use this road every day.

"Feedback has been very positive and the standard of the work is first class."
Cllr Glen Sanderson



NEW LOOK WEBSITE HELPS YOU SEARCH FOR YOUR NEW HOME



Your search for a new home will now be much easier thanks to a re-design of the Homefinder website.

Northumberlandhomefinder.org.uk, delivered by the council in partnership with other housing providers in the county, has been given a major overhaul to improve the way the council and its partners market their properties, and to make the site more user-friendly.

Taking its inspiration from leading online property search sites, such as Zoopla and Rightmove, Northumberland Homefinder now offers more information about the properties listed. This includes more photos and floor plans of the property, as well as information on the area and local services nearby, such as health centres and schools.

You'll now also be able to see houses that you are eligible to bid for, based upon your assessed housing need, as well as showing how many bids you have previously made.

The new look website will help you to make better choices on what properties to bid for and help the council to reduce the number of empty properties in communities.

If you would like further information on the Homefinder service please contact the council on 0345 600 6400.

Stay safe this SUMMER

Summer is here, and that means day trips to the beach, long walks in the countryside, and family barbecues. But what about the potential health hazards that comes with the warmer weather?

Take a look at these Summer tips to make sure you stay healthy and safe while you enjoy what the great British Summer has to offer safely.

TAKE CARE WITH PICNIC FOOD

Take care when cooking food on a barbecue or taking it on a picnic. Just a couple of hours out the fridge can cause nasty bacteria to develop.

- ☀ Wash your hands and work surfaces
- ☀ Keep raw meat products wrapped and separated from other foods
- ☀ Use separate utensils for raw food
- ☀ Thaw frozen food thoroughly in the fridge before cooking
- ☀ Ensure all food is cooked thoroughly before serving

BE SENSIBLE IN THE SUN

It's easy to underestimate the strength of the British sun but ultraviolet radiation (UV) can be extremely damaging and it's vital to protect your skin from harmful rays and heat.

- ☀ Apply sunscreen regularly to any exposed areas of skin (min factor 15)
- ☀ Wear a peaked or wide brimmed hat
- ☀ Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration
- ☀ Take a break from the sun if you're feeling dizzy or nauseous
- ☀ Cool off in the shower or apply an ice pack to overheated skin
- ☀ If you live alone, ask a relative or friend to visit or phone to check that you are not having difficulties during periods of extreme heat.

TAKE THE STING OUT OF SUMMER

With the warmer weather comes the sudden appearance of bees, wasps, and other stinging insects.

- ☀ Keep a lid on your food and sugary drinks
- ☀ Use a good insect repellent in the form of a spray, cream, or wristband
- ☀ Cover your arms and legs, and wear gloves when gardening

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE SOMEONE IN DIFFICULTY?

If you see someone in difficulty in the water, tell somebody, preferably a lifeguard if there is one nearby. Alternatively dial 999, ask for the fire and rescue service at inland water sites and the Coastguard at the beach.

For more information about water safety visit The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents website at www.rospa.com

TAKE CARE IN WATER



During the school holidays, and in particular in hot weather, children can put themselves at risk of drowning. On average 40-50 children drown per year in the UK.

To keep yourself safe, when you are in, on or beside water, always follow the Water Safety Code.

THE WATER SAFETY CODE

Spot the dangers!

Water may look safe, but it can be dangerous. Learn to spot and keep away from dangers. You may swim well in a warm indoor pool, but that does not mean that you will be able to swim in cold water.

The dangers of water include:

- ☀ it is very cold
- ☀ there may be hidden currents
- ☀ it can be difficult to get out (steep slimy banks)
- ☀ it can be deep
- ☀ there may be hidden rubbish, e.g. shopping trolleys, broken glass
- ☀ there may be no lifeguards
- ☀ it is difficult to estimate depth
- ☀ it may be polluted and may make you ill

Special flags and signs warn you of the dangers of swimming at the beach.

