BYKERNEWS

community trust www.bykercommunitytrust.org



OCTOBER TRIPS

BYKER IS THRIVING SEE PAGE 8 **KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME** SEE PAGE 14

Issue 45 - Autumn 2024

Our freephone telephone number

0800 533 5442

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

- Option I for repairs (also out of hours emergencies)
- 2 Option 2 for all rent enquiries
- ♠ Option 3 for all housing enquires
- A Option 4 for all business enquiries



USEFUL NUMBERS

Concierge Service (Byker Wall residents)

Employment & Welfare Benefits

Housing Benefit / Council Tax (Switchboard) **O191 278 7878**

0800 772 0519 0800 533 5442



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	Byke، جزء من Karbon Homes.
	11. 1. 1. 1. 7. 1. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 7. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.

هذه المعلومات عن er Community Trust

	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!
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: A big thank you for our big clean up 9. Euro 2024, 10. Olaf

Down: 1. My Karbon, 4. Ice Cream, 5. Barbie, 6. Wimbledon, 8. Don Henley, 11. Glastonbury

Across: 2. Whitley Bay, 3. The Hoppings, 5. Barbecue, 7. Kids Kabin,

Crossword answers (page 19)

WELCOME TO THE **AUTUMN EDITION** OF THE BYKER **NEWSLETTER..**



Despite the disappointing weather, we still managed to have a great summer, especially on our trips to Northumberland Zoo, Beamish and Hall Hill Farm. We ran a diary competition at the zoo and you can read the entries from our lucky winners on page four.

With the half term around the corner, we're running two free trips to Holmeside park. Details on how to apply can be found on page four, alongside some highlights from our summer trips.

The days might be getting darker, but Byker is beaming! We have recently published the latest Thriving Byker Strategy, outlining all the fantastic work that is going on in our community. On page eight, you can see just a few of the highlights over the past year.

As you'll see from later in this issue, we're very pleased to announce that our environmental plans are moving forward with the next phase of customer consultations. On page 13, you'll find further details of when the consultations will take place and what they'll entail.

Also on page 13, we have shared some new ways you can get involved on the estate and our usual opportunities as a reminder, too. Having your input as customers in how we deliver services is

incredibly important and we'd love to see more of our customers making an impact in Byker and within Karbon.

Keeping you safe in your homes is our top priority. Unfortunately, here has been an increase in e-scooter charging-related fires, and on page 14 we've listed some helpful tips on keeping your home safe when using lithium batteries and chargers. On the opposite page, you will find some further simple tips on day-to-day ways you can keep your home safe.

We always welcome your feedback about this newsletter and the services we deliver, please speak to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer or a member of staff within our Customer Services Team.

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 and your families have a wonderful half term.

Michelle Bell **Assistant Director - Byker**



Keeping our customers up to date is very important, but more importantly is respecting your choices in how we do so.

As a customer, you have the right to opt in or out of our customer newsletter.

We're giving you the option to update your preferences surrounding our newsletter, which you can do so by emailing info@karbonhomes.co.uk

OCTOBER HALF TERA



DEAR DIARY...

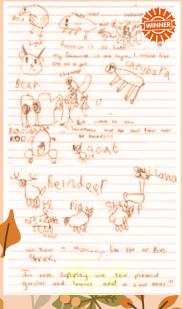
We held a competition on our trip to Northumberland Zoo in August to see who could write the best diary entry documenting the day.





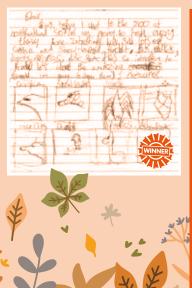
Luna-Mae documented her day with lots of fantastic drawings - our favourite is the capybara!

"We saw a Donkey! Like the one from Shrek!"



Cameron not only wrote a detailed diary entry, but included drawings as well.

"We saw lots of capybara, snow leopards, tarantulas, bats, meerkats, parrots, alpacas, arctic foxes - it was so interesting to learn lots about the amazing creatures!"



