

“Thank you Newcastle”

How the city and its
residents have
responded to
COVID 19

[BeatCovidNE.co.uk](https://www.beatcovidne.co.uk)

citylife

Your council magazine

Spring 2021

Inside this issue

- A budget for recovery
- Community heroes
- Help shape our city centre

Newcastle 
City Council

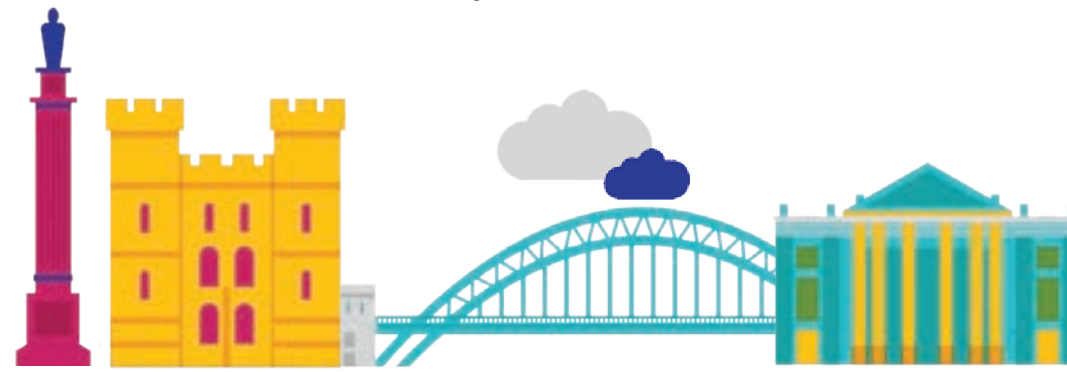
Contacting the council Save time Do it Online

We're always working hard to improve our online services, so people find it easy to contact us.

You can apply and pay for many of our services online, as well as report an issue using our simple online forms. Visit www.newcastle.gov.uk to find out more.

It's quicker and cheaper for most people to contact the council by using the internet, and there is no need to stand in a queue or wait on the phone.

As our website is available 24/7, you can do business whenever and wherever it suits you.



Keep up to date with our news and important advice

Want to hear all our news as it happens and keep up to date with the most recent advice about Covid-19?

We use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to let you know about this and other activities and events. And by following our social media channels, you can get involved in the conversation instantly. Maybe you can show your support to our hard-working staff or tell us what you think about a new service?

So why not give us a 'like' or a 'follow' to stay up to date with the latest news from Newcastle City Council?

- Facebook: Newcastle City Council
- Twitter: @NewcastleCC
- Instagram: lovenewcastle

Council meetings

The council holds a number of meetings throughout the year which the public can attend. These include Cabinet, Planning meetings, City Council and Overview and Scrutiny meetings. At this time these can only be viewed online on the Newcastle City Council YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/c/NewcastleCCUK>. We will advise when this arrangement changes.

The next Business Cabinet meetings will take place on Monday 19 April 2021 at 5.30pm, and on Monday 21 June 2021 at 5.30pm.

City Council meetings usually take place on the first Wednesday of most months at 6pm. These would normally be held in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre, or online depending on restrictions at the time.

The Annual Meeting will be held on Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 2pm, and the next meeting of City Council will be Wednesday 26 June 2021 at 6pm (provisional date).

Dates of all meetings can be found at www.newcastle.gov.uk/councilmeetings

You can view the papers for all meetings at <http://democracy.newcastle.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx>.

For more information, please phone Karen Christon on 0191 211 5024 or email karen.christon@newcastle.gov.uk.

Make your vote count on Thursday 6 May 2021

In May 2021, we will be heading to the polls again.

Make sure you have your say on matters locally by voting at the Local Government and Police and Crime Commission elections.

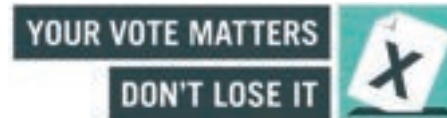
Remember you must be registered to vote to have your voice heard.

To register visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Methods of voting:

You might currently vote at the polling station, but did you know that you could vote in the comfort of your home by opting to vote by post? Or if you were unable to attend a polling station in person you may wish for someone you know and trust to cast your vote on your behalf by appointing a proxy.

The Electoral Commission



For more information on postal or proxy voting visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/electionsandvoting

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Contents

Our Newcastle Pages 4 - 10

Headline news from the city and the latest on the Council's budget proposals.



Thank You.

Page 11

Read our cover star Carol's story of working at the RVI during the pandemic.

"It's been a tough year, but we've shown real grit and done so well. Thank you"



Environment – a clean, green and safe Newcastle

Pages 23 - 25

Newcastle leading the way in tackling change and waste and recycling reminders.



Employment – creating more and better jobs

Page 26 - 35

The Council and businesses across Newcastle are working together to shape a brighter future, create jobs and drive investment with a transformed city centre at the heart of the plans.



Health and Social Care – a healthy, caring city Pages 12 - 21

Newcastle's Covid vaccination programme is off to a flying start, the power of our Community Champions and how the Collaborative Newcastle Partnership is helping protect the most vulnerable in our city.



Education and Skills – the best learning opportunities for all

Pages 36 - 39

A safe, secure and welcome return for all pupils as schools reopen.



Housing – building more and better homes

Pages 40 - 43

The latest housing developments and opportunities, including an unlikely transformation of the country's 'worst doer-upper'.



News in brief:

Always remember

The police, your bank, HMRC, Amazon or Sky will never ask you to transfer your money, hand over cash, buy vouchers or send via a money service bureau or download an application on your phone.



Fraudsters will pretend to be from your bank, the police, HMRC, Sky or Amazon or another organisation and give you information that will worry you, such as an issue with your bank account, money owed, corrupt banking employees, a problem with your National Insurance number or a friend or relative in custody.

Never ring them back using the number they provide. This is a fake number.

They will prey on your fears and may tell you not to tell anyone about the call due to the secrecy of the 'incident'. No company would do this. They are doing this to hide the fraud.

To prevent fraud from happening you must terminate the call immediately. Use another phone to report this to action fraud on **0300 123 2040** or **www.actionfraud.police.uk**

If you think you have fallen victim to a scam, please notify your bank immediately.

Are you unemployed and worried that the pandemic will make your chances of finding work even harder?

Then we may be able to help.

Local projects across the city, mainly in the west of the city and the wards along the riverside, are ready to support you if you need a hand to build your skills, improve your confidence, work out your finances or plan your next steps. You can join Stitch Sisters project to develop skills in garment manufacturing to an industry standard, take part in financial wellbeing workshops as part of the Routes to Work project or join the Rebel Business School online for an alternative look at starting a business.

Whether you were unemployed before the pandemic, are currently furloughed, have recently been made redundant or are now ready to consider your options get in touch with one of our local projects. Information is available online www.northoftyneclld.org.uk or email us on clldproject@newcastle.gov.uk

The council has secured funding for CLLD from the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020



For a chance to win* an iPad, sign up to your online account

Managing your Council Tax and benefits online is quick and easy.

- View your current balance and payment plan
- Apply for discounts and exemptions simply
- View your account history and information
- Check your benefit entitlement and payments
- Switch off paper bills

Sign up before 30 September 2021 and you will automatically be entered into a prize draw to win* an iPad.

<https://myaccount.newcastle.gov.uk>

* Terms & conditions apply



A welcome from Pat Ritchie, Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council

It has been a year like no other and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in Newcastle for the way this city has responded to Covid-19.

In the face of a global pandemic this city has pulled together like never before. Although it has been an incredibly hard year and the impact on people's lives has been profound, the response from communities, businesses and other organisations across the city has been phenomenal.

The national vaccination programme brings a more positive outlook, and the local provision for both vaccinations and testing in this city is second to none, so we are now looking to the future with cautious optimism.

Although we know recovery will take time, we won't lose sight of our ambitions for the city.

We will continue to invest in care that protects and supports the most vulnerable in our city and deliver services to children and young people to give them the greatest chance possible of future success. And we will continue to support our businesses and work to create the conditions for them to grow and thrive, generating new opportunities for our residents.

We will only achieve our ambitions by continuing to work closely with communities, partners and businesses, so I would encourage everyone to come on this journey with us.

In my role as Returning Officer, I can confirm that government have confirmed that this year's elections will be taking place on Thursday 6 May. In Newcastle that means we will be holding both the Local and Police and Crime Commissioner elections. Preparations are being made to ensure these go ahead in a way which is COVID-secure for all voters and elections staff.