Red & Yellow flags - lifeguards on patrol

Red flags - it's dangerous to bathe or swim, so don't go in the water.

AVOID ACCIDENTS IN THE GARDEN

The combination of summer clothing and footwear with lawnmowers, spades and secateurs – may be an accident waiting to happen.

- ☀ Wear closed or steel-toed shoes when mowing or digging the garden
- ☀ Keep children well out of the way when using the mower or any power tools
- ☀ Pay attention to trip hazards such as hosepipes, flagstones
- ☀ Store chemicals and tools safely in a shed or garage

For more information about water safety visit The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents website at www.rospa.com

GET READY FOR UC Universal Credit



So what is Universal Credit?

It's a new benefit for new claimants, of working age, and will replace the following benefits:

- Housing Benefit
- Child Tax Benefit
- Working Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

When is it being introduced?

Universal Credit is gradually being rolled out across the UK in stages. Currently in Northumberland if you are single and are making a NEW claim for Job Seekers Allowance then you will claim Universal Credit.

All other people making a new claim, i.e. couples & families will claim Universal Credit by September 2018.

This roll-out will take place in July 2018 for areas covered by Cramlington and Morpeth Job Centre Plus and by September 2018 for areas covered by Alnwick, Blyth and Bedlington Job Centres Plus.

Once the roll out for all new claimants is complete, all existing claimants will be moved over to Universal Credit at some point between July 2019 and March 2022, however, we do not currently have a schedule for this.

How do I make a claim?

You will have to make a claim for Universal Credit online, so you will need access to the internet. Only in very exceptional circumstances will a paper application be accepted. There are a number of places where you can use a computer for free including your local library or job centre. Call us on **0345 600 6400** to find out more about where you can go or about any free courses available to help become computer literate.



What do I need to do now to prepare?

- ✓ Open a Bank account/savings account with a bank or credit union - Universal Credit will be paid direct into your bank account, building society or credit union account.
- ✓ Start saving now - it can take up to 8 weeks for your first payment to come through, if your rent is due in that time having savings would mean you are still able to pay on time. Remember failure to pay your rent can affect your tenancy.

Where can I go for help with my application?

- Contact NCC on **0345 600 6400** and speak to one of our benefit advisors
- Your local job centre
- Your local library
- Your nearest Citizen's Advice Bureau

What is the claim process?

Before you make your claim you need to have the following information available for yourself and your partner, if you have one.

- ✓ your postcode
- ✓ your NI number - you can find this on a payslip or letter from HMRC
- ✓ details of your bank, building society, credit union or Post Office card account (if you don't have one of these, you'll need to open an account or use simple payment)
- ✓ the type of accommodation you have, eg private rent, council tenant, or housing association tenant - make sure you check this before you apply
- ✓ how much rent you pay - this can be found on your rent agreement, ask your landlord for a copy if you don't have one
- ✓ your landlord's address - this can be found on your rent agreement, ask your landlord for a copy if you don't have one
- ✓ your landlord's phone number
- ✓ details of any savings you have and any other 'capital' investments, eg shares or property that you don't live in
- ✓ details of any income that's not from work, eg from a pension or insurance plan
- ✓ details of how much you earn from work, eg recent payslips
- ✓ how much you pay for childcare (if you want to claim for childcare costs) details of any other benefits you're getting, ie what benefit and how much you get child benefit reference numbers for any children you have if you get child benefit - this can be found on letters to you about child benefit, it will start with 'CHB' and is made up of 8 numbers and 2 letters, eg CHB12345678 AB - phone the Child Benefit Office on **0300 200 3100 (textphone 0300 200 3103)** if you need help

You can correct any mistakes you make on the online claim as you go through this and you should check it carefully before you submit it at the end. You cannot save the form and return to it later so make sure you have enough time to complete it. It would be best to allow yourself an hour or more if your situation is complex or if you are not confident with computers.

