



**BRINGING OUR
COMMUNITY SPACES
BACK INTO USE
PAGE 14**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK
@BYKERCOMMUNITYTRUST
FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

**FUTURE
PROOFING THE
BYKER WALL
PAGE 10**

**LEARNING
FROM OUR
COMPLAINTS
PAGE 11**

**KEEPING SAFE
WITH YOUR HOME
APPLIANCES
PAGE 17**

Our freephone telephone number

0800 533 5442 is available for all enquiries and out of office hours emergency repairs.

📞 Option 1 for repairs (also out of hours emergencies)

🏠 Option 3 for all housing enquiries

£ Option 2 for all rent enquiries

🏢 Option 4 for all business enquiries

USEFUL NUMBERS

Concierge Service (Byker Wall residents)

0800 772 0519

Employment and Welfare Benefits

0800 533 5442

Housing Benefit / Council Tax (Switchboard)

0191 278 7878



LANGUAGES

This information is about Byker Community Trust, part of Karbon Homes. If you'd like this in another format, such as translated or audio version, please let us know!

Arabic

هذه المعلومات عن Byker Community Trust، جزء من Karbon Homes. إذا كنت ترغب بها بصيغة أخرى، مثل نسخة مترجمة أو صوتية، فيرجى إعلامنا!

Slovak

Tieto informácie sa týkajú organizácie Byker Community Trust, ktorá je súčasťou spoločnosti Karbon Homes. Ak si želáte obdržať tieto informácie v inom formáte, napríklad v preloženej alebo zvukovej verzii, dajte nám prosím vedieť!

Farsi

این اطلاعات درباره بایکر کامیونیتی تراست (Byker Community Trust)، که بخشی از کاربون هومز (Karbon Homes) است، می باشد. اگر مایل هستید این مطلب را در قالب دیگری، مانند نسخه ترجمه شده یا صوتی دریافت کنید، لطفاً به ما اطلاع دهید.

French

Ces informations concernent le Byker Community Trust, qui fait partie de Karbon Homes. Si vous souhaitez obtenir ce document dans un autre format, par exemple traduit ou dans une version audio, faites-le nous savoir !

Czech

Tyto informace se týkají organizace Byker Community Trust, která je součástí společnosti Karbon Homes. Pokud byste chtěli tyto informace v jiném formátu, například v přeložené nebo zvukové verzi, dejte nám prosím vědět!

Polish

Niniejsza informacja dotyczy Byker Community Trust, części Karbon Homes. Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać tę informację w innym formacie, np. w tłumaczeniu lub w wersji audio, proszę dać nam znać!

Portuguese

Esta informação é sobre Byker Community Trust, parte da Karbon Homes. Se desejar esta informação noutro formato, por exemplo a versão traduzida ou em áudio, por favor informe-nos!

FRONT COVER PHOTO:

One of our hobby rooms that is set to be refurbished.

WELCOME TO THE AUTUMN EDITION OF BYKER NEWS!



I hope you enjoyed your summer break and managed to join us on some of our fantastic trips. Of course, we'll be running some more in the October half term, so keep an eye out on page 4 and our social media channels for more information.

Just because summer has come to an end doesn't mean the fun has to stop! Turn to page 6 to hear from the team of Newcastle City Council behind the "On The Square" events, and find out what they have planned for the autumn and winter seasons.

As the days become shorter and nights longer, keeping our customers safe is our top priority. If you see or experience any anti-social behaviour, please report it. You can do so by calling 0800 533 5442. If what you are experiencing is an emergency or there is immediate risk, please call 999.

Along with one of our community partners, we've been able to secure £338,000 funding to transform some of the Hobby Rooms on the estate. You can read more about the project, and what the Hobby Rooms will be used for on page 14.

As we move closer to winter and the festive season, it's important to remember to keep on top of our finances. Paying your rent couldn't be easier. Turn to page 8 to see all the different ways you can pay yours - stress and hassle free.

At Karbon, we always strive to provide you with the best service possible. We recognise that we don't always do this and have implemented a "you said, we did" approach to make real, impactful change. Turn to page 11 to find out more.