We are actively encouraging voters to register for a postal vote so you can vote from home. If you do choose to vote in person, you will see a few changes this year which are designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and, for that reason, it may take a little longer to vote and for votes to be counted.

The council will have the same number of polling stations (123) as other years but for practical reasons these may not



be in the usual location so it's important that you check your polling card before heading out to vote. We are asking voters to bring their own pens or pencils to fill in their ballot papers and it will be compulsory to wear a face covering in polling stations unless you have a medical exemption. Hand sanitisers, protective screens and social distancing markers will also be in place. You also may have to queue outside the polling station for longer than usual.

When it comes to the count, there will also be strict social distancing measures in place and fewer people will be involved so the count will take longer than in previous years. We will be counting votes cast in the Local election on the evening of Thursday 6 March, and the following day for the Police and Crime Commissioner election.

You must register to vote by midnight on Monday 19 April. To register visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 20 April for the elections on 6 May 2021



A budget for recovery



It's never easy to put together a budget when demand is greater than resources - but this year has been particularly difficult. Not only have we had Brexit uncertainty, but it feels COVID-19 has turned the world on its head.

Despite some welcome one-off Government grants, we had to take the unprecedented step of raising controls on our expenditure as income collapsed and costs soared.

Government expects us to raise Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept by the maximum to cover the financial gap. So, we are faced with the difficult choice to increase Council Tax by 1.95% and use the 3% increase in Adult Social Care Precept to meet the rising cost of caring for older people and the most vulnerable.

Though COVID will cast a shadow over budgets for several years, we are confident we can improve services, facilities and the environment. We will tackle inequality and push forward with ambitious climate change initiatives. Our vision for a net zero city by 2030 is the foundation for our economic vision to Build Forward Better – protecting jobs and creating new ones at pace.

Transforming care services, and working with partners as part of Collaborative Newcastle, will ensure they are effective, efficient and have the best outcomes for those who need them. We will continue to lobby Government for a national solution to the social care crisis, and work with businesses, who continue to show confidence in the city through their investment decisions creating more and better jobs.

Thanks to all of you who submitted views in our budget consultation. We have difficult choices, and must cut our cloth in these trying times, but our commitment to ensure no child is left behind and to maintain Newcastle as a great city remains. As the vaccination programme progresses, this budget also offers hope for a better future.

Nick Forbes

**CLLr. Nick Forbes,
Leader of Newcastle City Council**

Painful decisions

Difficult decisions must be taken to set a balanced budget.

- The coronavirus pandemic has cost the council £60m in rising costs and a fall in income
- Around half, has been met by Government
- This left us with no option but to make £32m worth of cuts in spending in 2020-21
- Now we have to save £40m in 2021-23
- This is on top of the £305m cut since 2010

In order to set a balanced budget in 2021-22 we will

- Reduce spend across adult social care by £8.4 million by re-modelling services, ensuring appropriate support and financial management
- Reduce spend across children's social care by £3.8 million by safely reducing demand on children's social care, expanding in-house child placements and reconfiguring the residential estate
- Review public health contracts with low population impacts
- Increase fees and charges across a range of services, including parking, pest control, bulky and garden waste collections and bereavement services digital streaming
- Increase Council Tax by 1.95%
- Apply the 3% adult social care precept assumed by Government

Investing in our city

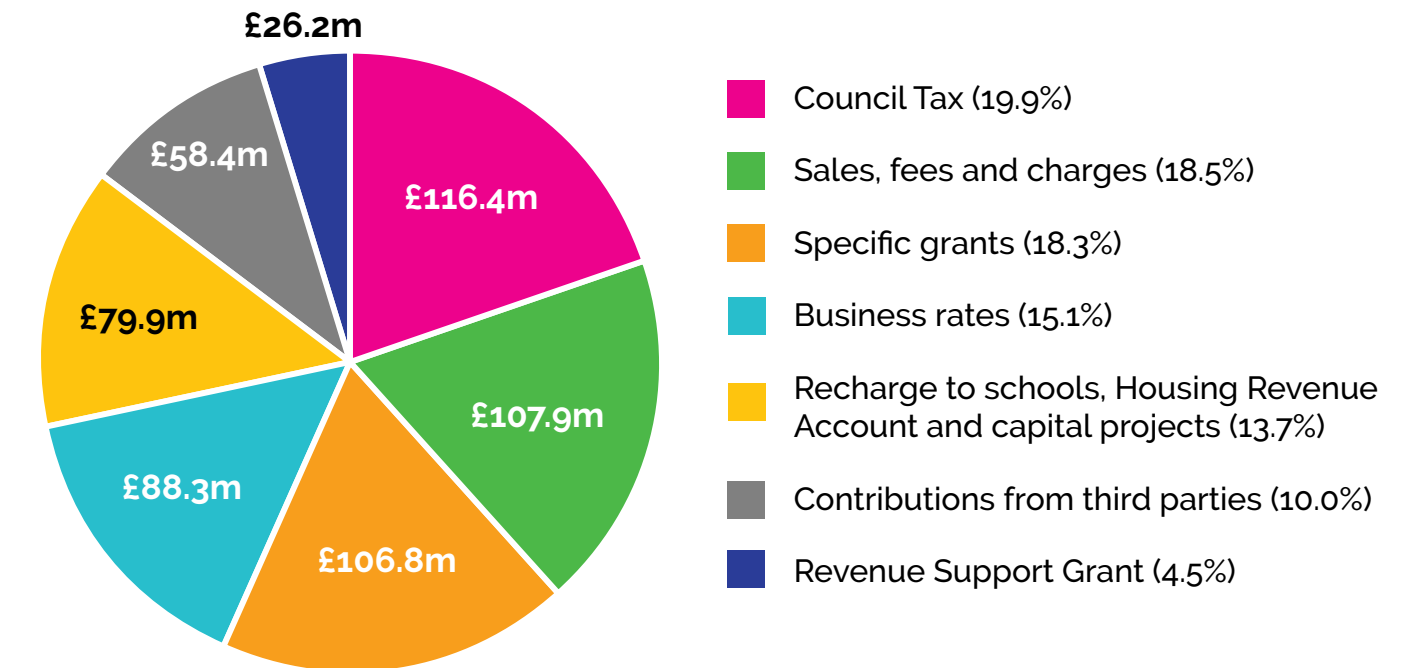
We plan to invest £250 million in capital projects over the next two years.

This will create economic opportunities and jobs – the building blocks of a strong economy – making the city open for business and attracting private sector investment.

