

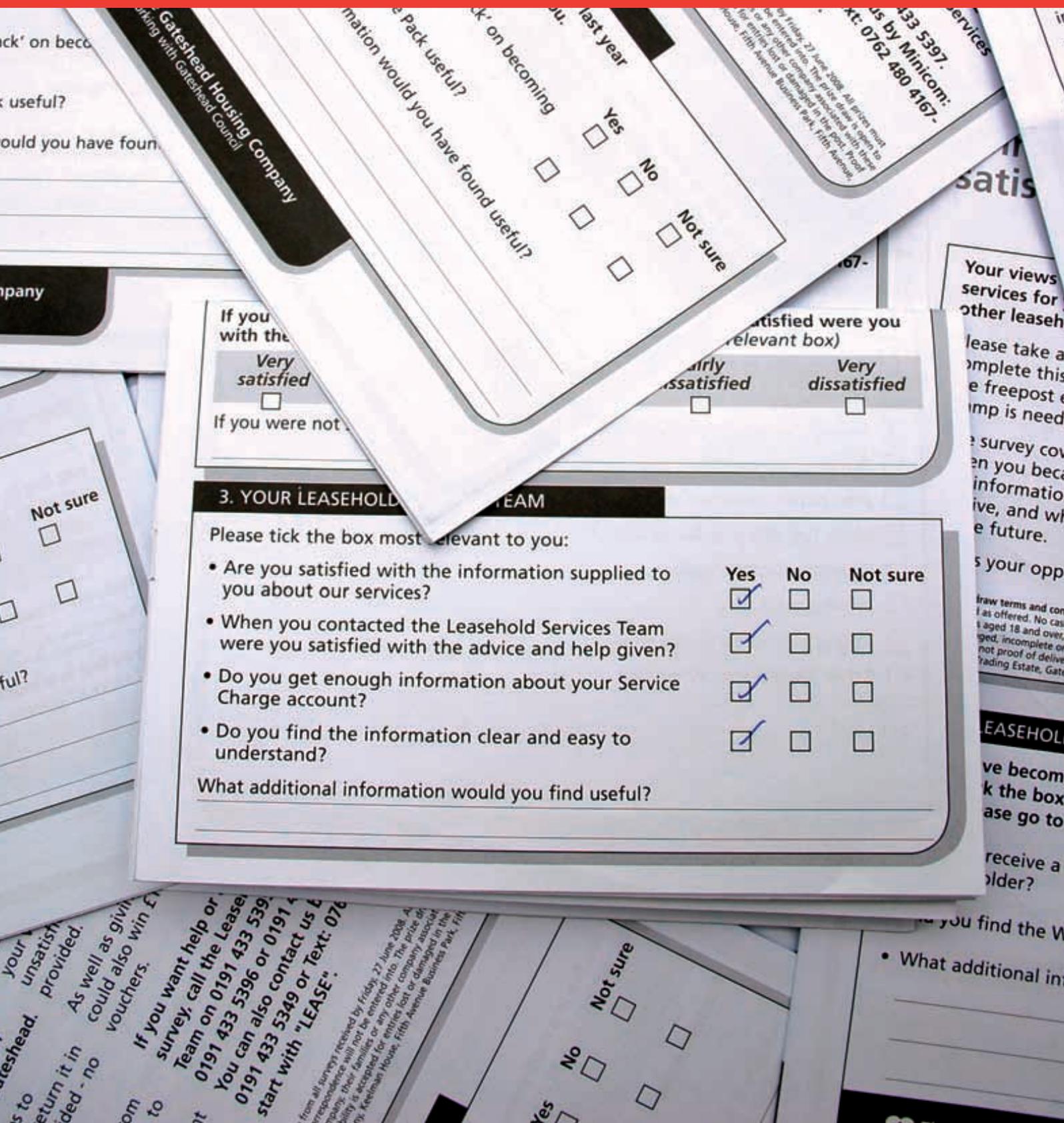


The Gateshead Housing Company

# Leasehold news

Bringing you housing news

September 2008



Gateshead Housing Company  
Working with Gateshead Council

...last year

...on becoming

...Pack useful?

...information would you have found useful?