If you can, give us a follow on Facebook @bykercommunitytrust where we post regular updates about what's happening on the estate.

I hope you have a wonderful autumn and families have a great half term.

Michelle Bell
Assistant Director

**DIDN'T GET
YOUR COPY OF
THE MAGAZINE?**

You can subscribe or unsubscribe at any time, or if you'd like it in another format, such as translated or audio version, let us know!

OCTOBER HALF TERM TRIPS

We had a fantastic time on the summer trips! In autumn half term, we'll be holding two trips to Northumberland Zoo on Tuesday 28 and Friday 31 October.

You can register for your place on the trips by scanning the QR code. If you would prefer a member of the BCT team to fill out the form on your behalf, please visit our reception.

Terms and conditions apply:

1. Anyone in arrears and not engaging with our Income Team to arrange repayment, will be subject to a review.
2. Anyone with an open ASB case will be subject to a review by our safer communities officer before a final decision is made.
3. Any application to attend a trip is subject to management discretion in exceptional cases.



Foundation Futures

Byker Christmas parade

After the amazing success of last year's first-ever Byker Christmas Parade, Foundation Futures is excited to share that the parade will be returning this year! Plans are already underway thanks to its wellbeing group and the team can't wait to celebrate with our community once again. The date will be confirmed soon, watch this space.

Peer mentoring training

We're offering free peer mentoring training for 16-25 year-olds in Byker. This is a wonderful opportunity to gain skills in communication, leadership and supporting others, perfect for boosting confidence and CVs. Complete the short questionnaire or get in touch if you want to know more.

BECOME A PEER MENTOR

TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGE 16-25 LIVING IN BYKER
(OR HAVE GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF/LINKS TO THE AREA)

WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND LEARN NEW SKILLS?

JOIN OUR EXCITING PEER MENTOR TRAINING AND LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

WHAT YOU WILL GET:

- ✓ BOOST YOUR CV AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES
- ✓ LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT OTHERS
- ✓ BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS
- ✓ BE PART OF SOMETHING POSITIVE IN BYKER

HOW TO APPLY:

SCAN THE QR CODE AND COMPLETE THE SHORT APPLICATION FORM

SCAN ME

FUNDED BY NEWCASTLE YOUTH FUND

Newcastle City Council

COMMUNITY FUND

FOUNDATION FUTURES
Real support. True connections. A future you believe in.

BYKER IN BLOOM

In collaboration with Newcastle City Council, we once again hosted our Byker in Bloom Competition, celebrating the best outdoor spaces Byker has to offer.

The awards event took place at The Grove, where our winners were recognised with a certificate and prize.

List of winners:

Most attractive front garden:

- 1st Julie Tyson
- 2nd Guntis
- 3rd Joint Lisa Graham
- 3rd Joint Geoff Lang

Most attractive back garden:

- 1st Joint Maureen Gardner
- 1st Joint Peter Parker
- 2nd Joint Stephen Deal
- 2nd Joint Madelaine Moor
- 3rd Thomas Reilly

Wildlife friendly garden:

- 1st Davey Poremba
- 2nd Ann Maghie
- 3rd Julie Tyson

Young gardener (under 18):

- 1st Safraz Khan, Elnaz Inara Khan
- 2nd Layla Sanas
- 3rd Sidney Rose Poremba

Community project:

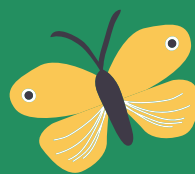
- 1st Keith Robison and Gary Money (Lawson House)

Most attractive balcony:

- 1st Ruby Glover
- 2nd Charlotte Haswell

New gardener:

- 1st Layla Sanas
- 2nd Zara Tipples
- 3rd Stephen Rooke



NEWCASTLE EAST HIGH STREETS PROJECT

Summer fun arrived once again on Hadrian Square, with a full programme of 12 free events across July and August.

There was something for everyone from live music, outdoor theatre and immersive art installations to hands-on workshops. Highlights included a market run entirely by puppet monsters, Byker Groove – a one-day music festival and a crane show featuring aerial performers.