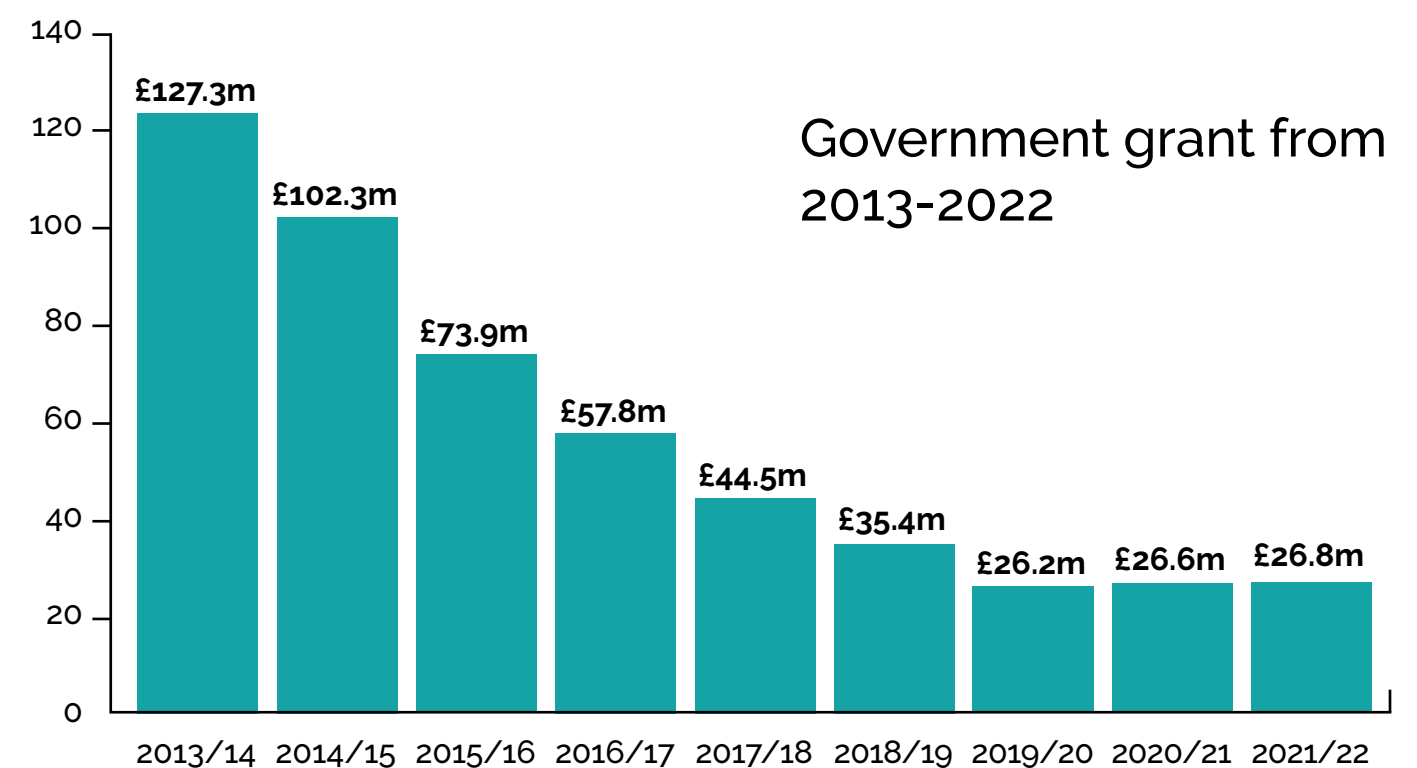
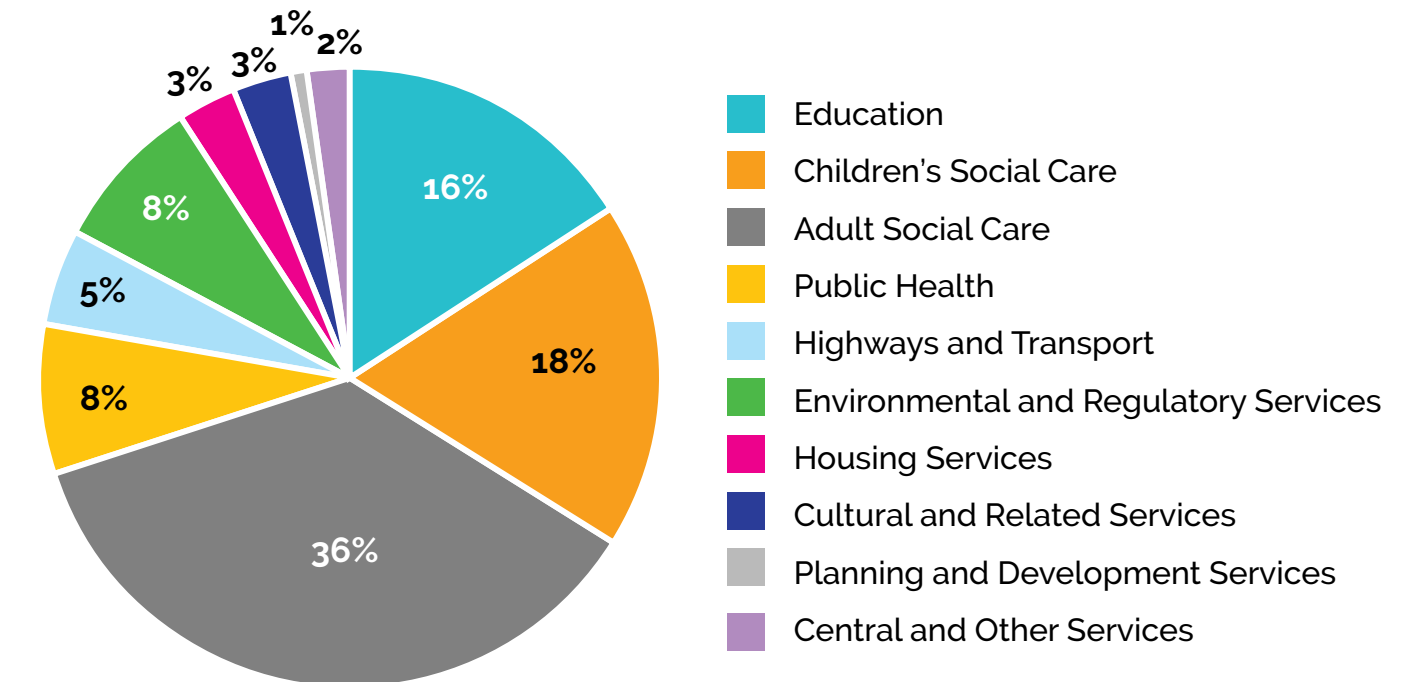
The council is not permitted to spend capital monies on services. Examples of what we will do include:

- Invest £5 million in road and pavement improvements
- Invest £2 million in grants for disabled facilities
- Invest in new residential schemes for people receiving social care
- Invest further in Newcastle Helix development site where there are plans for new housing, offices and multi-storey car park
- Develop detailed investment plans to secure the long-term future of the River Tyne and Walker Quay
- Prepare land within the North Bank of Tyne Enterprise Zone for further inward investment to drive a low carbon future through offshore wind
- Support construction of new schools and homes at key strategic sites

Where our income comes from (£m)



How the council plans to spend your money



Government grant from 2013-2022

A new swimming pool at West Denton?

A new swimming pool could be built at West Denton Leisure Centre as part of a review into the city's leisure facilities.

It comes after leisure operator GLL announced in September it could not afford to reopen West Denton Pool which closed as part of the first lockdown.

In response to the impact of the pandemic on the leisure sector we started a strategic review of leisure provision including swimming facilities across the city to understand what will be required in the future.

Experts were asked to produce options to keep a community pool in West Denton which included:

- Refurbishing the existing 60-year-old pool with its outdated plant and heating system
- Building a new modular community pool on the side of West Denton Leisure Centre

The council agreed to explore the option of a 25m pool at West Denton Leisure Centre which would be cost effective, easy to manage and energy efficient.



Funding has been earmarked for a feasibility study to explore this option and examine how it could be funded from a range of sources. Once the study is complete consultation with residents and users will begin.

Subject to planning approval, a new pool could open in early 2023.

Above: A modular swimming pool similar to the type that could be built at West Denton
Picture: courtesy of ReCreation

Help with Council Tax

Residents struggling with the economic impact of the pandemic will receive extra financial help.

We will ease the burden of Council Tax by giving eligible working age households up to £160 towards their bill.

It means for two years in a row 16,000 households in Newcastle will be excused from paying Council Tax and a further 14,000 will receive additional support during these tough times.

We are targeting all of our £5.5m share from the Government's £670m hardship fund at struggling residents, including:

- Working age households in receipt of Council Tax Support (previously known Council Tax Reduction)

- The self-employed in hardship & receiving Council Tax Support
- Families struggling to pay Council Tax
- People in receipt of the extra £20 per week in Universal Credit - (check at copy deadline)

In addition to helping pay Council Tax, we have also paid out: £299,000 in Test & Trace Support Payments to 598 people; £151,290 in winter fuel payments to 5,066 families; assessed 9,500 new claims for council tax reduction; supported 1,070 families with crisis support; supported over 11,000



families with food vouchers to feed their children in the school holidays and supported 1,758 people/families with discretionary housing payments.

- Any remaining Council Tax hardship money - once priority cases are helped - will go to other households to help them pay their Council Tax.

Residents who currently receive Council Tax Support do not need to contact us. We will automatically issue a new Council Tax bill in the next few weeks.

Tackling obesity

Being overweight or obese can have serious consequences for your health and your happiness.

Our approach to tackle obesity has been to commission services which encouraged physical activity and healthy eating among individuals, families and targeted groups. It's a model we have followed since 2013 - but obesity has continued to rise so we are changing our approach.

Our new whole systems approach will be much broader - targeting whole communities that promote healthy behaviour in everyday life.

With partners, we will work in schools, workplaces, and parks to encourage activity and healthier eating. And a much broader group will be targeted including those with mental health conditions and long-term illnesses, BAME communities, early years and those with chronic disease.