Yes  No  Not sure

If you were not satisfied with the information provided (tick relevant box)

Very satisfied  Fairly satisfied  Fairly dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

**3. YOUR LEASEHOLD SERVICES TEAM**

Please tick the box most relevant to you:

	Yes	No	Not sure
• Are you satisfied with the information supplied to you about our services?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• When you contacted the Leasehold Services Team were you satisfied with the advice and help given?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do you get enough information about your Service Charge account?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Do you find the information clear and easy to understand?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What additional information would you find useful?

\_\_\_\_\_

If you want help or survey, call the Leasehold Services Team on 0191 433 5396 or 0191 433 5399. You can also contact us on 0191 433 5349 or Text: 076...

From all surveys received by Friday 27 June 2008. All prize draw entries must be entered into. The prize draw will be held on 27 June 2008. Responsibility is accepted for entries lost or damaged in the post. Kreaman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 2JF.

...What additional information would you find useful?

Yes  No  Not sure

## New faces

**The Leasehold Services Team have been joined by two new faces to help deliver efficient services.**



**Chris Bryden** came to the company in June as a Leasehold Surveyor.

This is a new role that will focus on the coordination and collection of comprehensive condition survey information for leasehold properties.

Chris has already met with some leaseholders at the last Service Improvement Group meeting,

and is looking forward to the challenges ahead.

He said: "This is an exciting time for the team in delivering new policies to make services for leaseholders even better."

A new Finance Manager, **Sarah Thompson**, has also recently joined the company who will provide a vital overview to the service overall.



## Building cleaning services are improved

**Following consultation with tenants and leaseholders, The Gateshead Housing Company has updated its cleaning service standards.**

Residents of multi-storey blocks with a concierge service, or in some low-rise blocks of flats, will receive a cleaning service to communal areas on behalf of Gateshead Council's Local Environmental Services (LES).

LES must abide by a Service Level Agreement, which specifies what cleaning tasks are to be carried out and how often.

When tenants and leaseholders were consulted, they felt unsure about what tasks should be carried out by LES, how often they should be completed, and who to contact with any queries.

As a result the housing company has updated its standards – see page pages 14 to 15 for full details – and is currently investigating ways to extend the service to blocks of flats where a cleaning service is not currently provided.

Martin Poulter, Operational Support Manager, is grateful for the comments received from residents so far.

He said: "It is important that the services we provide meet our tenants' and leaseholders' high standards.

"As part of an ongoing review, we will be carrying out further consultation in the near future."

**If you have any further questions about the cleaning service standards, contact your nearest housing office or call Paula Hodgson, Operational Support Officer, on 0191 433 5369.**



# Company brushes up on homes work

Thousands of multi-storey flats, maisonettes and other homes are set to have a facelift as part of a major ten-year painting programme.

The painting, on top of the company's £1m a week borough-wide home improvement programme, will have a dramatic impact on the look of flats and maisonettes across the borough.

The rolling programme has already seen work done this year to:

- Acomb, Bedale, Fell, Beacon and Lough Courts in South Gateshead
- Abbot, Monk, Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane Courts, as well as maisonettes on Chandless Estate in Central Gateshead
- Whickham North in Inner West Gateshead
- Chopwell Estate in the West of Gateshead.

Bill Fullen, Chief Executive of the housing company said: "As well as spending over £1m on improvements to the inside of homes, we also want to improve the look of the outside of homes and estates as a whole.

"This painting programme will make a real difference to the look of many homes across the borough."



## And the winners are...

**Mr C Emptage**, Blaydon, and **Mr P Lovett**, Felling, were both the lucky winners of £50 of MetroCentre vouchers by simply paying their service charges by Direct Debit.

The Leasehold Services Team holds a free prize draw every quarter and automatically enters those leaseholders who have set up a Direct Debit.

Direct Debit is arguably one of the easiest ways to make regular payments – and by doing so you could also be a winner.

For details on how to set up the scheme contact the Leasehold Services Team on 0191 433 5395.

### Another lucky winner is...

**Mrs M Bullock**, Gateshead, will also be making a trip to the MetroCentre, having won another leaseholder free prize draw.

She successfully completed and returned this year's Annual Leasehold Survey, and not only gave her views, but also reaped the rewards.

Thank you to everyone who took part.