The events programme is led by Newcastle City Council in collaboration with Creative Producer, Lizzie West and is part of a wider project to help improve high streets in the east of the city. Each event is designed to bring people together, celebrate local talent and re-energise Shields Road. Now in its second year, the programme has so far welcomed over 5,000 people in 2025 and the fun doesn't stop there.

There's an exciting winter programme coming soon. Kicking off with a two-day Autumn Celebration on 28 and 29 October, the season continues with Illuminating Byker returning on 7 November, bringing residents together with a dazzling mix of light, theatrical puppetry and live music. To round off the year, Hadrian Square will host a festive Winter Fair on 13 December, featuring traditional funfair rides, transforming the square into a joyful gathering place for all ages.

See you on the Square!



Did you attend any of the summer events? The Council is interested to hear your feedback. Send your comments to economicdevelopment@newcastle.gov.uk or via the link to the webpage below.

For further information on the High Streets Project and upcoming events visit www.newcastleeast.commonplace.is or follow [@hadriansquare_events](https://twitter.com/hadriansquare_events) on social media.



A BETTER WAY TO MANAGE YOUR TENANCY IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

We're excited to share that a brand-new MyKarbon portal is coming this autumn.

The new version is more intuitive and packed with helpful features to improve your experience and give you more control over your housing services.

Here's what's new:

- **Simpler repair reporting** – Just describe the issue and upload a photo. No need to figure out which trade to request.
- **Smarter appointment booking** – Combine multiple repairs into one visit, saving time and reducing disruption.
- **Photo uploads** – Help our teams prepare in advance and improve the chances of a first-time fix.
- **How to guides** – Solve simple issues like blocked sinks yourself, freeing up staff for complex repairs.
- **Know your Housing Officer** – Your portal will show their name and contact details, so you know exactly who to contact.

If you don't already have an account, it's easy to register and you can access it from your laptop, tablet or mobile.

All you will need is:

- your name
- an email address
- and your tenancy number

If you need help with your account, get in touch by emailing mykarbon@karbonhomes.co.uk or give us a call on our freephone number **0808 164 0111**



mykarbon

PAYING YOUR RENT

Did you know there are a few different ways you can make payments to your rent account?

Direct Debit

This can be set up over the phone by calling **0800 533 5442** or by logging into MyKarbon. It only takes a couple of minutes, and your payments will be collected from your bank account hassle free. You will receive notification of the direct debit and the amount to be taken.



Give us a call

You can pay with a bank card by speaking to one of our friendly team during office hours on **0800 533 5442** or by using our automated payment line. The payment line is available 24 hours a day and outside of office hours, you'll just need your tenancy reference number.

MyKarbon

You can sign in to or set up an account on the Karbon Homes website. To register you will need your name, email address and

tenancy reference number. To login you will need your username and password. MyKarbon is available 24 hours for you to make debit card payments that will be posted to your account immediately.

Online banking

You can set up a regular standing order or make a one-time bank transfer to Karbon Homes via your online bank account. To do this you need the following details:

Sort code: 60-15-08

Account number: 63575523

Reference: please quote your tenancy reference number

Swipe card

Cash payments can be made using your Allpay swipe card or using the barcode from one of our letters at any Post Office, PayPoint or PayZone outlet. If you don't have a card or need a new one, then please call us on **0800 533 5442** or email **info@karbonhomes.co.uk**.

Direct Payments from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit

If you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, you may be able to have this paid directly to us.

Please call **0800 533 5442** or email **info@karbonhomes.co.uk** and we can check for you.

We're here to help

We know the run up to Christmas can be an expensive time, but your usual payments should still be made to your rent account. If you are experiencing problems with paying your rent, then please contact one of our friendly team to discuss this on **0800 533 5442** or email **info@karbonhomes.co.uk**. We can offer advice and support and refer you to one of our specialist advisors.

Did you know?

We have a rent surgery every Monday (from 12:30 pm to 3pm) and Wednesday (from 10am to 12:30pm) at The Byker Community Trust Office where you can speak with a Customer Accounts Officer face-to-face and use a translation service if required. We're here to help.



Rent statements

At Karbon, we're always looking for ways to improve our services and make life easier for our customers, while also trying to reduce our carbon footprint. That's why we've gone paperless with rent statements, and we're no longer sending them in the post.