Local Authorities face huge financial challenges which have been exacerbated by the pandemic - placing huge financial strain on our budgets. We hope this new approach will improve outcomes for our residents while enabling the council to set a balanced budget.

We will continue to engage with service providers, so they continue to play a part in our efforts to tackle this national issue.

To find out more visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/budget



A fresh approach to tackling obesity

Tree-mendous

It's well known that trees have benefits for both the natural environment and the communities we live in.

Not only do they absorb carbon dioxide, helping to cleanse the air of pollutants, but they prevent flooding, lift our mood and provide homes for other plants and animals.

Compared with most places, Newcastle has a lot of trees - 18.1 percent of our city is covered by tree canopy compared to a national average of 17 percent.

In 2019 we introduced a tree strategy that includes a strong commitment to planting many thousands more trees, with the council supporting a wide range of projects, including potential North East wide efforts to plant hundreds of hectares of new woodland.

And in our 2021/22 budget we are pledging to spend another £400,000 towards the upkeep and protection of trees across the city, helping existing vegetation thrive, and supporting our ambitions to make where we live greener and happier.

We recently teamed up with armed forces charity Walking With The Wounded and the Freeman of Newcastle to plant over 400 trees in the city.

As well as boosting the environment, the Growing Together project helps ex-military personnel to engage with the community and use their skills to help regenerate the areas they live in. Newcastle was the first council asked to take part in the project.

It's hoped that the saplings, which were donated by the Woodland Trust, will grow into a lasting tribute to all those who serve in the armed forces and help green the city for future generations.



Volunteers from the council and Walking With The Wounded plant trees on the town moor

Support for families

Families most affected by the pandemic are in line for extra support.

The council will spend £500,000 to help soften the impact of the pandemic on some of the city's most disadvantaged families and children, to ensure no child is left behind.

While those on the lowest incomes have suffered most as a result of the pandemic, the council will attempt to stem the widening inequality by allocating £200,000 to Children and Families Newcastle, a new fund which will help families get community-based support.

The remaining £300,000 will be used to kick-start a city-wide

campaign that will ask partners to help children and young people catch up on missed education, tackle emotional or mental health issues, and help them take advantage of training and employment opportunities.

Examples of practical help could include donating or funding IT equipment to support remote learning, or supporting activities or events to safely promote physical and emotional wellbeing.

We'll keep you updated on the campaign plans as they move forward.

Don't miss the EU Settlement Scheme deadline

With the deadline looming European citizens living in Newcastle need to apply to the European Settlement Scheme soon to avoid being at risk of losing their home, their job and being faced with possible deportation.

There is no charge to apply and there are organisations in Newcastle offering free help to anyone who applies before applications close on 30 June 2021.

Local resident Casey Pearcy recently completed the process and is encouraging other people to apply as soon as possible.

Originally from Colorado, Casey moved to Newcastle in January 2018 after getting married. Casey's husband, who is an Irish national, had the right to live in the UK both as an EU citizen and because of rights set out in the Good Friday Agreement. As a US citizen married to an Irish national Casey applied for, and was granted, an EEA family permit which gave her the right to live in the UK until 2023.

The couple soon settled into life in Newcastle. As well as working in a local primary

school Casey became a Cats Protection foster home volunteer and started playing for the Newcastle Roller Derby skating team where she's now a Junior Team coach.

But as the end of the Brexit transition period approached, Casey decided to check what it would mean for her. And it's a good job she did. The changes mean Casey's EEA family permit isn't valid after 30 June so she would become an illegal immigrant.

Casey immediately went online to apply to the EUSS. It took about 20 minutes and she uploaded her documents on a mobile phone app. Two weeks later Casey was granted pre-settled status meaning she can continue living in the UK.

Casey says she found the process "pretty easy" but she isn't sure it would be as simple for someone who isn't "IT savvy or whose first language isn't



English" and she's also worried about the lack of advice and after care as she wasn't even told she needed to tell her employer or landlord about her changed status.

Casey Pearcy who moved to Newcastle from America needed to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme



EUSS: What you need to know

What is the EUSS?

The EUSS protects the rights of eligible EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their families and allows them to continue living in the UK.

Who should apply to the EUSS?

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens and their families and those with EEA family permits and permanent residence cards who want to continue living in the UK.

How do I apply?

You can apply online at www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families.

You will need to provide proof of your identity and a digital photo of your face. There is no charge to apply. You must apply by 30 June 2021.

Do children need to apply?

Some people are surprised to discover that children need to apply to the EUSS. Children do not automatically get the same settled or pre-settled status as their parents. Every child, even if they were born in the UK, must apply unless they are a UK citizen or have the right to live here under other immigration legislation.

What happens if I don't apply?

If you are eligible to apply for the EUSS and don't apply you will not be able to legally live in the UK after 30 June 2021. You could lose your home, your job and benefits you receive and could face deportation.

Is there anything else I need to do?

There are some people you will need to tell about your status including your landlord or

mortgage company, the DWP if you receive any benefits, your GP, your children's schools, your employer and the council.

Where can I go for help and advice?

For free help and advice contact:

- Your Homes Newcastle by email EUSS@yhn.org.uk or phone **0191 277 1190**;
- The Children's Society North East: email euss@childrenssociety.org.uk or call **0191 349 9481**
- Riverside Community Health Project: email EUSSadvice@riversidechp.co.uk or call **07943 197 249** or **0191 226 0754**
- North East Law Centre: Phone: **0191 230 4777** between 10am to 1pm every Friday for free advice service on legal issues

For more information visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/eu-settlement-scheme

It's been a tough year, but we've shown real grit and done so well - **thank you for doing your bit.**

Carol Duncan, 54, is a dispenser in the pharmacy at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle and one of the faces of the #BeatCovidNE campaign.

"I can't imagine leaving the house now without a mask and hand sanitiser. Along with my bag, keys and phone, it's so normal to me. When Covid first hit, I felt quite anxious. I work in one of the busiest hospitals in the North East and I'm clinically vulnerable as I suffer from asthma. It's a very serious virus - it affects all ages and people from all backgrounds - and we can't just allow it to spread. Even with the vaccine programme underway, we will still need to take precautions for the foreseeable future.

When lockdown first came into force, life was the same for me in some respects - I still went to work at the hospital each day - but so very different in other ways. Every Sunday our extended family used to gather at my sister's house. It was our weekly catch up where the young and old come together to enjoy each other's company. Our oldest family member is 85 and the youngest is just one year old. This stopped overnight last March. How I long for a family Sunday again!, Hopefully, those days will come again soon.

At work, we have strict PPE and social distancing measures. What's been great is that I've always felt safe at work. From arriving to start my shift, to the everyday logistics that a socially distanced team experiences, it's been well organised and I've been impressed with how it's managed and how everyone has adapted. The emotional support from my team has also been incredible. If I'm having a bad day, which we all do, someone is always there to listen.

When I'm not at work, spending more time at home doing simple things like taking the dog for a runabout on the local field or enjoying a new boxset has helped me cope with the lockdowns. If I do need an instant pick me up I just call one of my friends or a relative on FaceTime - it makes such a difference.

While it's been a tough year for everyone, I think we've all shown a level of resilience and understanding that we should feel so proud of. The way we've looked after the more vulnerable members of our community is wonderful. By following the rules, we are each playing a role in helping to protect the lives of others and get closer to normality. That's why I'm passionate about the BeatCovidNE campaign and being involved. I think it's important to keep reminding people why the rules matter and why following them is the only way we're going to keep Covid infections at bay.



Carol Duncan is a pharmacy dispenser at The Royal Victoria Infirmary. She is one of the faces of the #BeatCovidNE campaign. www.beatcovidNE.co.uk

The pandemic has taught us how effective basic hygiene measures are, such as wearing masks, regularly washing and sanitising hands and keeping your distance in a public place. If you're ever in doubt about whether you're following the rules just remember 'hands, face, space.' It's such a simple but powerful message. Following the rules helps to stop the spread of Covid and, with the vaccination programme going from strength-to-strength, we're starting to get the upper hand on the virus. Together, we can get the North East through this as we move closer, but cautiously, to normality. Let's keep going to beat Covid."

BeatCovidNE.co.uk

For more than a year we have been fighting a global health crisis which has impacted every single one of us.