How will I be paid?

You'll get a single payment every month to cover your living costs. This will be paid directly into your bank, building society or credit union account.

If you make a joint claim as a couple, you'll get a single payment for both of you.

After you apply it'll usually take 8 weeks to get your first Universal Credit payment. After your first Universal Credit payment, you'll be paid monthly.

If you pay rent or have a mortgage and you think a payment will be late because you're waiting to be paid, you should talk to your landlord or mortgage lender and explain.

If you think you won't have enough money to live on, you can ask for an advance payment of Universal Credit, by calling the helpline on **0345 600 4272**.

Will I still receive Housing benefit, and therefore will my rent be paid directly to Northumberland County Council?

No, you will no longer receive Housing Benefit, your rent or Housing Element will be paid directly to you on a monthly basis and you will need to take responsibility for paying your rent to us. Contact us to set up a direct debit.

Useful contacts:

Northumberland Credit Union - www.ncul.co.uk **01670 503666**

Credit Union South East Northumberland (CUSEN) - www.cusen.co.uk **01670 797283**

Green Dog Walkers campaign

Are you a dog owner? Why not sign up to a new campaign promoting responsible dog ownership across Northumberland?

We want to change public attitudes so that it becomes socially unacceptable to fail to clean up after your dog



The Green Dog Walker (GDW) initiative is encouraging local environmental groups and motivated individuals to sign up to the GDW pledge.

The Campaign focuses on the issues of dog fouling, together with dog control and public safety. Dog fouling can have a significant impact on our environment and presents a serious public health risk of Toxocariasis for example.

There have been dog attack incidents locally including an incident in 2016 in Burns Park, Blyth.

The Campaign will promote Northumberland as a welcoming place for responsible dog walkers, whether residents or visitors, whilst emphasising that Northumberland is not a place that tolerates irresponsible dog owners.

For more information go to:
www.northumberland.gov.uk/greendogwalkers








We want to change public attitudes so that it becomes socially unacceptable to fail to clean up after your dog i.e. they should leave only pawprints. Our commitment to effective enforcement will continue as before with targeted enforcement patrols at identified problem areas across Northumberland.

Volunteers will talk to dog walkers, offer free poop bags and encourage them to sign up to the green dog walker pledge.

The GDW Pledge includes:

-  pledging to always wear the greendog walkers armband when walking your dog,
-  to always clean up after your dog and put the bag in a bin
-  adopt a friendly non-confrontational way to encouraging other dog walkers to do the same.

Everyone who signs up will be supplied with free GDW doggie bags to distribute to other dog walkers.

Green Dog Walker support kits will be provided to local community groups, individuals, and schools who want to take an active role. The toolkit includes a supply of campaign guides, pledge brochures, armbands, doggy bags, and posters.



YOUR news SURVEY

PLEASE RETURN YOUR SURVEY BY Monday 14th August 2017

We are always looking at how we communicate with our tenants and ensuring that we are giving you the information you need, in the way you would prefer to receive.



We hope that this publication is useful for our tenants in keeping you informed of any changes in things such as benefits, highlighting the exciting projects happening in your community and letting you know what the council is doing to improve your estates and areas.

We're asking you to tell us how you would like to receive future editions of Your News. You can either fill in the application online at www.northumberland.gov.uk/yournewsurvey17 or fill in the details below and hand it in at your nearest customer information centre.