OCTOBER HALF TERM TRIPS'

Due to popular demand, we'll be hosting two trips to Holmside Park during the October half term.

The adventure park in Durham has over 20 indoor and outdoor activities, including a giant inflatable obstacle course.

You can register your interest by scanning the QR code.

Alternatively you can still go down to BCT reception and register for the trips there.

Terms and conditions apply:

*First come first served. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

ELEMENTS
STREET ART FESTIVAL

You may have noticed an artistic addition to the estate over the summer.

We partnered with the team at ELEMENTS street art festival to install a street art board in the heart of the Byker estate. The installation was one of 14 pieces of artwork in the festival trail, which celebrated the talent of the region's street and graffiti artists.

Situated at the junction of Raby Street and Raby Cross, the Byker artwork was created by artist 'Nocciola the Drawer', who in collaboration with Foundation Futures, worked with young people living on the Byker estate to workshop ideas and portray what Byker means to them through the piece.

From the session, a fun, vibrant mural was created, which illustrates the diversity of the estate and includes Byker's iconic colours and a classic Geordie saying.

This isn't the end of street art in Byker, there will be some very exciting new additions coming soon – so keep your eyes peeled around the estate.





BIG CLEAN UP

A huge thank you to everyone who joined our day of action from the Byker management team and Newcastle City Council!

We collected and disposed of around 24 tonnes of rubbish. We couldn't have done it without you, and your efforts have gone towards making Byker cleaner and greener.

If you need any information or advice on rubbish or waste disposal, please refer back to your cleaner greener Byker newsletter. There are lots of ways outlined to dispose of your waste, or even give it a new lease of life.

A copy of this can also be found on our website at https://bykercommunitytrust.org/resources/





FOUNDATION FUTURES

Foundation Futures is an organisation specialising in teaching and youth services that operates from the heart of our estate.

From youth groups to family support and advocacy, they provide a large range of activities and groups to support our community and beyond.

They have lots of groups and activities every week at The Chevron – have a read of the leaflets below and opposite to see if there's something that would suit you or your family.



FOUNDATION FUTURES
Providing safe spaces and safe faces to transform lives

FAMILY SUPPORT & ADVOCACY

FROM SEPTEMBER 2024 WE CAN PROVIDE SUPPORT, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES LIVING IN BYKER ON:

- -Benefits
- -School based issues including school refusal
- -Support with working with statutory services such as social services, youth justice, probation, housing
- -Careers advice
- -Volunteer opportunities
- -Workshops
- -Signposting

and more

Contact Jennie to find out how we can support you and your family

At The Chevron, Gordon Road Mon-Thurs 9.00-4.00

For more information contact, Jennie:

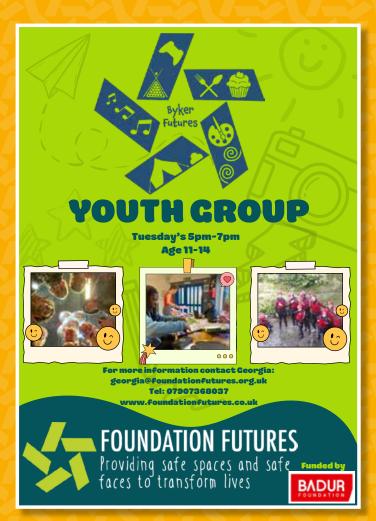
07895582516

jennie@foundationfutures.org.uk www.foundationfutures.co.uk

funded by

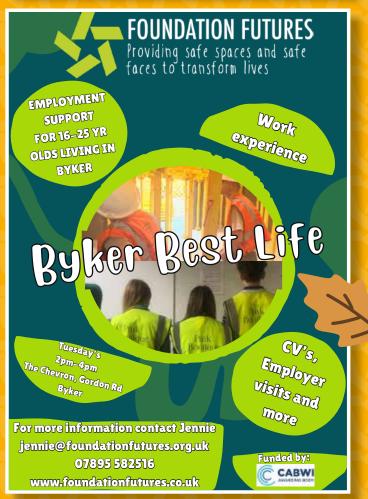














Here in Byker, we're working to provide our customers with a safe, comfortable environment in which they can flourish.