Businesses have closed, unemployment has risen, and worst of all, thousands of lives have been lost. This has had a profound effect on our communities. Thankfully, the remarkable progress made with vaccinations means that we are able to provide an increasing degree of protection and a route back to normality. While health colleagues and an army of volunteers are making great strides

in vaccinating those most susceptible to serious illness, it will still take many months for everyone to be offered both doses of a vaccine to afford them the greatest possible protection from the virus.

That is why it remains essential that we all continue to follow the rules in full and protect ourselves and others from becoming unwell, prevent NHS services from coming under the severe pressures they have faced during the pandemic so far, and save as many lives as possible.

Our communities have gone to great lengths to play their part in protecting our city, enduring three harsh periods of

lockdown while continuing to look out for one another, and we are grateful for your efforts.

But it is important that we persevere, carry on following the Hands, Face, Space guidance and maintaining the hygiene standards that have become part of everyday life, and continue to do our bit while the NHS's biggest ever vaccination programme continues.

Thank you.

Professor Eugene Milne
Director of Public Health for Newcastle

Vaccination programme off to a flying start

Partners in Newcastle have made rapid progress in delivering Covid-19 vaccinations to the priority groups set out by the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisation (JCVI) since the rollout began in December.

Collaborative Newcastle partners including Newcastle GP Services (NGPS), Newcastle Hospitals, Newcastle Gateshead CCG and Newcastle City Council have been working together to deliver the jabs to the city.

With an NHS mass vaccination site at the Centre for Life, and centres managed by the Primary Care Networks at Newcastle Racecourse and the Eagles Community Arena, a significant proportion of residents have already received at least their first dose.

NGPS partnered with Go North East to deploy a vaccination bus – a mobile vaccination unit delivering jabs to high-risk groups in line with JCVI priority 6, and other centres are due to begin administering jabs in the future.

The first cohort to be offered their vaccinations, in line with the JCVI, were residents in care homes for older adults and their carers, followed by those over the age of 80 and frontline health and social care staff. Over 75s, followed by the over



70s and individuals deemed clinically extremely vulnerable comprised the top four priority groups, which the Government aimed to offer a first dose of the vaccine by the middle of February.

The aim is for remainder of the nine priority groups, covering everyone over the age of 50 and people with underlying health conditions, to be vaccinated by April 15 with remaining adults to be vaccinated by July 31.

It remains essential for everybody, including those who have received their jabs, to continue to follow the restrictions and maintain the Hands, Face, Space guidance at all times to protect themselves

and others in the community who may still be at risk of serious illness from Covid-19.

Covid-19 vaccines have been rigorously tested prior to being given approval for use, are clinically proven to be safe, and are most effective when as many people as possible accept an offer.

Individuals who may be at risk but are not yet eligible for vaccination as part of the JCVI-based roll out, we recommend consultation with a GP and assessment under the new QCovid risk based algorithm to determine individual risk and eligibility. Find our more at digital.nhs.uk/coronavirus/risk-assessment

Roadmap out of lockdown

Step 1

8 March 29 March

Education

8 March

- Schools and colleges open for all students
- Practical Higher Education courses

Social contact

8 March

- Exercise and recreation outdoors with household or one other person
- Household only indoors

29 March

- Rule of 6 or two households outdoors
- Household only indoors

Business and Activities

8 March

- Wraparound care, including sport, for all children

29 March

- Organised outdoor sport (children and adults)
- Outdoor sport and leisure facilities
- All outdoor children's activities
- Outdoor parent and child group (max 15 people, excluding under 5s)

Travel

8 March

- Stay at home
- No holidays

29 March

- Minimise travel
- No holidays

Events

- Funerals (30)
- Weddings and wakes (6)

Step 2

No earlier than 12 April
At least 5 weeks after Step 1

Education

- As previous step



Social contact

- Rule of 6 or two households outdoors
- Household only indoors



Business and Activities

- All retail
- Personal care
- Libraries and community centres
- Most outdoor attractions
- Indoor leisure inc. gyms (individual use only)
- Self-contained accommodation
- All children's activities
- Outdoor hospitality
- Indoor parent and child groups (max 15 people, excluding under 5s)

Travel

- Domestic overnight stays (household only)
- No international holidays

Events

- Funerals (30)
- Weddings, wakes, receptions (15)
- Event pilots

Step 3

No earlier than 17 May
At least 5 weeks after Step 2

Education

- As previous step



Social contact

- Maximum of 30 people outdoors
- Rule of 6 or two households indoors (subject to review)

Business and Activities

- Indoor hospitality
- Indoor entertainment and attractions
- Organised indoor sport (adult)
- Remaining accommodation
- Remaining outdoor entertainment (including performances)



Travel

- Domestic overnight stays
- International travel (subject to review)

Events

- Most significant life events (30)
- Indoor events: 1,000 or 50% (plus pilots)
- Outdoor seated events: 10,000 or 25% (plus pilots)
- Outdoor other events: 4,000 or 50% (plus pilots)

Step 4

No earlier than 21 June
At least 5 weeks after Step 3

Education

- As previous step

Social contact

- No legal limit



Business and Activities

- Remaining businesses, including nightclubs



Travel

- Domestic overnight stays
- International travel

Events

- No legal limit on life events
- Larger events

Step 4 all subject to review

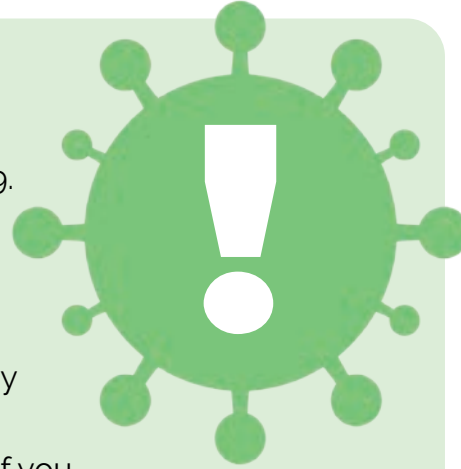
Public health: COVID-19

Symptoms

It is important to remember that having just **ONE** of these symptoms could be a sign you have COVID-19.

- **A high temperature** – you may feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- **A new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three coughing episodes in a day.
- **A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – you could lose it completely, or things may taste or smell different to usual.

These symptoms may be small, you might feel like you can continue to work and don't feel unwell, but if you have any of these you **MUST** get a test and follow self-isolation guidance. You could pass the virus onto someone in your community who becomes extremely ill.



Look after yourselves and others

COVID-19 remains a serious threat to public health and it is essential that we all continue doing what we can to look after ourselves and others in the community.

We must all carry on washing our hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and water, or with a hand sanitiser gel if this is not available. Continue to wear a face mask where required, such as in shops or on public transport, unless you have an exemption, and maintain social distancing from anyone not in your household or support bubble by keeping at least two metres apart wherever possible.

To see the latest restrictions and guidance in place to tackle COVID-19, visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/coronavirus.



Book a test

If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, you must self-isolate immediately and book a test.

It is really simple. Just call 119 or visit the NHS Test and Trace website as soon as you have symptoms www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test

COVID-19 testing in Newcastle

Newcastle City Council has implemented a programme of routine testing of people without symptoms of COVID-19 (known as asymptomatic).

This routine testing will help to identify those individuals who do not have symptoms but are potentially infectious – this will help to reduce the risk of transmission and outbreaks. As many as one in three people with COVID-19 display no symptoms of the virus, but could still pass it on to others who may be at a greater risk of serious illness.

The council's asymptomatic testing programme began with tests being offered to key workers in critical frontline council services, before it was opened up to all key workers in the city who could not perform their roles from home.

Find out if you're eligible for asymptomatic testing in Newcastle at www.newcastle.gov.uk/coronavirus

Our Community Heroes

Since the start of the pandemic, community champions have played an important role in keeping our communities safe.

Our Community Champions are volunteers from all walks of life, giving up their own time and stepping up during one of the most difficult times this country has faced.

The pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on our most vulnerable residents and our champions have played a vital role in reaching those residents.

From the very first lockdown, they've helped us deliver critical Public Health messaging right into the heart of our communities. They've helped communities stay informed with the latest advice, from translating information, recording videos, gathering feedback and concerns.

They've made a huge difference in the fight against COVID-19 and helping to stop the spread of the virus.

The council was recently awarded £311,000 to expand on the work with our Community Champions to support those most at risk and to boost vaccine take up.

Through the Community Champions scheme councils and voluntary organisations will deliver a wide range of measures to protect those most at risk - building trust, communicating accurate health information and ultimately helping to save lives. This will include developing new networks of trusted local champions where they don't already exist.