As we've mentioned in the article above, you can access your rent information using our free and secure online MyKarbon portal or call us.

If you need a paper statement at any time, please contact us to request one to be sent via email or post.

SEE IT – REPORT IT

Under new Building Safety laws, certain fire or structural safety issues in your building must be reported to the Building Safety Regulator. The system we now have in place for this is our Mandatory Occurrence Reporting System.

Knowing about these types of fire or structural safety issues helps us address issues quickly and keep everyone in the building safe. We want to make it as simple as possible for concerns to be reported to us.

If you see any of the following types of issues, please report them to us:

- Damaged or faulty fire doors
- Blocked fire escapes, corridors or exits
- Anything that might cause a fire to start or spread in the building
- Poorly completed building work that could make the building unsafe
- Cracks or other structural issues with the building including to balconies or walkways

What happens after you report something?

Our Building Safety Team will quickly investigate and fix any problems. If there is an immediate danger, we'll treat it as an emergency.

We'll investigate all reported issues within 10 days and, if required, report them to the Building Safety Regulator.

We'll keep you informed about the investigation and let you know the outcome and any future steps.

What to report

Provide as much detail as possible about the issue, share photos or videos of the issue if this helps.

How to report

1. In Person: Visit Our Office, Or Speak To Your Housing Officer Or Scheme Coordinator
2. Phone: **0808 533 5442**
3. Email:
Byker.firesafety@Karbonhomes.co.uk
4. Submit A Report Online:
www.karbonhomes.co.uk

To request this information in another format or language, please contact:
byker.firesafety@karbonhomes.co.uk





FUTURE PROOFING THE BYKER WALL

Following recent changes in building safety legislation, Karbon Homes has taken proactive steps to ensure the long-term structural integrity of the Byker Wall.

Why the survey was needed

The Building Safety Act, introduced after the Grenfell tragedy, now requires housing providers to demonstrate both fire and structural safety for high-rise buildings. As part of our commitment to compliance and resident safety, we commissioned Ridge and Partners, specialist structural engineers, to conduct a comprehensive survey of the Byker Wall and its link blocks.

What the survey found

- The Byker Wall has undergone previous structural repairs and refurbishments.
- Investigations, including borehole drilling and concrete sampling, provided strong evidence that the Wall remains structurally sound.
- No RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete), a material recently flagged nationally for safety concerns, was found.
- Ground conditions and concrete foundations were found to be satisfactory.

Things for us to do

While the overall structure is sound, engineers have advised a few targeted improvements:

- Isolated repairs to balconies where steel inside the concrete has started to rust.
- Installation of something called cathodic protection. This will help to extend concrete durability.
- Completion of external waterproofing on balconies and walkways, especially across link blocks.
- Brickwork reinforcement and repointing where needed.
- Introduction of a long-term structural inspection strategy.

What happens next

All structural repairs will be added to the wider investment plan for Byker, and we'll be communicating these soon.

Our Building Safety Manager will lead the future management strategy for structural inspections and assessments and will present our evidence to the Building Safety Regulator when we are asked to do so.

We're committed to keeping you informed every step of the way. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Email: buildingsafety@karbonhomes.co.uk

LEARNING FROM OUR COMPLAINTS



We're always looking to improve. One of the ways we do this is through continuous learning through our customer and colleague feedback. By regularly reviewing and making changes based on this feedback, we're able to create a positive complaint handling culture and provide a fantastic service.

We wanted to share some of the recent lessons learned from complaints across Karbon and Byker.

Explaining the 53-week rent year

What customers told us:

We received feedback that our rent increase letter didn't explain the 53-week rent year or how it affects Universal Credit. This meant you had to contact us to understand why your housing costs didn't match your monthly rent.

What we've done:

We've added a dedicated page to our website that clearly explains the 53-week rent year and how it relates to Universal Credit.

What's changed:

We'll include this explanation in all future rent increase letters that relate to a 53-week rent year, so you'll have the information upfront.

Making arrears letters more supportive

What customers told us:

Customers suggested that our customer arrears letters felt too harsh and could cause unnecessary worry.