Please tick [✓] which option you prefer to receive YOUR news

1 
BY POST

2 
BY EMAIL

3 
PLEASE REMOVE ME FROM THE MAILING LIST

Name:

Address:

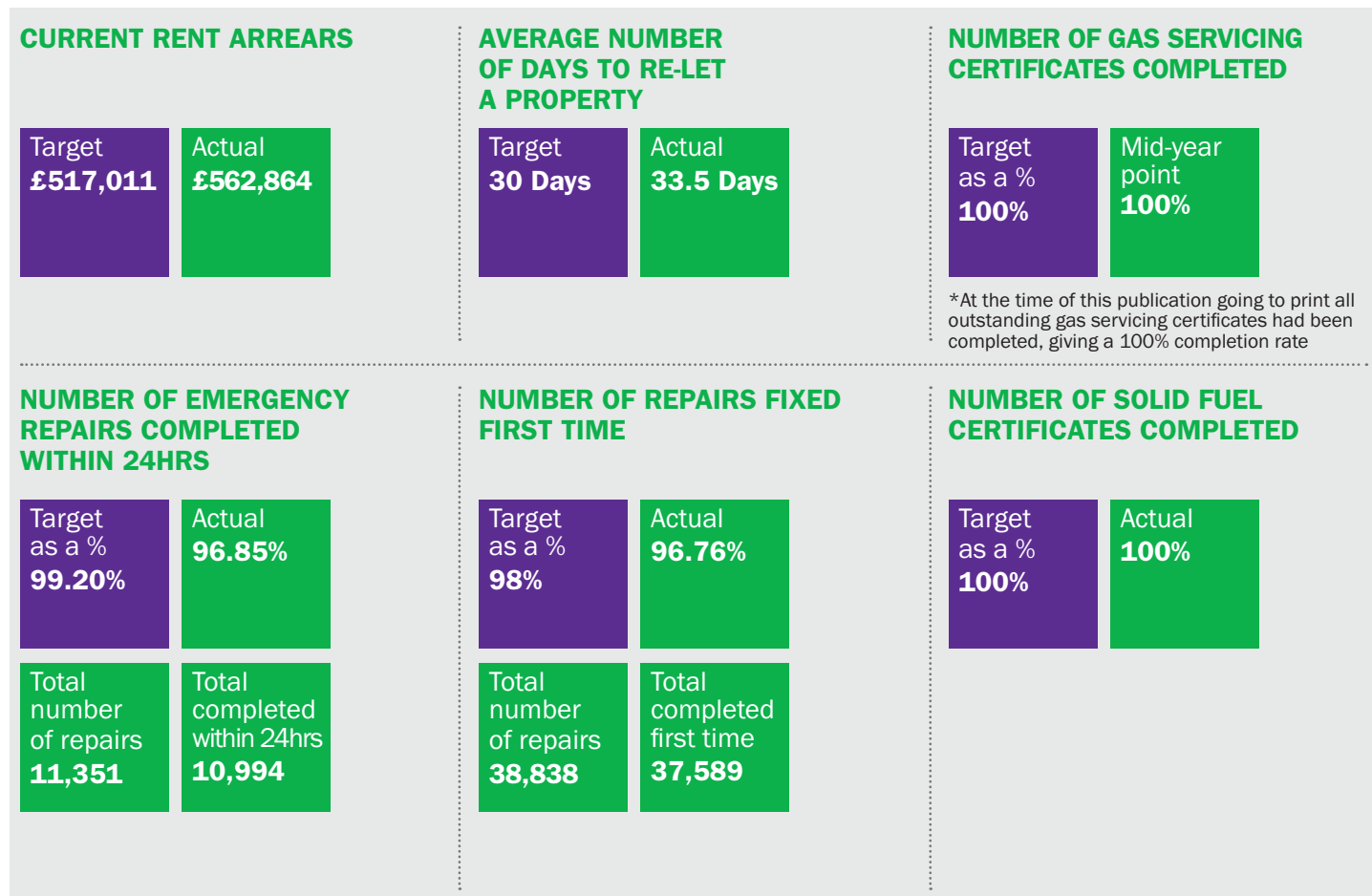
Email:

PERFORMANCE

We aim to be the best we can and offer the best service we can to our tenants. This is why we are constantly monitoring our performance and measuring our work against a set of performance indicators.