## We want your views

If you have any suggestions about how we can make the services we provide to you and other leaseholders even better, then why not come to one of our main forums?

- **Monday, 13 October between 2pm and 4pm in Keelman House, Board Room**
- **Tuesday, 14 October between 6pm and 8pm in Wrekenton Community Centre hall**



For further information call the Leasehold Services Team on 0191 433 5395.

# Annual performance report

Performance indicators play a key role in achieving the housing company's mission – 'To provide excellent and efficient services working in partnership with residents and the wider local community to create homes and neighbourhoods that meet the aspirations of the people of Gateshead.'

There are a number of ways we can measure our successes.

The figures below detail the results for 2007/08 in comparison with 2006/07

## Right to buy sales

	2007/08	2006/07
Applications	262	751
Freehold sales	111	156
Leasehold sales	28	37
Total freehold sales	13,074	12,963
Total leasehold sales	821	793

## Service charges

	2007/08	2006/07
Estimated annual bill	£248,446	£213,377
Actual annual bill	£226,106	£217,997
Average annual bill	£275.40	£274.90

## Arrears management

	2007/08	2006/07
<b>Service charges:</b>		
• % income collected	97%	92.29%
• Arrears as at 31 March	£6,941	£23,471
<b>Major Works (eight months collection):</b>		
• % income collected	51%	
• Debt raised	£110,823	
• Arrears as at 31 March	£54,041	

Janice Adams, Leasehold Manager, is pleased with this year's financial performance.

She said: "This year's results highlight the positive steps forward being taken for leasehold services – and in particular towards arrears collection.

"The housing company offers support to anyone facing financial difficulty and aims to resolve what can be sensitive issues through practicable payment plans."

For further information, see page 16 or visit [www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/benefits](http://www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/benefits)

# How satisfied are you?

In May 2008, all leaseholders were issued with a survey to gauge satisfaction levels on a range of service areas.

The results are in, and a positive comparison can be made with the results from 2007:

Satisfaction levels	2008	2007
Provision of information	89%	67%
Provision of caretaking service	87%	39%
Provision of concierge service	100%	n/a
Cleaning standards in low-rise blocks	80%	34%
Grounds maintenance	66%	55%
Completed repairs	72%	39%



Were the people who carried out your repair polite and helpful?



How satisfied are you with the look and appearance of your estate?



How satisfied are you with the services provided by the building's insurer?



When you have contacted the Leasehold Services Team, how satisfied were you with the advice and help provided?



Do you feel you receive enough information about your service charge account?



Do you find information about the leasehold service clear and easy to understand?



Do you feel you have enough opportunities to get involved in the service?

- What would encourage you to become more involved? (Typical responses included):
  - Alternative meeting times
  - More decision-making opportunities
  - Seeing the results of involvement.

- Do you consider the service charges you pay to be of good value for the services you receive?  
**66% good value (compared with 23% in 2007).**

- How satisfied are you with the overall service provided by your Leasehold Services Team?  
**89% satisfied (compared with 50% in 2007).**

## How will this information be used?

The Leasehold Services Team will continue to build upon areas of satisfaction and aims to improve response rates for 2009.

The Leasehold Service Improvement Group will investigate all areas of dissatisfaction and suitable remedies will be investigated and implemented.

**For further information on the Leasehold Service Improvement Group, see page 10.**

# ASBESTOS ADVICE FOR LEASEHOLDERS

**As a leaseholder, it is important that you are aware of the signs and procedures for monitoring and resolving possible cases of asbestos, and your role and responsibilities.**

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of naturally occurring minerals that are contained within rock.

The minerals appear as masses of strong flexible fibres that can be separated and woven.

The three main types of asbestos found in the UK are:

- Crocidolite (known as blue asbestos)
- Amosite (known as brown asbestos)
- Chrysotile (known as white asbestos).

## Why was asbestos used in buildings?

Asbestos fibres are strong and resistant to heat and chemicals.

This led to widespread use in a large range of building products and materials from the 1930s to the mid 1980s - however its use was banned in the UK in 1999.



# ASBESTOS ADVICE FOR LEASEHOLDERS

## Is it dangerous?

There are very low levels of asbestos fibres in the air everywhere, but this low level is extremely unlikely to cause harm.

