

Newcastle Clean Homes Protocol

A process for managing the clean-up of homes of vulnerable people in Newcastle

Why are we doing this?

- **Preventing homelessness is a key task for local authorities**
- Every year, some people lose their homes because they fail to keep them clean, and the property becomes a nuisance or a danger to others
- Every year, someone has to spend longer than needed in hospital because their home is considered too unhealthy for them to return to
- The City Council has a duty to deal with premises which are “filthy or verminous” - but there has been a great deal of confusion about who should organise this, and who should pay for any clean-up

What do we want to achieve?

- **Dealing quickly with houses which are considered to be “filthy or verminous”, or on the edge of becoming so**
- Clarifying who is responsible for doing what
- Saving time for staff in all departments
- Joining up our efforts to help or persuade people to clean their homes up, linking support with enforcement
- Acting earlier, and particularly alerting others earlier
- Reducing homelessness or institutionalisation

Who is involved?

- Environmental Health – they will investigate any case referred to them of a home that might be “filthy or verminous”
- Health and Social Services - they will pass on information about any property they are concerned about to Environmental Health, and will work with them to persuade the occupant to get the clean-up done
- Your Homes Newcastle’s Advice and Support Workers – they will work with an occupant who wants to gain the skills to manage their home
- Strategic Housing – they will work with other agencies to try to make sure no occupant loses their home because of the state it is in
- Landlords (social landlords and private landlords) – they will try to persuade tenants to clean their homes, and will contact Environmental Health if this does not lead to any action from the tenant

- Neighbourhood Services – they will compile a list of suitable contractors to do clean-ups, and will work with Environmental Health to order the work
- Private Rented Project – they will advise tenants and landlords about this process

What are we asking you to do?

- **Make sure all relevant staff know about this process**
- Notice when a house is in serious need of a clean-up, and mention it to the occupant if you are already working with them
- If it is a rented home, let the landlord know that there is some concern
- If the occupant does not or is not able to clean up the property, let Environmental Health know

If the occupant refuses to take action, Environmental Health officers will take their normal enforcement action, but will involve Social Services and other support agencies. Together, these agencies will offer support as well as enforcement.

Key contact points

Environmental Health:	Keith.smith@newcastle.gov.uk	211 6148
Social Services:	David.forster@newcastle.gov.uk	277 2555
Advice and Support Team:	suzanne.halliwell@yhn.org.uk	278 8621

To see the full Protocol, visit the Newcastle Homelessness Forum website:

http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/nhf_policies