Performance indicators are targets used to measure our performance in specific areas and provide important information in key services we provide. These have been agreed by tenants.

Our latest figures show the results for the year 2016/17.



Your step-by-step guide to THINKCHANGE

OUR TENANT ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORK



thinkchange

We want you to have your say on how your housing service is delivered and to influence how decisions, which affect you and your home, are made.

ThinkChange is our new tenant online social network. Not only does it allow you to put forward ideas on how to make improvements, it also allows you to comment on current initiatives or ideas put forward by other tenants.

These ideas could then be put before the council, via the tenants forum, and could help shape the way things are done in the future.

Your Forum may also use the system to get your opinion on certain matters, with your views being taken direct to the council for further discussion.

All you need to do is contact Julie Turner in the Residents Involvement Team on **01670 623493**, julie.turner@northumberland.gov.uk with an active email address.

Then use our easy-to-follow guide below and start having your say today!

GETTING STARTED

- You will receive an email with your username and password. Follow the link in this email and sign up to your account.
- Once you're signed-in you will be asked to change your password to one that is more memorable.
- You can then manage your account, change your profile picture, let us know what you want to be kept up to date on (although we recommend you tick all three boxes, so you are informed when a new idea is posted)
- REMEMBER: You must save the changes by clicking the "update user" button

CREATING A NEW IDEA

- Click on the ideas menu icon, then on Submit Your Idea

There are 4 easy steps to post your idea

1). Basic Details

Give your idea a title - something short and simple.

Leave the date generated by the system, unless there is a reason to shorten or lengthen the discussion. If so, click on the calendar and change the date.

Explain your idea - you don't need to write a lot just enough to give a good description.

2). Benefits and People

Explain the benefits of your idea - who it will benefit and how. Keep it simple.

3). Documents

Add any documents to support your idea. Select add a document and download and attach the document. Max size limit 1GB, per document.

4). Review & Create

Make sure you're happy and then click on save. To make changes simply go back and amend.

You can also like an idea, follow an idea or comment on another idea.

CHALLENGES

The Forum may ask for your opinions and views on certain ideas or "challenges". To view current ones click on the Challenges menu icon. You can comment and like on any challenge.

TENANTS GET ADVICE

at drop-in sessions



People living in Amble and Rothbury have been getting advice on everything from their tenancy to personal health at a series of drop-in sessions.



Our team in Alnwick joined forces with support organisations from across Northumberland to offer help and advice to residents in Amble.

The event was held at the Radcliffe Club and tenants were able to meet with representatives from Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB); Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP); MIND; the local credit union, as well as Amble Parish Council.

The council's Alnwick housing team, including anti-social behaviour officers, were also on hand to give residents advice on anything related to their tenancy.

It is hoped that similar events will now be held in other locations.

And if Rothbury residents seeking advice on housing or council tax issues were invited to a monthly, drop-in session.

Running from May-June the sessions, held at Rothbury Parish Hall, offered advice to people with housing benefits and council tax queries.

A benefits advisor and housing officer from the council were there to answer residents' questions and deal with any enquiries.

The sessions were open to all residents in Rothbury and surrounding areas, and if successful may be set up in other parts of the county.

TASK & FINISH GROUPS



After listening to feedback from members of our Service Development Groups we have decided to change the way these groups are organised.

We have agreed to **Task & Finish** groups instead as they are much more focused, have a defined timeline and clearer outcomes for everyone involved.

This means when we have a project to be completed, we will ask for volunteers to work alongside us. Before you commit to this though, we will give you all of the information you will need to help you decide whether you wish to take part or not. We will tell you how much time you will need to volunteer, how many meetings will be involved and what the outcome of the project is expected to be.

For example, our Editorial Task and Finish Group meets before every new edition of **Your News**. They attend three, 1-hour meetings, bring ideas about articles and help to review and agree the final draft before it goes to print. Each time we are working on a new edition, we invite tenants to join us.