When asbestos containing materials age or become damaged, there is the possibility of fibres being released into the air.

If you inhale these fibres over a long period of time, they can become lodged in the tissue of your chest or lungs and your body's natural defence mechanisms cannot break them down.

Breathing these fibres in can then cause cancers of the lungs, particularly if you are exposed to the fibres over a number of years.

**IMPORTANT** - asbestos materials are present in many buildings across the country and are perfectly safe if they are not damaged.

## What are my responsibilities as a leaseholder?

As a leaseholder you are responsible for the repair and maintenance of the internal areas of your own property, including any materials that may contain asbestos.

You are responsible for keeping the material in a safe condition and not exposing any other people, for example contractors you may employ, to the asbestos.

## What should I do when undertaking work to my home?

You should not attempt to remove or repair asbestos material yourself.

Specialist laboratories can sample suspect materials to confirm whether or not asbestos is present.

If you wish to have any suspect materials tested, contact the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) at 21-47 High Street, Feltham, Middlesex or by telephone on 0208 917 8400.

They will be able to provide you with details or your local accredited analysts.

If you wish to have any asbestos material repaired or removed, contact the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) at 237 Branston Road, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire or by telephone on 01283 531 126.

They will be able to provide you with details of your local licensed asbestos removal contractors.

## I am worried about asbestos in the external parts of my home and communal areas outside my home. What do I need to do?

Asbestos containing materials are safe unless they are damaged.

The Gateshead Housing Company is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the structure, exterior and shared parts of the block, for example, the roof, fascia and soffits.

If you suspect that an asbestos material in a communal area or an external part of your home is damaged or in poor condition, please contact the HomeRepairs Team on freephone 0800 408 6008 or e-mail [repairs@gatesheadhousing.co.uk](mailto:repairs@gatesheadhousing.co.uk)

## Further information

Remember, asbestos materials in good condition are safe. If you have any doubts call HomeRepairs on freephone 0800 408 6008.

For advice on asbestos, you can contact the HomeRepairs Team on the above number or Gateshead Council's Environmental Health Officer on 0191 433 3000.

For further information on asbestos visit [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

**REMEMBER – ASBESTOS MATERIALS IN GOOD CONDITION ARE SAFE.**



# Carbon monoxide,

it's invisible,  
it's odourless,  
it's tasteless...

# it's too late.

**Every year dozens of people across the UK die from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gas appliances and fires that have not been properly maintained.**

The Gateshead Housing Company takes a serious approach towards gas servicing, and checks should be carried out every 12 months.

The housing company can provide a gas service of a property to leaseholders for around £40 - prices may vary depending on the number of appliances.

## Exclusive offer

To ensure safety in the home, the housing company is offering free carbon monoxide detectors (including installation) to all leaseholders who join The Gateshead Housing Company's Gas Servicing scheme within the next three months\*.

The detectors are endorsed by CORGI, are used by British Gas, and are guaranteed for five years.

Alternatively, leaseholders can purchase carbon monoxide detectors at the discounted rate of £21, plus postage and packaging (RRP between £30 and £38).

Full installation instructions and guarantee will be provided.

**For further information contact the housing company's Gas Servicing Team on 0191 433 5338 or 0191 433 5319.**

 **The Gateshead Housing Company**  
Working with Gateshead Council

\*Applicants must join the scheme for a minimum of two years.

The Leasehold Service Improvement Group has been working with the housing company to develop new procedures to improve the standard of repairs.

Following concerns from some leaseholders that the standard of repairs to communal areas of their building were not to their satisfaction, new policies have been devised that will scrutinise repairs prior to the issues of quarterly repairs and maintenance statements.

This has been a pilot scheme that the company would like to roll out further with your help.

If you would like to work with the housing company and monitor the repairs carried out in your block get in touch.

**You asked-  
we did it**

Call Helen Craig on 0191 433 5395 for further information.

## Housing company's new headquarters officially opened

**The Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Maureen Chaplin, welcomed staff from across The Gateshead Housing Company to officially open the company's new headquarters.**

Hundreds of staff joined Board members and local councillors to watch The Mayor unveil a plaque commemorating the official opening at Keelman House.



