

## Special Issue

Newcastle  
City Council 

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# YOUR GUIDE TO THE BYKER DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEM

In December 2021, we experienced a number of leaks on the District Heating System (DHS), which unfortunately resulted in the loss of heating and hot water to homes and businesses across the Byker Estate.

**We are very sorry for the inconvenience this caused.**

To ensure your heating and hot water was reinstated as soon as possible, Newcastle City Council (NCC) installed temporary boilers across the DHS.

The aim of this leaflet is to give you some general information on the DHS, an overview of what happened, what action we put in place to get heating and hot water supplies reinstated to your home and what the plans are going forward.

## WHAT IS THE BYKER DISTRICT HEATING SYSTEM?

The DHS was installed in the 1970's when the Byker Estate was built. It provides unlimited heating and hot water to all homes on the Byker Estate and many other buildings including Byker Primary School, offices such as the BCT office, Barnardo's, Byker Lodge Care Home and St. Lawrence Church.

The heating and hot water supply is generated from boilers located in the main heat station on Walker Road and then distributed at 130 degrees Celsius around the estate through a network of underground primary mains pipework.

The primary mains enter 11 substations located across the estate, where equipment reduces the temperature and pressure of the water to 70 to 75 degrees, suitable for distribution through underground and overground secondary mains pipework into your home.

**Please see the map on the centre pages to see the 11 substations and what substation your home is connected to.**



## SO, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HEATING AND HOT WATER SUPPLY?

At the beginning of December, NCC identified four underground leaks on the primary mains network which affected the heating and hot water supplies to over 1,300 homes. The leaks were located at the main Heat Station at Walker Road, at Chirton substation, outside Shipley Baths and on Gordon Road. All heating and hot water supplies were reinstated by 23 December by connecting temporary boilers to the substations at Shipley, Kendal, Grace Lee, Chirton, Raby/Carville and Gordon.

Our number one priority has and will continue to be, the welfare of our customers and stabilising the heating and hot water supply to your home.

Support to customers included:

- We attempted to contact all affected customers to check on their welfare and to organise for customers to be temporarily rehoused or provide additional support if this was required for medical reasons.
- Colleagues from BCT, Karbon and NCC distributed over 1,200 portable heaters to customers.
- We operated an out-of-hours service with our customer contact centre to ensure our customers

could get in touch and have portable electric heaters delivered outside normal working hours.

- We provided updates via the BCT website, our social media channels and we sent text messages to customers affected to keep them updated and informed of progress.
- We encouraged customers to get in touch on our freephone number if they were experiencing intermittent or low temperatures with their heating and hot water supply and we sent members of our trades team out to these homes to investigate.



## TIMELINE OF EMERGENCY INCIDENTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

We've received a lot of calls and questions from customers about reimbursement payments including why some people got more reimbursement than others and some customers felt they were entitled to more.

Our teams dealt with over 1,300 individual claims and processed them within a few weeks. Some customers were without heating and hot water for 24 hours while others were without supply for up to six days. All customers received £10 a day reimbursement for the time they were without heating and hot water.

In addition, all affected customers received 100% off their heat charge payment for the days they were without heating and hot water. We automatically processed this for our customers on their account to make this as smooth as possible.