By doing this, we are moving with our tenants and listening to how they want to be involved.

All our future project groups will be advertised on our tenant Facebook group, Tenants Online Voice, so make sure you ask to join the page to be kept up to date and watch out for information on Task and Finish Groups.

Would you like to volunteer for our Task & Finish groups?









LEASEHOLDERS







- what you can expect from us





We are keen to establish good working relationships with leaseholders. As part of this commitment we have developed a set of service standards, so that you can be sure of the level of service you can expect from us.

These standards are reviewed regularly and we engage with leaseholders as part of this process.

So what can you expect from us?

-  We will make sure that it is easy for you to contact our staff - Dedicated Leasehold Services Officer - **01670 622906**.
-  Our staff will be friendly, polite, helpful and will listen to your concerns.
-  We will keep the structure of your building insured against fire, flood, lightning, explosion and any other reasonable risks. You will continue to be responsible for insuring your home contents.
-  We will continue to maintain the structure and outside of your building.

-  We will tell you about your responsibility to pay for all the services we provide.
-  We will give you an invoice for your estimated service charges every March. Your service charge invoice will be clear and explain the individual charges.
-  We will send you an actual invoice/statement in September for the last financial year, confirming if any further money is owed.
-  We will offer you a range of ways to pay, either in one payment or in monthly instalments.
-  We will consult you on any major repairs or improvements we plan to do to your building.
-  We will consult you about your payment options for any major repairs or improvements.

-  We will consult with you while we do any work on your building.
-  We will provide an appointment system when we need to do repairs to your home.
-  We will give you reasonable notice if we need to get into your home to do any repairs. This will be 7 days unless there's an emergency.
-  We will always try to provide the best services that we can. If, however, you are not satisfied with our service, please let us know and we will try to sort out your complaint immediately. If you are still not satisfied, please ask for our complaint leaflet, which tells you how to complain.

NOTICEBOARD



Remember if you have an empty home which is causing a blight on your community we want to hear about it.

If you have a property near you which has been empty for two years or more, which is having a negative impact on your area, such as anti-social behaviour then tell us about it.

To report a property contact the private sector housing team on **01670 622299** or email privatesectorhousing@northumberland.gov.uk



Stuck for ideas on what to do with the family at the weekend?

Check out our **FRIDAY FIVE EVENT LISTING** posted on Northumberland County Council's What to Do in Northumberland Facebook page every Friday.

If you have events coming up at a weekend, then share the details on this page.

Save the Date! 4th September 2017

The **Ovo Energy Tour of Britain** will travel through the heart of Northumberland, passing through 26 communities and covering 117 miles.

The race will start in Kielder Water & Forest Park at 10.15am and head out through Bellingham and Otterburn before heading towards the coast via Eldson, Rothbury, Alnwick, Eglingham, Chatton, Belford and Bamburgh.



Full Northumberland route details can be found at www.nlandtob.com, or for further information about the National Tour, please visit: www.tourofbritain.co.uk/home.php



Product recall

Northumberland County Council's Trading Standards service is warning residents of two new product recalls on tumble dryers and fridge freezers.



Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, which is believed to have been started by a faulty fridge freezer, owners of **Hotpoint FF175BP (white)** or **FF175BG (graphite)**, manufactured between 2006 and 2009 should call Whirlpool Corporation's freephone hotline on **0800 316 3826** or visit www.hotpointservice.co.uk/fridgefreezer to register their details for further updates.

Owners of **Beko and Blomberg tumble dryers** with the model numbers **DCU9330W, DCU9330R, DCU8230, DSC85W, TKF8439A**, manufactured between May and November 2012 should contact Beko on 0800 917 2018.



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Simply search *Homes for Northumberland* and click to like our page



@HomesforN_land

ELECTION UPDATE

With both local and general elections all taking place within a few weeks of each other you would be forgiven for not knowing who your new representatives are.