The new headquarters, at Team Valley, Gateshead, house over half of the company's 400 staff.

Barbara Dennis OBE, Board Chair of The Gateshead Housing Company, said: "The new headquarters have given us space to expand and recruit more staff to help with the work we do across Gateshead."

The Mayor of Gateshead, Councillor Maureen Chaplin, said: "The company's work to improve local estates has made a genuine difference to the borough."

## New website for housing company

Gateshead residents now have a new place to find local information with the launch of The Gateshead Housing Company's new website.

The new website, [www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk](http://www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk), has been developed to provide specific local information about each area of Gateshead, so that customers can find out about developments that are tailored to them.

The radical revamp of the site has allowed the company to include more information about its £1m a week Decent Homes programme, getting involved in decisions and tackling anti-social behaviour, as well as increasing the site's accessibility.

The site will also provide information on how to become a housing company tenant or leaseholder and will provide a useful portal to other useful organisations across Gateshead and the North East.

Bill Fullen, Chief Executive of The Gateshead Housing Company said: "We are committed to giving our tenants and leaseholders up-to-date information, giving them every chance to get involved, and letting them have a say on what we do."

"Our website plays a major part in how people can access information 24-hours a day, and also news on the work we are doing over the coming years to make homes and the services we provide even better as part of our £1m a week improvement plans.

"But we want to make the site even better over the coming months and would very much like to receive the views of any of our customers who use the website and also those who may never have used the internet before."

[www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk](http://www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk)

# You said - we did!

**The Leasehold Service Improvement Group's monthly meetings are making significant changes to the services provided to leaseholders overall.**

Here are just a few of the suggestions made and the outcomes thereafter...

## **'I don't understand what is included in the management fee.'**

We reviewed the budgets and implemented a new charging procedure in April that is based on specific services received in each block.

## **'I want financial assistance when paying for large Major Works bills.'**

We have developed and sent financial packages to Gateshead Council for approval, and will update you on the progress.

## **'What is included in the Grounds Maintenance contract and how is it monitored?'**

We reviewed the service standards and published them to all leaseholders.

## **'Can the tenants' contents insurance scheme be available to leaseholders?'**

We opened the scheme in July and proposal forms were sent to leaseholders in August.

## **'I feel the HomeRepairs Team don't understand specific leaseholder queries.'**

We have introduced a training programme for the HomeRepairs Team.

## **'I am not satisfied with the standard of repairs to communal areas.'**

We have introduced a pilot scheme for leaseholders to check repairs before statements are issued.

## **'I don't feel housing company staff in general know how to deal with leaseholder enquiries.'**

We have developed policies and procedures together with leaseholders and Gateshead Council for staff.

## **'I don't feel like the leaseholder service standards are clear enough.'**

We have reviewed our service standards and performance information.

## **Want to make a difference?**

It is important that the Leasehold Services Team continues to work with its Service Improvement Group to make services you receive even better.

If you would like to know more about the group, please contact Leasehold Services on 0191 433 5396.

## **Service Improvement Group meetings for 2008**

Venue	Date	Time
Keelman House - Board Room 1	Monday, 6 October	12 noon to 2pm
Keelman House - Board Room 2	Tuesday, 4 November	12 noon to 2pm
Keelman House - Board Room 1	Monday, 1 December	12 noon to 2pm

# Estate Tours

The Gateshead Housing Company regularly holds Estate Tours so tenants and leaseholders can highlight aspects in and around their local environment that they would like to improve.



By coming along you can have your say and make a real difference to where you live.

## Estate Tours in the South of Gateshead

- Acomb Court – Tuesday, 9 September
- Allerdene – Thursday, 25 September
- Barford Court – Thursday, 2 October
- Beacon Court – Tuesday, 16 September
- Beacon Lough Lower – Thursday, 25 September
- Beacon Lough Upper – Tuesday, 7 October
- Bedale Court - Tuesday, 9 September
- Chopwell Gardens – Monday, 27 October
- Eighton Banks – Wednesday, 15 October
- Lyndhurst Lower – Tuesday, 28 October
- Lyndhurst South – Thursday, 23 October
- Lyndhurst Upper – Thursday, 16 October
- Northside – Thursday, 18 September
- Portmeads – Wednesday, 3 September
- Ripley Court – Tuesday, 2 September
- Springwell – Monday, 20 October
- Stretford Court – Thursday, 2 October
- Willerby Court – Tuesday, 2 September
- Wrekenton – Monday, 13 October