What we've done:

We're redesigning our first arrears letter to be more supportive and understanding. We'll also keep an eye on how customers respond and make further improvements if needed.

What's changed:

We're committed to making sure our communications are respectful and helpful, so we'll continue to listen to your feedback.

Giving advance notice of visits

What customers told us:

A customer's father let us know that his son, who has learning difficulties, was very upset when our Grounds Maintenance Team arrived without warning.



What we've done:

We've updated the customer's records to make sure we give advance notice before any visits so he can feel prepared and comfortable.

What's changed:

The customer's father has since thanked our team for the change, saying it's made a big difference in helping his son feel more at ease.

We regularly share our complaint feedback learnings on the **Learning from our Complaints** section on our website.

Visit www.karbonhomes.co.uk/complaints to find out more.



MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYMENT ADVISOR SEAN!

Taking over from Hannah, Sean will be providing dedicated employment support on the Byker estate.

Sean has worked in our Foundations for Life Team providing support across Durham and Northumberland, as well as leading some of our courses.

Whether you're looking for employment or want a career change, there are plenty of ways Sean can help you:

- Employment advice
- In-work support
- Access Maths and English support
- Digital training and support
- Volunteering
- Work placements

Sean also runs our **"The Write Turn"** course, that supports customers to pass their driving theory test.

If you're interested in speaking to Sean to discuss your next career move, email **foundations@karbonhomes.co.uk** or call **0191 223 8750**.

OUR PROGRESS IN TACKLING DAMP AND MOULD

The tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his home in Rochdale, was a devastating reminder of just how important safe, healthy homes are.

Awaab's story sparked a national conversation about the dangers of damp and mould and led to the Regulator of Social Housing releasing a report highlighting the issue and recommending improvements.

Since then, we've worked hard to strengthen how we spot, manage and fix issues, because everyone deserves to feel safe and secure in their home. We're pleased to share our progress.

With new rules, known as Awaab's Law, now being introduced across the country to ensure faster action, the work we've done has put us in a good position. We know there's still more to do in speeding up inspections and repairs, and we're committed to doing so.

Report any issues to us via the MyKarbon portal, emailing info@karbonhomes.co.uk or call **0808 164 0111**.

Our approach

We take a proactive approach to prevent and respond to damp and mould, including:

- Surveying all homes every five years
- Monitoring homes at higher risk
- Acting on customer reports
- Preventing water from entering homes by replacing doors, windows and roofs when needed
- Improving energy efficiency of homes
- Training teams to better identify and resolve issues

A timeline of some of our key actions:

2023

- Reviewed our approach and created an action plan
- Introduced a damp and mould policy
- Launched new training for our teams
- Created a risk rating, ensuring we prioritise any high-risk cases
- Improved customer communications and made them available in multiple languages
- Improved our record keeping

2024

- Recruited more surveyors to do damp and mould inspections
- Invited customers to review our overall approach and suggest changes
- Trialled sensors in several homes to better understand causes of damp

2025

- Prepared for Awaab's Law – making sure we can respond within timescales
- Created a dedicated Damp and Mould Team
- Created a Major Works Team to resolve complex cases
- Introduced technology to check customers are satisfied the issue has been resolved and to help to manage appointments

What is Awaab's Law?

Starting 27 October 2025, housing associations must investigate serious repair issues within strict timeframes, including 24 hours for emergencies posing immediate risk and 10 working days for extensive damp and mould.

If the issue can't be resolved immediately, a letter or email will be provided to customers within three working days, detailing findings and next steps.

From 2026, the rules will go beyond damp and mould, covering a wider range of risks like extreme temperatures, fire safety, structural issues and hygiene hazards.

Find out more at www.karbonhomes.co.uk

BRINGING OUR COMMUNITY SPACES BACK INTO USE

Along with our community partners, we've been able to secure over £338,000 in funding to breathe new life into some of our community spaces on the estate.

Karbon has been awarded over £98,000 through Historic England's Heritage at Risk Capital Fund. The estate is one of 37 heritage sites across England to receive a grant for a project set to bring the estate's hobby rooms back into use. The fund is led by Historic England and funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The project will transform two hobby rooms, which are spaces dotted amongst the homes on the estate designed by architect Ralph Erskine in the 1960's, to help foster community interaction and cohesion.