From maintaining our green spaces, to providing opportunities for young people, and facilitating major investment programmes – Byker is thriving!

The Thriving Byker Strategy (TBS) provides a framework for strategic partnership working, and showcases what we are doing, and who we work with on the estate throughout the year.

Its objectives and priorities are based on what you, our customers, asked for and how they will impact positively on the Byker estate.

During 2023/24, the TBS has been refreshed in collaboration with BCT Committee and our strategic partners to ensure the themes remain relevant and align with their strategic priorities for the Byker estate.

The TBS is widely influenced by the views of customers over the following key themes:



Pride and ownership in the area



A cleaner and greener Byker



Extending our reach



Health, wellbeing and mindfulness



A safe place to live



Community training and employment







JUST SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS DURING 2023/2024

Place



34

community events held



1,343

BCT Customers engaged through these events

Customer



389

customers supported through Household Support Fund



882

customers signed up to MyKarbon Portal

Costs



£804,253
additional money gained for customers



£77,800

secured from NCC Household Support Fund



£2.8M

spent on improvements to our homes



£60,428

spent on community activities and programmes

Homes

This year we have installed:



60

new kitchens



61

new cloakrooms



209

new bathrooms and showers



230

homes benefitted from new internal doors

Since April 2021 we have installed:





232

new kitchens



999

homes benefitted from new internal doors



880

bathrooms and showers

21

customers re-engaged with upgrade works and were added back into the programme after initially declining



You can read the full Thriving Byker Strategy on our website: wwwbykercommunitytrust.org/resources/

CUSTOMERS HAVE THEIR SAY ON OUR DAMP AND MOULD APPROACH

Making sure our customers live in safe, healthy and energy efficient homes is a top priority – and it's our responsibility as a landlord. This includes a commitment to addressing damp and mould.

We're also dedicated to listening to our customers and making sure their views shape our services.

As part of this, we recently invited our Customer Scrutiny Panel to share their thoughts and provide feedback on how we handle damp and mould issues. We caught up with customer and panel member Ann Potts to hear her thoughts and why she decided to take part.

What made you decide to join the Scrutiny Panel?

I joined the panel to ensure the customer's voice is heard. To act as a 'critical friend' to influence the decisions that are taken, ensure that the views and needs of customers are considered in order to promote better services and policies and that changes are fit for purpose and justified.

How did you find reviewing our approach to damp and mould?

I found it very positive, although sad due to the circumstances. We were all aware of the news reports about the conditions some social housing residents were living in elsewhere in the country, alongside the terribly sad death of Awaab Ishak, leading to the introduction of Awaab's Law.

We worked alongside Karbon staff who deal with damp and mould, and we found out how Karbon is dealing with these issues.

What did you learn as a result?

We learnt that Karbon is very proactive in their approach. There are different types of damp, which are dealt with via different methods.

Initially, damp and mould were dealt with by Karbon through a six-stage process. This will be reduced to three stages, making the process more efficient and streamlined.

Technology and training will be updated, communication will be comprehensive and transparent. There is a pilot scheme placing sensors in homes to measure humidity and temperature and so much more.

What would you say to other customers who would like to join one of our customer committees?

I would say go for it. There are a variety of groups to join, so something to interest most people. You don't have to have any qualifications, and you learn such a lot. You'll be there representing your neighbours, and you will meet like-minded people from different areas all with the same goal - to ensure the customer's voice is heard at every level and we receive value for money.