## Estate Tours in Central Gateshead

- Abbey Court – Wednesday, 24 September
- Abbot Court – Wednesday, 22 October
- Acquired Property (Shipcote) – Wednesday, 8 October
- Adelaide Court – Tuesday, 21 October
- Bensham Court – Friday, 24 October
- Blue Quarries – Thursday, 11 September
- Centurion Way – Thursday, 11 September
- Chandless Estate – Friday, 19 September
- Claremont – Tuesday, 14 October
- Coatsworth – Tuesday, 14 October
- Deckham – Thursday, 18 September
- Fieldhouse – Thursday, 9 October
- Florence Avenue – Thursday, 11 September
- Marian Court – Wednesday, 15 October
- Melbourne Court – Tuesday, 21 October
- Mount Pleasant – Wednesday, 8 October
- Park Court – Tuesday, 21 October
- Regent Court – Thursday, 23 October
- St James' Village – Tuesday, 30 September
- Sunderland Road – Wednesday, 8 October
- Tennyson Court – Thursday, 25 September
- Warwick Court – Thursday, 16 October

## Estate Tours in the East of Gateshead

- Bill Quay – Thursday, 16 October
- Carlisle Street – Thursday, 9 October
- Ellen Wilkinson – Monday, 15 September
- Falla Park – Tuesday, 23 September
- Millford/Ridgeway East – Monday, 22 September
- Millford/Ridgeway West – Monday, 15 September
- Rickgarth – Wednesday, 17 September
- Ridley Terrace – Thursday, 11 September
- Wellington - Thursday, 18 September
- Windy Nook – Tuesday, 16 September

## Estate Tours in the Inner West of Gateshead

- Clasper Village – Tuesday, 30 September
- Coach Road – Thursday, 2 October
- Derwentwater – Tuesday, 21 October
- Dunston Hill – Thursday, 18 September
- Dunston Park – Monday, 1 September
- Dunston Road – Tuesday, 9 September
- Holmeside – Thursday, 16 October
- Lobley Hill – Thursday, 25 September
- Racecourse – Wednesday, 17 September
- Rectory Glebe – Tuesday, 23 September
- Rose Milling – Tuesday, 16 September
- St Mary's Green – Thursday, 30 October
- Sunnyside – Tuesday, 16 September
- Victoria – Tuesday, 21 October
- Whickham North – Friday, 12 September

## Estate Tours in the West of Gateshead

- Bagnall Grange – Monday, 29 September
- Daffodil Close – Monday, 22 September
- Highfield – Wednesday, 22 October
- Hole-in-the-Wall – Tuesday, 30 September
- Lower Rowlands Gill – Wednesday, 10 September
- Mosspool – Tuesday, 28 October
- Parkhead – Wednesday, 17 September
- Parkfield/Tower Gardens – Tuesday, 28 October
- Runhead Estate – Tuesday, 7 October
- Ryton Central – Tuesday, 21 October
- Snookhill/St Pauls – Monday, 13 October

For further information on any of the tours, contact the Leasehold Services Team on 0191 433 5395.

# Leasehold service standards

The Leasehold Service Improvement Group agreed at its July meetings that all service standards, monitoring and performance indicators will be reported to all leaseholders.

The following information provides an update on all of the above.

The proposed service standards will be reported to the Access and Diversity Committee on Tuesday, 7 October for agreement. If you have any comments on the standards contact the Leasehold Services Team on 0191 433 5396.