One hobby room on Spires Lane will become a vibrant new community hub and another on St Michael's Mount a dedicated artist's studio, providing space for creative production and community engagement.

We sat down with Victoria Keen, Place Partnership Strategic Lead at Karbon to learn more about the future of community spaces on the estate.

Hi Victoria, can you tell us a bit more about why the hobby rooms are being restored?

The hobby rooms are a very important part of Byker's architectural and social heritage. Over the years, they've served as spaces to bring the community together. We know residents on the estate have fond memories of them and want to see them back in use.

This project will help us preserve this part of the estate's identity, while creating new opportunities for our customers to connect, create and thrive.



How did this project come about?

We've recently created a place shaping initiative through our Fair Foundations strategy. This means that we've selected specific areas in the North East, one being Byker, that we're helping to thrive through investment.

Place shaping isn't just about creating new - for us, it's about celebrating and regenerating areas or buildings that already exist. The hobby rooms have had such an important role over the years, including where the old community newsletter "The Byker Phoenix" was created.



How has Historic England been involved?

Historic England's Heritage at Risk Capital Fund aims to revitalise heritage buildings in England which demonstrate strong local benefits. We saw how the hobby rooms would be a fantastic fit for this fund, and we were able to secure a fantastic amount of funding, thanks to Historic England recognising the importance of them, and the value they can bring to the estate.

What will the hobby rooms be used for?

We've been working hard to find local partners who would benefit from having a dedicated space and drive important initiatives within the community.

We can't tell you too much about who will be using the spaces right now, but we'll be providing lots of updates as we move closer to the hobby rooms being finished!

Work on the hobby rooms is expected to begin later this year, with completion scheduled for spring 2026.

In addition to these hobby rooms, Northern Cultural Projects CIC secured a £240,186 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and £36,488 match funding from Karbon, to see the photo studio hobby room on Raby Way transformed into a community archive.

Silvie Fisch, Director of Northern Cultural Projects CIC sat down with us to discuss this exciting project further.

Hi Silvie, why did you want to create an archive on the estate?

The Byker Estate is seen as one of the most iconic and significant housing developments, in both architecture and social history.

The estate has a rich history, and I think there should be a space on the estate where this can be celebrated and developed as time moves on and the estate evolves.

What can our readers expect from the Archive once work is completed?

The community archive will capture the evolution of the estate over the years, from pre-redevelopment and its construction between 1969 and 1983, through to the present. It will showcase the unique architectural and design features, as well as capture the stories of its communities and giving people agency over their histories.

Can the community get involved with the Archive?

Yes, of course! The archive will be community-led, providing people who live on the estate with volunteering and employment opportunities.

If you're interested in getting involved, please contact Silvie via silvie.fisch@northernculturalprojects.org.

The three-year project will start off with the refurbishment and conversion of the 'Photo Studio' hobby room on Raby Street. The Archive will open to the public in spring 2026.

CCTV

As part of our commitment to making Byker a cleaner, greener and safer area for everyone, we have both temporary and permanent CCTV cameras installed across the estate.

The presence of these cameras means we can monitor fly tipping, and hand over any information we find to the council, who can take action against this illegal activity.

We can also monitor anti-social behaviour and support the police with enquiries, maintaining our commitment to reducing crime in the estate area.

BOLAM STREET

Work has been continuing at our Bolam Street development, and we expect the first 12 homes to be ready in time for Christmas.

The development is a mix of one and two-bed bungalows, two-bed houses and two-bed apartments. If you're interested in applying for one of these homes, they are being allocated through the choice-based lettings process.

To apply you'll need to head over to www.newcastlehomes.org.uk to start your application. Through this your need/level of priority will be assessed and if successful you will be given the chance to bid on one of the new homes.

If you need help with your application, our Neighbourhood Housing Officers can support you. Contact us on **0800 533 5442** or email enquiries@bykerct.co.uk.



BE SAFE THIS BONFIRE NIGHT

A MESSAGE FROM TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE



As the darker nights draw in, we are now counting down towards Bonfire Night and, dare we say it, Christmas.