**DETAILS OF EACH EMERGENCY INCIDENT ARE INCLUDED IN THE TABLE ON PAGE 6.**

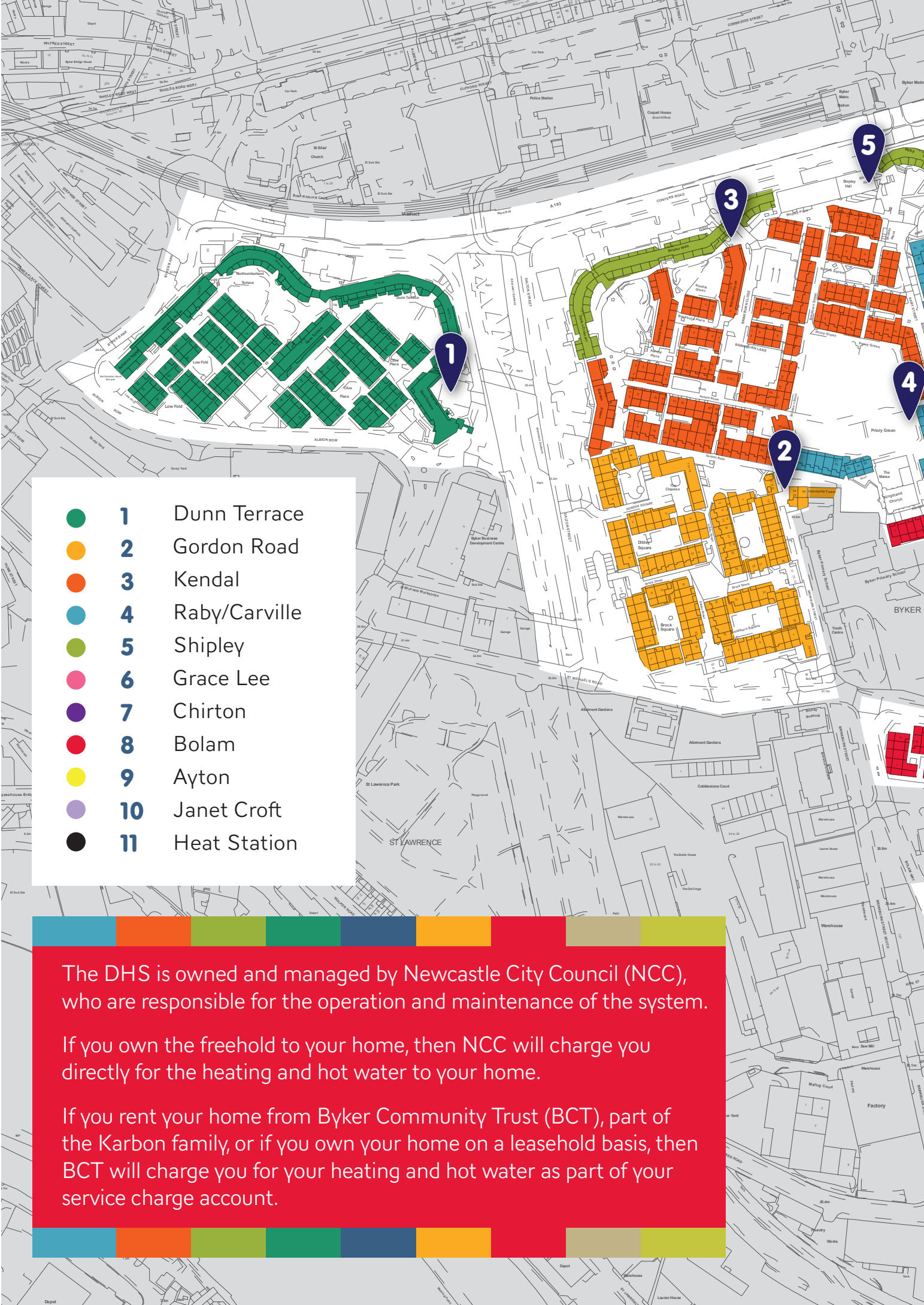
### 7 DECEMBER

NCC identified a leak on the primary mains outside Shipley Baths which impacted homes connected to the substations at Shipley, Grace Lee, Chirton and Kendal affecting 897 homes. NCC engineers immediately carried out an emergency repair to stem the leak.

### 8 DECEMBER

There was a flood in the Chirton substation caused by a leak on the incoming primary mains. Customers reported steam coming from the substation and NCC engineers immediately carried out an emergency repair to stem the leak.





- 1 Dunn Terrace
- 2 Gordon Road
- 3 Kendal
- 4 Raby/Carville
- 5 Shipley
- 6 Grace Lee
- 7 Chirton
- 8 Bolam
- 9 Ayton
- 10 Janet Croft
- 11 Heat Station

The DHS is owned and managed by Newcastle City Council (NCC), who are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the system.

If you own the freehold to your home, then NCC will charge you directly for the heating and hot water to your home.

If you rent your home from Byker Community Trust (BCT), part of the Karbon family, or if you own your home on a leasehold basis, then BCT will charge you for your heating and hot water as part of your service charge account.