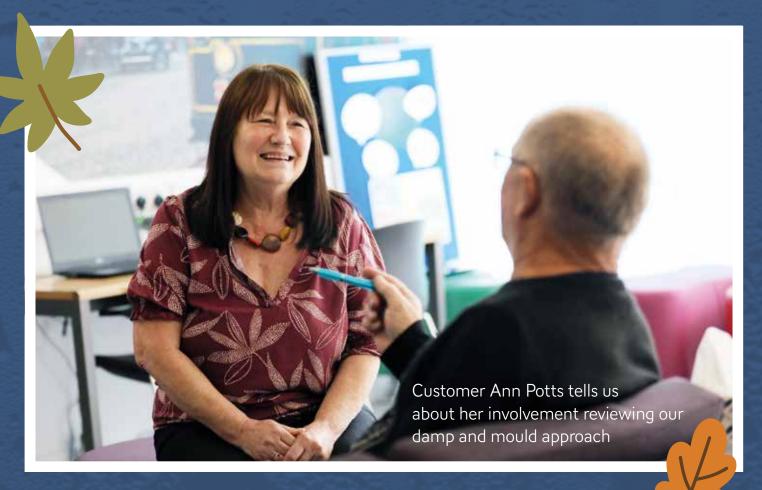
The panel members are currently writing up their findings and these will be shared with customers later this year.

To get involved in one of our customer committees, email connectwithkarbon@karbonhomes.co.uk



If you have damp and mould in your home, call 0800 533 5442 or email enquiries@bykerct.co.uk





Our approach to damp and mould

Here we tell you more about our approach to tackling damp and mould and share some everyday tips we can all do to help to prevent it.

- Our frontline teams receive damp and mould training.
- We take a proactive approach by surveying all of our homes and communal areas every five years, addressing issues as they arise.
- We monitor homes that are more prone due to their age, type or features.
- We respond to reports from customers.
- To prevent water getting into a home, we replace doors and windows, roofs and gutters, etc. when they're in poor condition and/or past their life cycle and carry out external pointing.
- We're retrofitting our homes so they're more energy efficient. This helps to tackle some damp and mould issues caused by a lack of insulation, for example.
- We've updated our customer materials to share our approach and provide some everyday tips we can all do to prevent damp and mould.



Tip 1

Using an extractor fan when cooking, showering and bathing removes excess moisture from the air.



Tip 2

If you spot condensation on a surface, wipe it down with a dry, clean cloth or towel.



Tip 3

Keeping your home heated where possible helps prevent condensation from forming on walls, floors and ceilings.



Tip 4

If you can, set your thermostat to the lowest comfortable temperature (between 18-21°C) will help to keep you and your home healthy.

GET INVOLVED!

Could you be the face of Karbon?

We're looking for customers to take part in one of our photoshoots.

We need photos of our customers to bring our brand, including our website and social media,

We would need to take photos of you and your family in your home and around the estate.

As a thank you for taking part and letting us use the photos, we would provide you with a £50 voucher.



For further information and to register your interest scan the QR code.



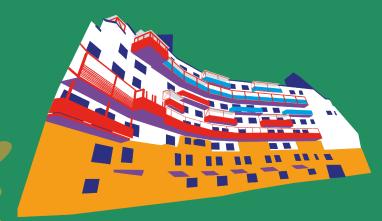
BUILDING SAFETY

Congratulations to our winners!

Three customers from Byker won £50 vouchers of their choice, after giving feedback on our draft Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy.

Your views and insight are incredibly important to us and will make a huge impact on how we work.

We're pleased to say the strategy is now in the process of being signed off, which wouldn't be possible without the influence of our customers.





We are holding the next round of customer consultations for the environmental works across the estate. These consultations give us the opportunity to share our plans and, more importantly, give you as customers the opportunity to feedback directly to us on these plans.

Wednesday 6 November 3-6pm

We will be sharing a presentation on the final design for the Aγton Rise neighbourhood, including bin storage, fencing, hard and soft landscaping improvements.

A REMINDER OF OUR USUAL OPPORTUNITIES







Estate walkabouts – join our Neighbourhood Housing Officers on their walkabouts and give us feedback on any issues or concerns that you may have. Check our Facebook page for dates.

Litter picks – spring clean your estate by joining us on a litter pick. You'll join other volunteers, and all equipment will be provided. Check our Facebook page for dates.

The Bread and Butter Thing – become a volunteer to help unload the van and pack food into the bags every Friday afternoon.

Contact our Community Engagement Officer Bijoli on **0800 533 5442** or email **bijoli.deypurkaystha@bykerct.co.uk** for further information.