We would always urge people to attend official, organised community events, like firework displays and bonfires, and avoid unlicensed gatherings.

Always remember to:

- Bring in your wheelie bins after collection
- Use council-operated Household Waste and Recycling Centres to discard bulky items and don't leave them next to communal bins
- Be aware of where your children are playing or congregating during evening times
- Keep your pets indoors during firework displays
- Avoid setting off fireworks in confined garden spaces and close to areas like wooden fencing.

If you do experience an emergency, please call **999** and ask for the fire and rescue service. You can find further information about Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service by visiting www.twfire.gov.uk

Community safety

Please be aware that every Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service vehicle is fitted with CCTV cameras, and firefighters also wear body worn cameras during incidents. All footage can be used by the Police as incriminating evidence, and crimes made against the fire and rescue service are taken very seriously.

KEEPING SAFE WITH YOUR HOME APPLIANCES

At Byker, we work hard to keep you safe in your home. While we make sure our buildings and services meet the highest safety standards, risks can come from everyday household items. Electrical appliances are one of the most common causes of home fires, which is why using them safely is so important.

We spoke with Andy Kennedy, our Assistant Director for Building and Customer Safety, about some simple steps we can all take to reduce risk and protect our homes.

Hi Andy, tell us why it's important for everyone to think about appliance safety.

Electrical appliances – like kettles, toasters, washing machines, phone chargers, etc – are part of everyday life, but if not used safely, they can cause serious accidents. Simple steps like carrying out visual checks and using appliances correctly can make all the difference.

What should people look for when checking their appliances?

Look for frayed wires, scorch marks, cracked plugs or unusual noises or smells. If something doesn't feel right, unplug the appliance straight away and get it checked or replaced.

How else can customers reduce risk?

Always buy products from reputable retailers, and avoid cheap, unbranded items online. Unsafe or counterfeit goods can look convincing but may not meet safety standards. It's also really important to register your appliances with the manufacturer or through www.registermyappliance.org.uk. That way, you'll be contacted if there's ever a safety recall.



Any final advice?

Small actions can prevent big risks – please don't overload sockets or run appliances like washing machines when you're asleep. It's important to make sure you have working smoke alarms in place, and if it isn't working, please contact us.

Five quick safety tips for your appliances:

1. Check them regularly
2. Only buy appliances from trusted, reputable retailers
3. Register your appliances
4. Use them safely – avoid using them when you're out or asleep
5. Test your smoke alarms monthly, contact us if it isn't working.



LIVING IN OUR SHELTERED SCHEMES

We sat down with Alison, our Scheme Coordinator, and Penny a resident of Tom Collins House to learn about what goes on in our sheltered schemes.

Hi Alison, can you tell us a bit more about what sheltered schemes are?

Yes! Sheltered schemes are a block or group of flats that are exclusively for residents over 55. The flats are private, but each scheme has a communal lounge, kitchen and garden.

What's your role in the scheme?

As the Scheme Coordinator, I am our residents first point of contact for any issues they may have. I'm onsite throughout the week and carry out morning welfare calls for residents if they need one, I also create tailored support plans so that our residents receive all the support they need. I can signpost them to additional services such as benefit and financial advice and external support services such as Age Concern.

I also monitor the building for any repairs and issues that may occur and carry out the fire alarm tests.

I work closely with the Emma, the Housing Officer for Tom Collins House to make sure our customer's issues and questions are heard.

Hi Penny, what's it like living in a sheltered scheme?

It's great, you have your own home like you would in any other flat or house, but you've got the choice to be able to go and socialise in the communal areas too.



Alison



Penny

It's nice to know that you can always go have a chat or a change of scenery without having to go too far.

What are the communal areas used for?

Penny: We can just go there to make a drink and watch the tv or have a chat with our neighbours. We also have lots of activities that go on throughout the week, like games night and bingo.

Alison: Our Community Engagement Officer, Bijoli, also arranges lots of activities. Recently, we've had a series of cooking classes with Joanna from Nourish Food School who taught residents how to make a great range of dishes. We've also had visits from North East Museums who bring a range of household and fashion items from recent history for residents to discuss and learn about.