Service Standard	Monitoring	Reporting to leaseholders	Performance indicator
<b>Rights and responsibilities</b>			
We will keep you informed of changes in law that affect you through our twice yearly newsletter, forums and Service Improvement Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual leaseholder satisfaction survey.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None required.</li> </ul>
We will respect and protect your rights as a leaseholder and will expect you to respect our rights and responsibilities as the landlord's agent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints received and outcomes</li> <li>Monitoring and enforcing breaches of lease</li> <li>Monitoring of expenditure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News</li> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% response to breaches within timescales set in lease</li> <li>Actual costs within 5% of estimated costs.</li> </ul>
<b>Buying and selling your property</b>			
We will send you a leasehold information pack, within seven days of being told that you have bought your home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual leaseholders satisfaction survey</li> <li>Information pack, questionnaire and return slip.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of packs issued within seven days.</li> </ul>
When you sell your property we will send your legal representative a solicitor enquiry pack within seven days of receipt of the enquiry.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solicitor enquiry pack receipt slip.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% of packs issued within seven days.</li> </ul>
<b>Service charges</b>			
We will send you an annual estimated service charge bill, which will include details of how the charge has been calculated, in February.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually through the Northgate service charge system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% issued in February each year.</li> </ul>
We will send you a service charge certificate and balance of your account, detailing expenditure incurred, in June.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annually through the Northgate service charge system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% issued in June each year.</li> </ul>
We will send you a statement of your service charge account, including all income received and adjustments made, on a quarterly basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly through the Northgate service charge system</li> <li>Statement enquiry forms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% within one week of the end of the quarter.</li> </ul>

Service Standard	Monitoring	Reporting to leaseholders	Performance indicator
<b>Service charges (continued)</b>			
<p>We will respond to all 'disputes' within 20 working days.</p> <p>All decisions made as part of the 'disputes' process will be referred back to service providers to ensure continuous improvement of service provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly through the Northgate service charge system</li> <li>Monitoring by leaseholders - acknowledgment letter to include target response time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual response letter to include whether the dispute is justified or unjustified and any service improvement identified</li> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News</li> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</li> </ul>	<p>90% responded to within 20 working days.</p>
<p>We will monitor service charge payments on a monthly basis to ensure early intervention and provide support when accounts go into arrears.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly through the Northgate service charge system</li> <li>Corporate Management Team and the Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News</li> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>97.5% in 2008/09</li> <li>97.75% in 2009/10.</li> </ul>
<b>Repairs and maintenance</b>			
<p>We will keep the building in good condition to protect your investment and ours, and will provide you with a repairs and maintenance statement within six weeks of the end of each quarter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot scheme - leaseholders monitoring communal repairs prior to issue of invoices</li> <li>Property inspectors</li> <li>Repairs satisfaction cards/surveys</li> <li>Annual leaseholders satisfaction survey</li> <li>Leasehold enquiry forms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News</li> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group</li> <li>Individual responses to leaseholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% of statements within six weeks of the end of each quarter</li> <li>95% of enquiries within 10 working days.</li> </ul>
<b>Major Works</b>			
<p>We will consult you at least 30 days before we carry out any Major Works to your home and will provide you with details of financial assistance available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major Works acknowledgment return slip</li> <li>Decent Homes satisfaction surveys</li> <li>Leasehold property surveyor.</li> </ul>	<p>None required.</p>	<p>100% within 30 days of works commencing.</p>
<p>We will collect Major Works charges within 21 days, of the date of the invoice, or in line with any agreed repayment package.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly through the Northgate service charge system</li> <li>Corporate Management Team and the Board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual report to leaseholders through Leasehold News</li> <li>Quarterly to Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>75% within the first year</li> <li>25% in remaining years.</li> </ul>
<b>Satisfaction</b>			
<p>We will send you a yearly performance questionnaire. We will listen to what you have to say about our services and investigate dissatisfaction through our Leasehold Service Improvement Group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual leaseholders satisfaction survey</li> <li>Local and main forums</li> <li>Leasehold Service Improvement Group</li> <li>Telephone surveys.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leasehold Service Improvement Group</li> <li>Local and main forums</li> <li>Leaseholders newsletter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10% response rate</li> <li>70% satisfaction rate.</li> </ul>

# The Gateshead Housing Company's building cleaning specification

**This specification describes the cleaning service provided within the communal areas of multi-storey blocks of flats.**

It defines the cleaning tasks to be undertaken and the frequency at which these tasks are to be completed.

## Daily tasks:

### Lifts:

- Sweep out and damp mop floors
- Inspect and wipe clean any marks on the walls
- Check and report any defective lighting to the concierge
- Check and ensure door runners are clear and operating correctly
- Report to the concierge any graffiti that cannot be removed.