As e-bikes, e-scooters and even e-skateboards grow in popularity, so do the risks of fire caused by their lithium batteries. If they become damaged or begin to fail, they can explode and catch fire. Here's how to stay safe...

Buy from a reputable retailer

Many fires involve items, chargers and batteries which do not meet British or European standards or counterfeit electrical goods. So, always buy from a reputable retailer to make sure what you are buying is as safe as possible. Make sure you register your product with the manufacturer to validate any warranties – this will usually include the battery too. This will make it easier for manufacturers to contact you in the event of safety or recall information.

Don't block your exit

Don't charge or store your e-bike or e-scooter near the exit and where possible, store them outside of your home in a secure shed or a garage. If you live in one of our blocks, your e-bike or e-scooter must never be charged or stored in the communal areas or in a place that blocks a fire escape route. If you have to store them in your flat, do this away from the exit or your means of escape and avoid anywhere that can get excessively hot.

Watch for warning signs

A failing battery can be a fire risk. Keep an eye out for warning signs, such as overheating or swelling batteries and replace them if necessary. If you notice any unusual odours, smoke, or hissing sounds, unplug the charger immediately and carefully move the battery to an outside area. Remember: batteries can be damaged if dropped or if you crash and a damaged battery is more likely to overheat and be at risk of catching fire.

Let your battery cool

Lithium batteries can heat up when used. Let your battery cool down before charging it to avoid overheating. This will also help to extend the life of your battery.

Take care when charging

Always charge your battery in a well-ventilated area, staying away from combustible or flammable materials. Don't cover chargers or battery packs when charging. If you spot any signs of wear and tear to your charger, do not use it any further and replace it. Don't overload sockets or use inappropriate extension leads. Use un-coiled extension leads and make sure the extension lead is suitably rated for what you are plugging into it.

Never leave batteries unattended

It may be tempting to leave your battery charging overnight or when you are out, but this can be dangerous. Never leave your battery charging unattended or while you sleep, you need to be awake and alert so if a fire should occur you can respond quickly.

Unplug your charger

Once your battery is fully charged, unplug your charger. Overcharging your battery can damage it and increase the risk of fire. Make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging and maintaining your battery.

Damaged or old batteries

Do not dispose of batteries in your normal household waste or recycling as this can cause a bin or rubbish fire if damaged during waste collection and processing. This includes any communal bins if you live in one of our blocks. Check with Newcastle City Council about the best way to get rid of it safely.

For more information on charging lithium batteries safely, visit **www.london-fire.gov.uk/chargesafe**



TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING SAFE IN YOUR HOME

There are so many ways we can keep our homes safe and hazard free. Below are some simple and easy tips for avoiding any incidents within your home.

Tumble dryers

Never leave tumble dryers in use unattended. Avoid overloading the dryer, weight limits are often displayed on the machine or in the user guide. Regularly empty the filter of any debris.

Access for gas and fire safety checks

It is incredibly important you allow Karbon access to your home to carry out mandatory safety checks.

The appointments can be arranged at a time to suit you and take a short while to carry out, meaning you can get on with your day, safe in the knowledge that you've had the checks carried out.

Be mindful of electrical safety

Avoid overloading sockets, use extension cords safely, and regularly check for frayed wires or faulty plugs to reduce the risk of electrical fires.

Report repairs and maintenance issues promptly

Whether it's a leak, broken lock or faulty heating, reporting issues as soon as they arise helps keep your home safe and prevents bigger problems.

Practice safe cooking habits

Never leave cooking unattended, keep flammable objects away from stovetops, and consider having a fire blanket or extinguisher in the kitchen.

NEW STAFF

We'd like to welcome the following new members of staff who you may speak to on the telephone or face-to-face.



Faye Barrett Neighbourhood Housing Assistant





Lisa Tastan Neighbourhood Housing Assistant



Donna Lightfoot Neighbourhood Housing Assistant



Nazneen Khan Reception Host



STAY SAFE THIS BONFIRE NIGHT

The old saying is "...remember, remember the fifth of November".