So here's a list of MPs and county councillors covering your area and how you can contact them:

MPs



Berwick constituency
Anne-Marie Trevelyan (Cons)
 01665 478188
 trevelyanoffice@gmail.com



Blyth Valley constituency
Ronnie Campbell (Lab)
 01670 363050
 ronnie.campbell.mp@parliament.uk



Hexham constituency
Guy Opperman (Cons)
 01670 789161
 teamoppy@gmail.com

Northumberland County Councillors



Allendale
 Colin Horncastle (Cons)
 colin.horncastle@northumberland.gov.uk
 07976 677305



Alnwick
 Gordon Castle (Cons)
 gordon.castle@northumberland.gov.uk
 07919 112913



Alnwick
 Robert Moore (Cons)
 robbie.moore@northumberland.gov.uk
 07779 983751



Amble
 Terence Clark (Lab)
 terry.clark@northumberland.gov.uk
 07779 983768



Amble West with Warkworth
 Jeffrey Watson (Cons)
 jeffrey.watson@northumberland.gov.uk
 07554 114933



Cowpen
 Susan Davey (Lab)
 susan.davey@northumberland.gov.uk



Cramlington East
 Ian Swithenbank (Lab)
 ian.swithenbank@northumberland.gov.uk
 07785 921212



Cramlington Eastfield
 Christine Dunbar (Cons)
 christine.dunbar@northumberland.gov.uk
 07785 921212

**Cramlington North**

Wayne Daley (Cons)
wayne.daley@
northumberland.gov.uk
07897 446773

**Cramlington South East**

Allan Hepple (Lab)
allan.hepple@
northumberland.gov.uk
07769 304302

**Cramlington Village**

Mark Swinburn (Cons)
mark.swinburn@
northumberland.gov.uk
07506 722998

**Cramlington West**

Barry Flux (Cons)
barry.flux@
northumberland.gov.uk
07472002538

**Croft**

Kath Nisbet (Lab)
kath.nisbet@
northumberland.gov.uk
07747 461251

**Hartley**

Susan Dungworth (Lab)
susan.dungworth@
northumberland.gov.uk
0191 237 5531

**Hollywell**

Bernard Pidcock (Lab)
Bernard.Pidcock@
northumberland.gov.uk
07769 304321

**Isabella**

Gordon Webb (Lab)
gordon.webb@
northumberland.gov.uk
01670 365118

**Kitty Brewster**

Grant Davey (Lab)
grant.davey@
northumberland.gov.uk
07557 566197

**Newsham**

Deirdre Campbell (Lab)
deidre.campbell@
northumberland.gov.uk
01670 355242

**Plessey**

Jeff Reid (LD)
Jeff.Reid@
northumberland.gov.uk
01670 544113

**Rothbury**

Steven Bridgett (Lab)
steven.bridgett@
northumberland.gov.uk
07557 566197

**Seaton with
Newbiggin West**

Jim Lang (Lab)
jim.lang@
northumberland.gov.uk
07748 684665

**Seghill with
Seaton Delaval**

Margaret Richards (Lab)
Margaret.Richards01@
northumberland.gov.uk
0191 2370596

**Shilbottle**

Trevor Thorne (Cons)
Trevor.Thorne@
northumberland.gov.uk
07769 304311

**South Blyth**

Lesley Rickerby (LD)
Lesley.Rickerby@
northumberland.gov.uk

**Wensleydale**

Eileen Cartie (Lab)
Eileen.Cartie@
northumberland.gov.uk

For general enquiries or
to report an emergency
repair please contact us on

01670 542424

Visit
www.northumberland.gov.uk/Councillors/Councillors.aspx

ESTATE WALKABOUTS 2017

Have you an issue or a suggestion about your area?

Why not join your local walkabout and speak to your housing officers about it.

Check out the dates below. If you would like further information contact your Housing Officer for more details.