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DATE	EMERGENCY INCIDENT	CUSTOMERS/ SUBSTATIONS AFFECTED	DURATION OF TIME CUSTOMERS WITHOUT HEATING AND HOT WATER
12/12/21	Leak on the primary mains at Gordon Road. Engineers had to shut down the primary mains for safety reasons.	Raby/Carville	4 days
		Gordon	6 days
16/12/21	<p>Following the flood at Chirton substation on 8 December, engineers found the water ingress had affected the performance of pumps and invertors in the substation.</p> <p>Engineers had to shut down the substation while the pumps were dried out, rewired and reinstalled.</p>	Chirton (Excluding Mount Pleasant customers)	4 days
21/12/21	Engineers confirmed that the leak on the primary mains on 7 December had deteriorated, and had to shut down the primary mains for safety reasons requiring all customers heating and hot water to be transferred to temporary supplies.	Shipleigh	1 day
		Grace Lee	1 day
		Kendal	3 days
		Chirton	4 days

In the New Year, NCC confirmed that the small leak on the primary mains at the main Heat Station was getting worse. Work was already planned to replace this section of pipework and therefore temporary boilers were ordered for the remaining substations at Janet Croft, Dunn Terrace, Ayton and Bolam to transfer across customers to temporary heating and hot water supplies, prior to starting work to replace this section of primary main.

By 17 January 2022, all properties and commercial buildings supplied by the DHS were connected to temporary boilers at substation level across the estate. This is to allow engineers to carry out the essential repair works to the primary mains network while maintaining heating and hot water supplies to all properties.

## HANDLING YOUR COMPLAINTS

Once again, we sincerely apologise for the inconvenience this disruption caused you and your family in the run up to Christmas. NCC are working hard to complete the necessary repairs to the system as soon as possible.

We understand this has been very frustrating for many customers. Some of our customers wrote to us to complain about the situation and we have responded to each customer individually.

We therefore wanted to send you this leaflet to hopefully address some of your concerns and to explain what will happen next.

## WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT?

Temporary boilers have been connected to all substations across the estate. This will allow NCC engineers to carry out the essential repair works to the network whilst maintaining a heating and hot water supply to your home.

NCC are working to complete the repairs as soon as possible. Works to repair the primary main at the Heat Station on Walker Road are now underway and expected to complete in March 2022. At this point, we will be able to reconnect customers south of Commercial Road and Dunn Terrace back onto the main DHS.

You will see across the estate that excavations are ongoing at the areas affected by the leaks on the primary mains network. This allows engineers to quantify the extent of repair works and confirm a timescale for carrying out these repairs. As soon as we receive the programme of works, we will be communicating this to the customers affected in writing and will post updates on our website and social media channels.

Ahead of the work commencing on the substation which supplies heating and hot water to your home, we will also contact you by text message before, during and on completion of the works to keep you updated.

Temporary boilers will remain at each substation until repairs are complete and homes reconnected to the main DHS.

Alongside these works, NCC are appointing an independent engineering firm to carry out a detailed investigation of the DHS to identify if any other works are required on the system to ensure it will be reliable in providing heating and hot water supplies to customers in the long term. We will continue to provide updates on this exercise inside the Byker News newsletter, which is posted to all BCT customers four times throughout the year.





## WHAT WE NEED YOU TO DO?

- If you are a BCT customer or leaseholder, please make sure we have your correct mobile number so we can text you with updates before, during and after regarding the works to reinstate a permanent supply to your home
- Please keep an eye out on our website at [www.bykercommunitytrust.org](http://www.bykercommunitytrust.org) for updates
- Please follow us on social media on Facebook (**@BykerCommunityTrust**) and Twitter (**@BykerTrust**) to make sure you see all DHS updates
- **Owner occupiers** can also review copies of our Byker News newsletter on our website at [www.bykercommunitytrust.org/resource/category/newsletters](http://www.bykercommunitytrust.org/resource/category/newsletters)



## STILL NEED TO CONTACT US?

**BCT customers and leaseholders:** Please come and see us at the **BCT office at 17 Raby Cross** and we'll be happy to help. Alternatively, you can call us on freephone **0800 533 5442** and select option 2 to speak to one of the team or send us an email at [enquiries@bykerct.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bykerct.co.uk) and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

**Owner occupiers:** If you're an **owner occupier** and purchase your heating and hot water from YHN/ NCC, please contact NCC directly on **0191 278 7878**.

If you're still experiencing any issues with your heating and hot water supply, please report the problem and we'll get someone out to your property as soon as possible.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding while we work to reinstate customers back onto the DHS.