### Chute area (on balcony of every floor):

- Inspect chute area and report any bulky items to the concierge for collection
- Brush out chute area floor
- Check hopper is operational and report any defects to the concierge
- Check and report any blockages to the concierge.

### Communal entrance:

- Litter pick to a defined area outside all entrances and exit points
- Vacuum carpet or damp mop floor tiles
- Clean marks to glass internal and external
- Check and remove any marks from walls
- Check and report any defective lighting to the concierge.

### All other floors and stairwells:

- Inspect all floors, stairwells and balconies, litter pick and sweep as required
- Litter pick, damp mop and spray clean/burnish ground floor corridors
- Report any vandalism or damage to any part of the building to the concierge.

All cleaning will normally be carried out between the hours 9am and 1pm, Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays.

The length of time on site will vary depending on the size of the block and the number of cleaners working.

## Weekly tasks

- Damp mop and spray clean corridors, balconies and stairwells at all levels other than the ground floor
- Wash paintwork to internal doors leading to stairwells, both faces
- Dust all banisters and stair parts
- Clean glass in internal doors, both faces
- Wash and disinfect refuse chute areas
- Wash down railings in chute areas
- Wash and disinfect the bin storage room floor
- Damp wipe public telephone area
- Empty cigarette bins located at entrances and exits
- Polish glass for all entrance and exit doors, both faces
- Clean all woodwork including skirting boards and door frames in communal entrance
- Wash paintwork to all entrance and exit doors on the ground floor both faces
- Wash and disinfect bin store areas on the ground floor.

## Additional tasks:

- Rotate bins in bin storage room as necessary
- Put out and return to stand the bins from the bin storage room three times per week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or the working day before or after a Bank Holiday)
- Power hose and disinfect the bin storage room floor once every six months
- Clean insides of external windows bi-monthly\*.

*\*Except Regent Court where special provision is to be made.*

## Communal lounges – Eslington and Warwick Court

### Daily tasks:

- Empty waste receptacles
- Damp wipe furniture, fixtures and fittings, horizontal surfaces and walls as necessary
- Clean toilet areas
- Mop hard floor surfaces in toilet areas
- Replenish consumables in toilet areas, supplied by The Gateshead Housing Company
- Vacuum clean dust control mats
- Vacuum clean carpeted areas as necessary
- Sweep all hard floor surfaces, spot cleaning as required.

### Weekly tasks:

- Vacuum clean all carpeted areas
- Damp mop and spray clean/burnish hard floor surfaces.

### Monthly tasks:

- Polish internally the glass in windows.

## Laundry Room – Warwick Court

### Daily tasks:

- Wipe clean all machine surfaces
- Litter pick and sweep out
- Damp mop clean the floor surface
- Clean as required bench surface areas
- Clean all woodwork including skirting boards and door frames
- Check and report any defective lighting to the concierge.

## Annual review

Once a year a joint inspection and review with the contractor and client will be carried out, and any additional work identified will be agreed and priced separately.

For further information on the specification, please contact the Operational Support Team on **0191 433 5369** or e-mail [operationalsupport@gatesheadhousing.co.uk](mailto:operationalsupport@gatesheadhousing.co.uk)



# Up and coming Moving Forward courses

The Gateshead Housing Company holds free courses for tenants and leaseholders on a variety of subjects.



## Forthcoming courses include:

- **Running your first home** – Friday, 19 September, between 10am and 4pm
- **Health Up!** – Tuesday, 23 September, between 10am and 1pm
- **B&Q flooring** – Tuesday, 7 October, between 2pm and 3pm
- **Effective meetings** – Thursday, 23 October, between 10am and 4pm.

For more information on any of these courses, or for the full Moving Forward programme:

- Call Lisa Wilkinson on **0191 433 5357**
- Fax **0191 433 5354**
- E-mail [involve@gatesheadhousing.co.uk](mailto:involve@gatesheadhousing.co.uk)
- Text 'involve' to **0762 480 4167**
- Minicom **0191 433 5349**
- Visit [www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/pdf/movingforward.pdf](http://www.gatesheadhousing.co.uk/pdf/movingforward.pdf)

# Benefit advice - there's no price



**You may be entitled to help  
with your service charges**