How to become a Community Champion

Community Champions are residents who live or work in Newcastle that want to make a difference in their communities.

You'll be a positive role model and become the point of contact within your community and help share key COVID-19 messages and gather feedback and concerns.

You will join over 50 other champions who meet with us every fortnight on a virtual platform, discussing the latest situation on Covid-19.

Please note that being a Community Champion is not an enforcement or regulatory role. No formal training is required.

To find out more, visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/communitychampions.



Self-isolation

If you develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, or NHS Test and Trace identifies you as a close contact of a positive case, you will need to self-isolate to avoid spreading the virus further.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms you should self-isolate for 10 days and should only leave the house to get a test or to seek medical help. You are legally required to self-isolate if you have been told to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

People on low incomes who are required to self-isolate may be entitled to a support payment of £500 if they are unable to work from home and have lost wages while self-isolating.

Find out more and apply at www.newcastle.gov.uk/testandtracesupportpayments



Are you Clinically Extremely Vulnerable? Have you been asked to shield?

Some people are at higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19 and are classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable – there is additional guidance and support available to keep anyone in this group safe and protect them from the virus.

The Government recently added new groups to the Shielding list following research that showed some people may be at higher risk of being seriously ill if they catch the virus. Support is available in Newcastle for everyone who is Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and has been asked to shield.

Clinically extremely vulnerable people will get priority access to the vaccine and are advised to contact their GP if they have not been invited for a vaccination yet. To check the latest advice visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Shielding guidance was in place until 31 March 2021 and includes the following advice, as well as the current national guidance and legislation.

Work – Work from home when you can, if you cannot work from home you should not attend work. Support is available to you and your employer.

Socialising – Stay at home as much as possible. You can still go outside to exercise and for health appointments but you must keep contact with others to a minimum. Avoid busy areas.

Medicines – You should not visit a pharmacy. Ask family, friends or volunteers who can collect medicines for you. Pharmacies can arrange for free deliveries to your home.

Children – Speak to your child's doctor to understand their individual risks.

What support is available in Newcastle?

The Welfare and Wellbeing Team is available to help with guidance, support and advice as well as linking you with the voluntary and community sector in Newcastle who can provide a variety of services and assistance.

To request support you should visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare and complete the online form or call **0800 170 7001**.

A member of our dedicated Welfare and Wellbeing Team will call you back at least by the next working day to talk you through any concerns you have.

A list of services providing support in Newcastle is available on the information Now website – www.informationnow.co.uk

Fuel support

With residents spending more time at home as a result of Covid-19 restrictions, heating and energy costs have increased for many as a result.

Cold and damp homes are bad for our health, and making sure that our homes are adequately heated is an important part of staying well.

If you need support with heating and energy costs, advice and support is available on the Newcastle City Council website.

Visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/energyadvice for tips on how to find a better energy deal, making efficiency improvements, understanding your bills and much more.

If you are struggling to make payments or top up your prepayment meter, are having issues with a supplier or have other problems heating your home, we can help you get the support you need.

Food Support in Newcastle

Getting food can be difficult if you are clinically extremely vulnerable and avoiding the shops, or if you have to self-isolate. There are lots of options depending on your situation:

Help with shopping

Can you ask trusted friends, family, or neighbours to shop on your behalf? Alternatively, you can request an NHS Responder on 0808 196 3646 if you are self-isolating or Clinically Extremely Vulnerable.

Food delivery services:

Grainger Market Deliveries. Next day deliveries when you order before 4pm weekdays. Visit shop.graingerdelivery.com to explore the range.

Morrisons Doorstep Delivery Service. Phone **0345 611 6111** and select option 5. You can choose from 47 essential groceries and pay for delivery on your doorstep.

Sainsbury's. Call **0800 328 1700**, select option one and option one again to register. Then place an order by calling **0800 917 8557**.

Meals at Home. For deliveries of hot meals, call **0191 277 3978** or email meals@newcastle.gov.uk

Accessing free or low-cost food

If you are unable to pay for food, use Information Now and contact a local food bank <https://www.informationnow.org.uk/article/food-banks-in-newcastle/>

Emergency food

If you have less than 24hrs of food, and cannot use the options above, please get back in touch with us by completing an online form on our website www.newcastle.gov.uk/welfare

Local approach to Track and Trace

The development of the Integrated Regional Covid Hub is part of our move to a local Test, Trace and Isolate system from the existing national service.

The project is phasing in at present with the national team handing over cases to the hub for follow up.

Track and trace is an important response to identifying and responding to positive cases, to reduce community transmission and give appropriate advice.

This means that Newcastle residents will soon be contacted by an 0191 number by a local member of staff who will speak to them about their contacts, to identify and isolate them as quickly as possible.

This becomes more important as the numbers decrease as it gives a very rapid response to transmission. We will also be testing additional methods to maximise effectiveness and impact.

You may be contacted by the local team over the phone, by text or email. It is essential you follow the guidance and restrictions in full once contacted in order to protect our city.

Newcastle City Council Leader Nick Forbes (left), Chief Executive Pat Ritchie (right) and Newcastle Hospitals Chief Executive Officer Dame Jackie Daniel at The Lumen at Newcastle Helix at the launch of the Integrated Covid Hub which is supporting local Test and Trace arrangements.



City leaders back groundbreaking new partnership



In December 2020 Collaborative Newcastle officially launched: a partnership between Newcastle City Council, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospital Trust, Newcastle Gateshead CCG and Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust as well as the voluntary sector, care networks and GPs.

The partnership is amongst the first of its kind in the country and will help create a health and social care system across Newcastle that works together and supports residents to live long, healthy and independent lives. The partnership aims to reduce inequalities by tackling problems before they start and removing barriers that hold people back from achieving their potential.

The strength of Collaborative Newcastle has helped the city throughout the pandemic, work has included –

- **Creating the Integrated Covid Hub North East** – bringing a new approach to tackling the virus, including more localised testing and tracing, hundreds of new jobs and the introduction of a new innovation lab in Newcastle, which has a global reach for Covid research and science.
- **Supporting Care Homes during the pandemic** – including outbreak control support, providing PPE and dedicated nursing teams.
- **Newcastle Children and Families** – reimagining services for young people and bringing them closer to community services and support.
- **Social prescribing at scale** – helping residents with a range of support needs access services.
- **Positive mental health** – designing new ways to deliver mental health support.
- **Central Command Centre** – based at Regent's Point the space allows health and social care teams to co-locate, create strong relationships with partners and enables them to share real time knowledge and intelligence. The Command Centre has operated virtually throughout the pandemic.

Newcastle one of first places in the UK to vaccinate all eligible care home residents

In January Newcastle became one of the first places in the UK to vaccinate all eligible care home residents.

The huge collective effort was built on the strength of the Collaborative Newcastle partnership, with Council and NHS partners working closely with Care Homes to deliver a rapid, safe, and agile vaccination programme.

Seven teams worked across Newcastle over 5 days vaccinating around 15 homes a day. Over 1600 care home residents and staff received the lifesaving jabs in less than two weeks.



Lighthouse Lab/Biosphere

Don't Wait - Make 2021 the year you quit

It is never too late to quit smoking. Whilst life is challenging just now, smokers can do something life changing by making this year the time to quit.

Smoking damages the lungs and the immune system, leaving smokers more vulnerable to infections. It also increases the risks of heart disease, diabetes, lung and chest disorders, stroke and cancer, meaning that if smokers do get COVID-19, the symptoms could be more severe.

There is plenty of free, friendly, advice and support available to help.

Call **0191 269 1103** or visit www.newcastlestopsmoking.org.uk

Many community pharmacists can also help.



Alcohol

Taking a break from alcohol is one of the best things you can do for your health.

Reducing alcohol can have positive effects on the way you feel both mentally and physically – often within just a few days, as well as reducing long term risk of some serious illnesses such as cancer and liver and heart disease.

There are various sources for support and information which can be accessed.

Newcastle Treatment and Recovery (NTaR)

NTAreferrals@cntw.nhs.uk or **0191 206 1117**

Family Support

PROPS - Provide support to the families and carers of problematic drug/alcohol users. www.props.org.uk

More support is available at www.newcastle.gov.uk. Search 'drugs and alcohol' for help and advice.



Active Newcastle

If you're feeling like you want to move more, the good news is that you don't need any special skills or equipment to get active – you can make a difference just by adding more movement every day.