Are there any upcoming events you'd like residents to know about?

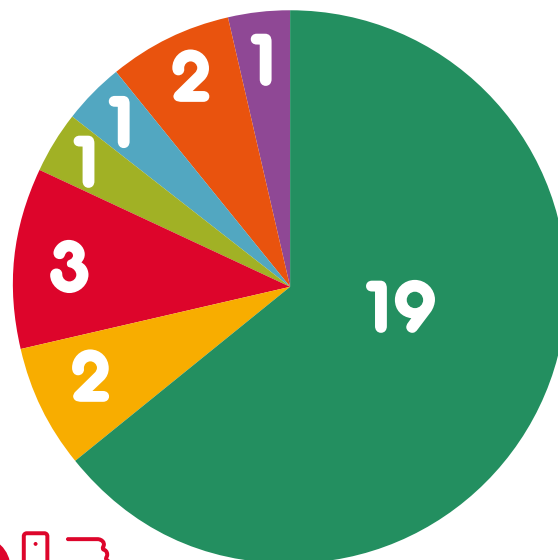
Yes, alongside are regular weekly activities, we're also planning some digital education sessions where residents can learn how to make the most of their mobile phones and other technology.

COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Q1 APRIL - JUNE 2025

Our aim is to give you the service you expect all day, every day, 365 days a year. We try hard to avoid problems, but sometimes we do make mistakes. If you receive a poor service, then please tell us about it so we have the opportunity to put things right. We greatly appreciate your time and view any feedback as an opportunity to improve our services. We're always listening and ready to work hard to resolve your concerns straight away. We received 5 compliments and 29 complaints in Q1 from customers regarding the service they received from us.

Number, Nature, Outcome



29 
COMPLAINTS



Responsive Repairs



Customer Accounts



Investment: treatment of home



Pest Control



ASB



Damp and Mould



Housing Management

5 

COMPLIMENTS

COMPLAINTS UPHELD

Upheld

14

Not Upheld

6

Partially Upheld

9

Upheld: A complaint is considered as 'upheld' when the investigation into the complaint found that we made mistakes or provided a poor service to the customer.

Not upheld: A complaint is considered as 'not upheld' when the investigation into the complaint found that we acted correctly in providing the service to the customer.

Partially upheld: A complaint is considered as 'partially upheld' when we agrees that the complaint was justified in at least one element of the complaint.

Ways to contact us:

- Face-to-face with any member of staff, including contractors working on BCT's behalf.
- Call our Customer Service Team on **0800 533 5442 (option 3)** 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-4:30pm Fridays.
- Email our Customer Services Team at: enquiries@bykerct.co.uk

- Write to our local office address: Byker Community Trust, 17 Raby Cross, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2FF.
- BCT website and social media via Facebook.
- Via a Councillor, MP or other third party.



Start location of Estate walkabouts

The Bread and Butter Thing food hub

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Byker Community Trust office Freephone 0800 533 5442 | 10 St. Lawrence's Primary School Call 0191 265 9881 |
| 2 Children and Families Newcastle East – Byker Sands Centre Call 0191 275 9636. Defibrillator available here. | 11 St. Lawrence's Church |
| 3 ACANE Community Centre and The Bread and Butter Thing Call 0191 265 8110 | 12 East End Library and Pool Call 0191 277 4100 |
| 4 St. Michael's Church Centre Raby Cross | 13 Climb Newcastle |
| 5 St. Michael's Church Headlam Street | 14 Chirton House |
| 6 Former Byker Community Centre | 15 Ralph Erskine House |
| 7 Byker Village Bowling Green | 16 Tom Collins House |
| 8 Byker Primary School Call 0191 265 6906 | 17 Mount Pleasant |
| 9 Avondale House (Veterans' Support) | 18 Byker Pantry |

How to contact Byker Community Trust:

- Call: **0800 533 5442**
- Option 1: Repairs
(also for out of hours emergencies)
- Option 2: Rent Enquiries
- Option 3: Housing Enquiries
- Option 4: Business Enquiries
- enquiries@bykerct.co.uk
- www.bykercommunitytrust.org
- bykercommunitytrust

BYKER
community trust

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