AREA	MEETING POINT	TIME	DATE
BLYTH			
Cowpen Estate	Between Briardale Rd and Brierley Rd	2pm 10am 10am	Jul 6 Oct 6 Aug 10
	East of Brierley Rd	2pm 10am	Nov 15 Sept 14
	West of Briardale Rd	2pm	Dec 13
Poets Estate	Corner of Abbotsford House flats	10am	Sep 6 Sep 7
	Corner Newsham Rd/ Kendall Ave	10am	Sep 14
	Path entrance near play park	10am	
The Avenues	Corner of Plessy/25th Patterson House carpark	1.30pm 1.30pm	Jul 13 Nov 9 Sept 7
Blyth Town Centre	Corner of Edward St/ Waterloo Rd	1.30pm	Jul 20 Nov 16
Solingen	1 Solingen	1.30pm	Sept 14
Benridge Park/ Cottingwood/ New Builds	Entrance to Benridge Park	10am	Sept 20
Newsham and New Delaval	Start of Delaval Cres (low numbers)	10am	Sept 26
Cowpen Farm	Outside No. 1 Fallow Park Ave	10am	Sept 8
Kitty Brewster Estate	Outside 5 Kitty Brewster Estate	10am	Jul 28
Hodgson's Road Estate	Entrance to Limes Ave	10am	Aug 4

CRAMLINGTON			
Mayfield Glade	Barrasford Road, near Clifton Road shops	10am	Jul 14
Mayfield Dale & Grange	Carpark opposite Tangmere Close flats	10am	Jul 14
Eastfield Grange	Entrance to Cairnglass Green	10am	Aug 3
Nelson Village	Outside local shop in the village	10am	Aug 23
Eastfield Lea	Outside community house at 1 Axminster Close	10am	Aug 28
Allensgreen/ Allerhope/ Adderstone/ Anton	Entrance to Allensgreen	10am	Sept 7
East Hartford	Bus shelter on Ormston St	10am	Sept 20

AREA	MEETING POINT	TIME	DATE
NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND			
Alnwick	Entrance to York Cres Cawledge View	10am 10am	Jul 14 Sept 15
Amble	Entrance to Straffen Court	9.30am	Jul 14 Oct 13
Rothbury	Jubilee Cres Addycombe Gdns	10am 11am	Jul 11 Jul 11
Longframlington	White Cottages	10am	Jul 18
Felton	Community Centre	11am	Jul 18
Shilbottle	Selby Road The Haven	10am 11am	Aug 8 Aug 8
Embleton	Doctors Surgery	10am	Aug 15
Longhoughton	North End	11am	Aug 15
***If anyone who does not live in the above areas would like a visit, or to discuss an issue, please contact Simon Crosthwaite - simon.crosthwaite@northumberland.gov.uk 01670 542424			

SEATON SLUICE			
New Hartley	Corner of Lysdon and Hartley Court	1pm 1pm	Aug 30 Nov 22
Seaton Sluice	Outside 1 Southward	10am 10am	Aug 31 Nov 23
Seaton Sluice	Front of bungalows 9-11 Wheatridge	1pm 1pm	Aug 31 Nov 8

SEATON DELAVAL/SEGHILL			
Blyth St	Corner of Prospect Ave/Blyth St	2pm	Oct 25
Hallington Dr/ Mindrum Way	Corner of Mindrum Way/ Elsdon Ave	2pm	July 19 Sep 13
Woodside Estate	Tilmouth Ave/Swarland Rd	2pm	Jul 20 Sep 14
The Crescent	Outside Black Arms pub	2pm	Jul 26 Sep 20
Laycock/ Northcott	Outside 16 Laycock Gdns	2pm	Jul 27 Sep 21
Deneside Estate	Corner of Burnlea Gdns/Hill Ave	2pm	Aug 16 Oct 26
Holywell	Holywell Dene Rd/Holywell Ave	2pm	Aug 31