Any Movement Counts

Active Newcastle has a host of live activity and pre-recorded sessions on our Facebook page and on demand on the Active Newcastle YouTube Channel to get you moving in your home or garden. All sessions are suitable for a range of abilities. These sessions are great, you can join in from your own front room with no special equipment or clothing needed.

Tips to becoming more active

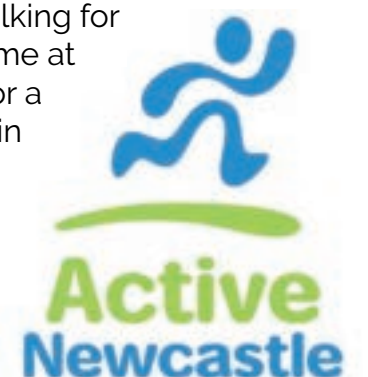
Start small

If you are completely new, start with 30 seconds of activity and gradually work your way up to 1, 5, 10 minutes and so on.

Did you know - you can break down your activity times into smaller chunks (e.g. 10 minutes) and it still counts toward "being active"?

It can be anything - Try out different activities until you find one you like. Moving more with members of your household can help when motivation dips and listening to music while getting active can also make it more enjoyable.

So whether it's walking for a set amount of time at lunch every day for a week, or building in some movement while the kettle boils– giving yourself a target can help with motivation.



Help your NHS to help you

We're making great progress with the COVID-19 vaccine – but we still need your help. That's the message from your local NHS as we move into springtime.

Dr David Jones, a local GP and Chair of NHS Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said: "It's been a phenomenal effort so far, and we owe everyone involved a huge thank you. In just a few weeks since the first local vaccine, we have reached nearly everyone in the top four priority groups.

"Right from the start everyone in Newcastle has pulled together and worked so hard – from GP practices, hospital and other NHS staff, to care home workers, volunteers and council staff. Newcastle GP Services – the local federation of GPs – has played a key role, with help from Newcastle City Council, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service and others.

"We're making great progress with the next two groups - over-65s, and people aged 16-65 who are in at-risk groups. If you are in one of these groups, please try to avoid contacting your practice to ask for your appointment – when it is the right time, you will get an invitation.

"We still need everyone to play their part by following the guidelines, even after the first jab. And remember, the NHS is still here to help, but working in different ways."



Dr David Jones
Local GP and Chair of
Newcastle Gateshead Clinical
Commissioning Group

How you can help

- Even after your first vaccine, please continue to follow the guidance to control the virus and save lives – that means staying at home as much as possible and following the 'hands, face, space' guidance when you are out.
- When you are invited, please be sure to attend your booked appointments.
- Please attend your appointment on your own if you can. If you need assistance, please bring only one person with you – larger numbers make it difficult for us to maintain social distancing.

New ways to help you

Why not download the NHS app from the App Store or Google Play? You can use it to book appointments, request medication and get medical advice.

You can also use the eConsult form on your practice's website, and you will get a response the next working day. You can still contact your practice by phone if you can't use the app or online options.

Many services are now phone or video based, but if you need to be seen face-to-face, the NHS will arrange a safe way for this to happen. GP practices, pharmacies and hospitals all have strict infection control rules in place.

If you need help

- If you have Covid symptoms like a persistent cough or high temperature, please stay at home and call **119** to arrange a test. You can also book a test by visiting www.nhs.uk and searching for 'coronavirus test'.
- For any other medical needs, call your practice or when your practice is closed, call **NHS 111**. You can also get help through www.111.nhs.uk
- Please come forward with anything that might need urgent medical attention - if you have symptoms like passing blood, finding a lump or unexpected weight loss, contact your practice.
- Answers to frequently asked questions about the vaccine are available at www.newcastlegatesheadccg.nhs.uk

PLEASE DON'T JUST TURN UP TO A&E.

You may be turned away.

A&E is for life threatening emergencies only.

Visit www.111.nhs.uk who will direct you to the care you need.

An MOT for your lungs

If you are a smoker (or have ever smoked), aged 55 to 74, you can expect a letter from your GP inviting you to a lung health check.

Letters are being sent out in stages over a period of two years, to those eligible for the check. The letter will tell you how to book your lung health check. Whilst Covid safety restrictions are in place, the check will be mostly done over the phone by specialist NHS staff. Following some simple questions about your health and lifestyle, the nurse will decide if you should have a CT scan of your lungs.

NHS lung health checks are different to NHS health checks

Even if you've recently been for a health check, you should still consider having your lung health check.

When it comes to lung health, spotting problems early can make a big difference, and just might save your life.

If you get your letter, don't ignore it.

For further information, visit www.yourlunghealthng.nhs.uk

Keeping track of our work

During the pandemic, the CCG is unable to its meetings in public – but you can still keep track and have your say.

Our Governing Body meetings take place online, and Newcastle residents can submit questions beforehand about items on the agenda.

If you want to keep track of local healthcare issues, and find out how you can influence your local NHS, our monthly online forum is a great place to start. Please visit www.newcastlegatesheadccg.nhs.uk for more details.

Your mental health

Many of us are affected by mental health difficulties. This can be very painful, even though it may not be as visible as a physical problem like a broken arm.

Need help now?

If you need urgent help right now, phone the Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Service any time on freephone **0800 652 2863**.

If you or another person have been harmed or are at immediate risk, you may require an emergency response - call **999**.

Who else can I talk to?

- Contact your **GP**
- Call **NHS 111** – open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They can tell you about crisis support services
- If you're finding it difficult to cope, feeling low, anxious or stressed, or not sleeping properly, contact Talking Helps Newcastle on **0191 282 6600** or visit www.talkinghelpsnewcastle.org
- If you are feeling suicidal, phone the Samaritans on **116 123** or visit www.stopsuicidenenc.org
- You can find useful self-help guides at www.cntw.nhs.uk/selfhelp

Why Wait? Cancer Doesn't.

If you are experiencing any possible cancer symptoms, speak to your GP.

Don't delay, call today www.nhs.uk/cancer

Homes in Newcastle to get a Full Fibre boost

During the past year, many of us will have found out-for better or for worse, whether our home internet is up to the task when it comes to the many demands of lockdown and homeworking.

Video conference calls with colleagues, running multiple software programmes, even simply downloading a file can be a frustrating process, particularly when your internet connection has to contend with housemates and family members that are trying to do the exact same thing.

For large parts of the country, home broadband often isn't fast or reliable enough to make the transition to working and living from home a smooth process and this can add to our day-to-day stress levels.

CityFibre backed research has found that a huge 78% of UK consumers felt slowed down and frustrated by their internet connection. With our home working odyssey expected to continue this year and even beyond Covid-19, 82% of UK workers are planning on working from home more - it's clear that strong, reliable broadband is no longer a 'nice-to-have' but an essential utility.

So, what's the solution?

Luckily, the answer to this problem already exists and is being rolled out at pace across Newcastle.

While the term 'fibre broadband' is thrown around a lot, often when providers mention fibre, they are



referring to connections that are only part-fibre. These connections usually include some copper wiring for the final stretch to your home or business, which is a major factor in slow speeds and dropped connections.

Ever felt like you're not getting the Internet speed that you paid for? The distance you live from your local cabinet and the number of customers using this can make a big impact on your available speed.

Since November 2019, CityFibre has been building a powerful new network in Newcastle that uses fibre optic cables for the entire length of the journey. This allows for a remarkably fast - think more than 10 times faster than the average UK connection for the higher-end packages - and a much more reliable service.

Once the network is live and activated in your area, services capable of gigabit-

speeds (1,000Mbps) will be available from an increasing range of broadband providers.

What's next for Newcastle?

Homes in parts of Kenton, Gosforth, Fawdon, Fenham and Blakelaw can now connect to our network with homes in Elswick, Benwell, Walker and Arthur's Hill next in line. In time, the network will be brought within reach of almost every house and business in the city.