What the Fire Service would like for residents to remember is to have fun but at the same time stay safe.

This time of year is always associated with fireworks, sparklers and bonfires, which are really exciting to experience and enjoy.

But they can also be very dangerous if used incorrectly or in an unsafe environment.

Please remember to:

- Attend organised and licenced fireworks
- Don't leave unwanted bulky items outside of your home as it can attract anti-social behaviour. Please take your items to the local household waste and recycling centres.
- Never throw aerosols in to open flames.
- Never set off fireworks indoors.
- Always keep your pets safely indoors during firework displays.

If you have any information about anti-social behaviour in your area associated with firesetting then please contact Firestoppers anonymously on 080 169 5558.

You can also find out more information about Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service by visiting www.twfire.gov.uk

PENSION CREDIT:



What you need to know

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges.

Recent changes to Winter Fuel Payment mean only those who receive Pension Credits are eligible for the fuel payment.

If you are not already in receipt of Pension Credit, it may be a good time to check if you are eligible.

You must have been eligible for Pension Credit during the 'qualifying week' of 16 to 22 September. Since Pension Credit can be backdated by three months, the last date you can make a claim for Pension Credit and still get the Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December 2024.

To do so, γou can head to the government website here: **www.gov.uk/pension-credit/eligibility**

You can also get in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment and Welfare Reform Officer, Aneta, who is on hand to help our customers with any questions about Pension Credit, and can help you further understand what benefits you could be entitled to.

Call: 0800 533 5442

SKIPS



We will be providing a number of skips throughout the estate so you can dispose of larger items that could pose a risk if left unattended.

Check out our Facebook for further information.

FOB REPLACEMENT

Keeping our customers safe and homes secure is our top priority. We're always looking for ways to maintain and improve security measures around the estate, and that's why we are replacing all door entry fobs to communal block entrances.

This will restrict access and further strengthen security and keep you and your homes as safe as possible.

We will be writing to affected customers by post with further information on how we are planning to roll out this replacement, and what we need from you.

A message from Northumbria police:

OPEN HOUSE, OPEN INVITATION

Houses in this area have recently been burgled by offenders who specifically target insecure homes. It's vital you follow crime prevention advice to reduce your risk of falling victim to such a crime.

Don't be a victim. Taking a few simple steps can reduce your risk even further:

- Ensure windows and doors are always securely locked even when you're at home.
- Fit outside security lighting.
- Avoid leaving valuables and keys within easy reach of doors or windows where they can easily be taken.
- Try to keep car keys and house keys on separate fobs.

We're using a range of tactics to tackle burglary including:

- High visibility patrols and operations to keep thieves at bay.
- · Identifying and targeting key offenders.
- CCTV cameras in hot spot areas.
- Carrying out search warrants at addresses used by known criminals.



COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS OI APRIL-JUNE 2024

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 18 compliments and 33 complaints in Q1 from customers happy with the service they received from us.

Number, Nature, Outcome

COMPLIMENTS



















COMPLAINTS

COMPLAINTS UPHELD

Upheld Not Upheld

Partially Upheld

18

8

Upheld: A complaint is considered as 'upheld' when the investigation into the complaint found that BCT 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 BCT acted correctly in providing the service to the customer.

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

Ways to contact us:

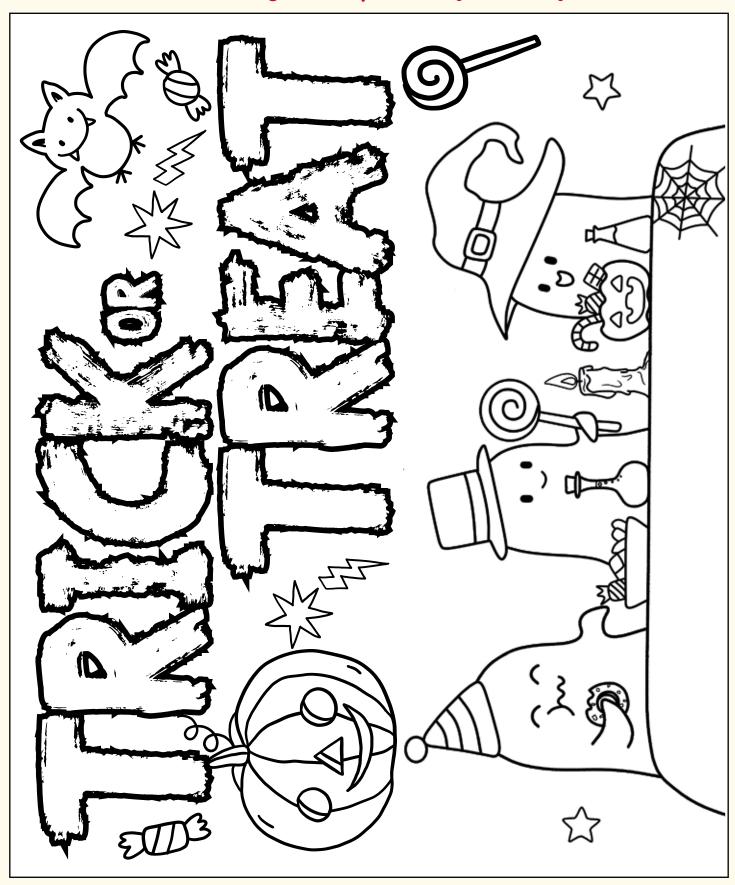
- · Face-to-face with any member of staff, including contractors working on BCT's behalf.
- Call our Customer Service Team on **O8OO 533 5442 (option 3)** 9am-5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am-4.30pm Fridays.
- Email our Customer Services Team at: enquiries@bykerct.co.uk

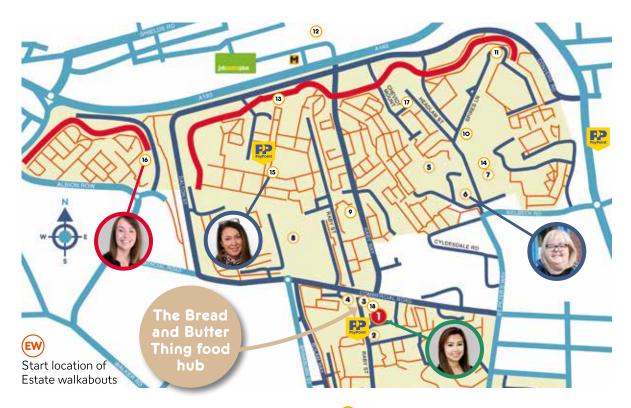
- · Write to our local office address: Byker Community Trust 17 Raby Cross, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2FF.
- · BCT website and social media via Facebook.
- · Via a Councillor, MP or other third party.

SPOOKY SEASON!



Colour in and use this sign to let passersby know if you have treats!





- Byker Community Trust office Freephone 0800 533 5442
- Children and Families Newcastle East Byker Sands Centre Call 0191 275 9636
- 3 ACANE Community Centre and The Bread and Butter Thing Call 0191 265 8110
- St. Michael's Church Centre Raby Cross
- 5 St. Michael's Church Headlam Street
- 6 Former Bγker Community Centre
- 7 Bγker Village Bowling Green
- 8 Byker Primary School Call 0191 265 6906
- Avondale House (Veterans' Support)

- St. Lawrence's Primary School Call 0191 265 9881
- St. Lawrence's Church
- (12) East End Library and Pool Call 0191 277 4100
- (13) Climb Newcastle
- (14) Chirton House
- (15) Ralph Erskine House
- 16) Tom Collins House
- Mount Pleasant
- (18) Byker Pantry

How to contact Byker Community Trust:



- Option 1: Repairs (also for out of hours emergencies)
- 2 Option 2: Rent Enquiries
- ♠ Option 3: Housing Enquiries
- A Option 4: Business Enquiries
- enquiries@bykerct.co.uk
- www.bγkercommunitγtrust.org
- bykercommunitytrust





Part of **Karbon**