How can you be among the first people in Newcastle to upgrade to a CityFibre connection you may ask? It's as simple as registering your interest at www.cityfibre.com/citylife

CityFibre



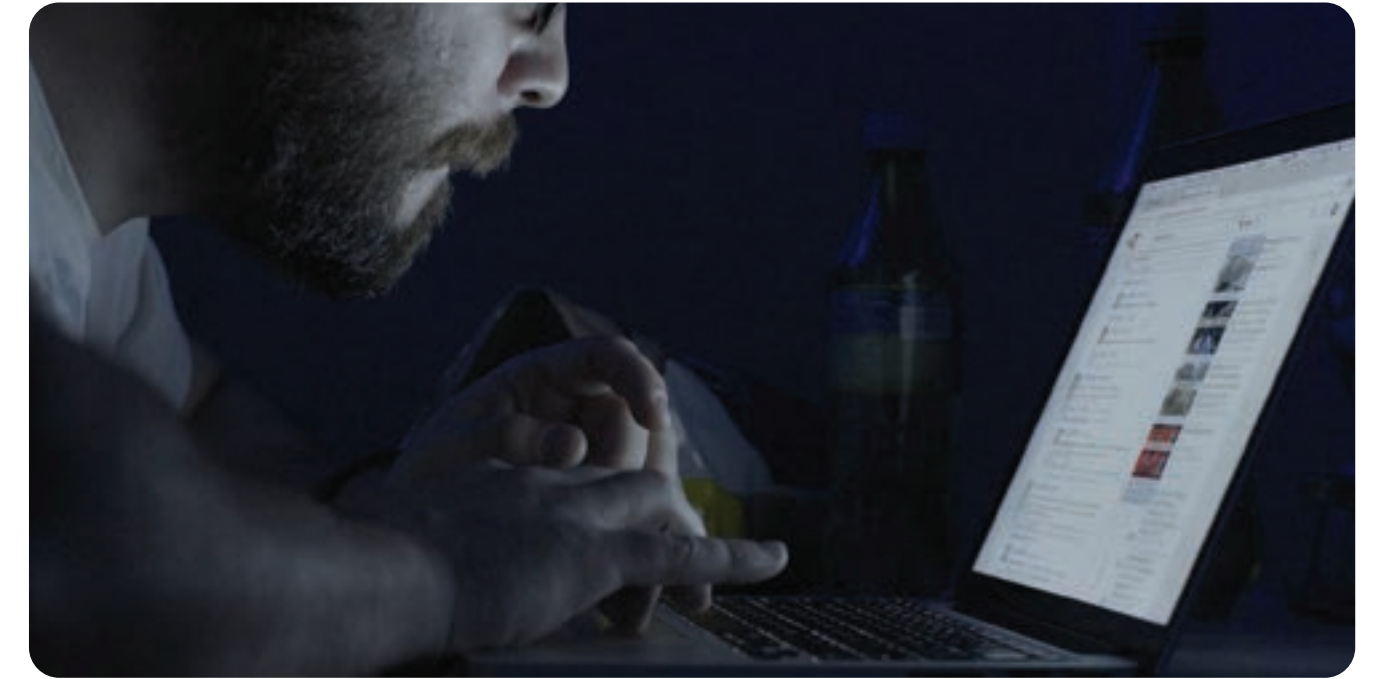
Prevent

Is someone close becoming a stranger?

It can be hard to know what to do if you're worried someone close is expressing extreme views or hatred, which could lead to them harming themselves or others. Working with other organisations, the city council protects vulnerable people from being exploited by extremists through a Home Office programme called Prevent.

Newcastle is a safe, diverse and largely tolerant city, but we cannot be complacent. The main aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. At the heart of Prevent is safeguarding children and adults and providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into extremist or terrorist activity. It is safeguarding against radicalisation.

Act early and tell us your concerns in confidence. You won't be wasting our time



and you won't ruin lives, but you might save them.

If you would like to learn more about Prevent and how we work to keep people safe from radicalisation, or if you have a concern about someone you know who may be at risk of being drawn into extremism or terrorism, then please visit the council website

www.newcastle.gov.uk and search 'Prevent', where you will find useful information and resources or you can visit www.actearly.uk

If you are worried about someone and would like to discuss your concerns, then please contact the Prevent Coordinator, Joe Hogan at prevent@newcastle.gov.uk

Hate crime

Report hate crime safely and anonymously in Newcastle

Newcastle is a safe and welcoming city but sadly a small minority of people continue to spread hate. A hate crime is anything that targets a person for their race, ethnicity or nationality, for their disability, their gender or sexual orientation, or their religion, faith or beliefs.

It comes in many different forms, including written, spoken or even gestured abuse, and has a profound effect on victims and their wider communities.

If you are a victim of, a witness to, or know about a hate crime incident, you can report it safely with Stop Hate UK.

Stop Hate UK is an anti-hate crime charity commissioned by Newcastle City Council to provide a confidential support and reporting service to residents in the city.

Details of how to contact Stop Hate UK can be found at www.stophateuk.org

In an emergency, dial 999.

STOP HATE UK
0800 138 1625
24 HOUR HELP LINE

Supporting people who sleep rough and preventing homelessness

Newcastle City Council has a positive track record of preventing homelessness and supporting anyone found sleeping rough.

The city's Active Inclusion Newcastle partnership launched in 2014 and has prevented over 24,000 households from becoming homeless.

The strength of this established partnership has been essential during the pandemic and helped support any rough sleepers to find suitable accommodation.

Between 30 March 2020 and 7 February 2021 871 individuals were provided with specialist accommodation.

To support the great work of our established homeless service providers in March 2021, the Council will work in partnership with Crisis to begin

a Housing First programme in Newcastle for more people who have become. As well as responding to the pandemic the Council will continue to work with local partners and national government to meet our long term aim to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

This partnership approach to preventing homelessness was recognised recently by winning a World Habitat Gold Award 2020.

Newcastle City Council's Housing Advice Centre has launched a new Freephone number for rough sleeping and homelessness advice - **0800 1707 008** it is available from 08.30am - 12 noon and 1pm - 4.30pm on weekdays.

You can use the same number outside of these hours to be directed to the Emergency Homeless Officer.

Newcastle leads the way in tackling climate change



Our roadmap to “Net Zero”, £1 million extra budget and a successful bid for £27.25m mean we can take major steps in 2021/22 towards carbon neutrality.

In late 2020 we were one of only four places in the UK to be named among the world’s “climate leaders,” receiving the top “A” grade from the charity CDP.

Part of that was down to the extensive work that has seen the council cut its own emissions by more than 44 percent since 2010, but also the new Net Zero Newcastle – 2030 Action Plan, which sets out over 150 ways that the city as a whole can work to tackle climate change.

The two main areas targeted in the plan are energy use in homes and non-domestic properties, which account for 64 percent of the city’s emissions, and transport, which is just under 30 percent.

To support those efforts the council is allocating an extra £1 million in the coming financial year – money that is already helping to leverage millions of pounds more in green investment for our communities, with £27.25 million secured from the Government’s Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

It will also help us to engage young people and communities about tackling climate change, with four summits planned through the course of this year.

And the £1 million will be used to support efforts to survey Newcastle using thermal imaging cameras – to identify where interventions are most urgently needed; look into the feasibility of building low carbon heat networks, similar to the one at Helix; develop the Newcastle GIS-based Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Network (Newcastle GREEN) project; support energy audits for the community and voluntary sector; retrofit public buildings; and help the development of a new, voluntary low carbon building standard.

Yet we know we must do more and address all emissions, from all sectors and drive them down to net zero.

How we do that is far from clear. The wholesale decarbonisation of a city, let



The Theatre Royal, which is one of 32 buildings that will benefit from our successful bid for £27.25 million in funding for low carbon upgrades

alone a country, has never been done before and the challenge is quite simply enormous.

Yet we have a chance at this November’s 26th UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow to show to the world that we take our commitment seriously and are taking bold steps forward in delivering our Net Zero actions.

Sixty years ago, the Space Race gave the world an ambitious goal to aim for.

When it began, nobody knew how to land a man on the moon, but we knew that we had some of the technology and knowledge at our disposal, and we believed that we had the collective will and ingenuity that would take us all of the way.

To an extent, the same principle applies to our current climate change challenge. This is our Space Race. A Space Race for the 21st Century.

By transitioning to net zero, we can create a city and country with a strong and inclusive economy built on the back of rapidly expanding green collar industries and the

thousands of new jobs they will bring.

This will generate new demands for investment and skilled personnel, and our city, our region and the UK can share greatly in this growth - What was once the Roman frontier could become the leading edge of a global green wave.

A place where individuals can live healthier lives, in a cleaner environment, with less fuel poverty and air pollution, more green space, and improved biodiversity.

And with increased prosperity will be the knowledge that our communities are ready for the impacts of a changing climate.

As we enter what we hope will be a year of very positive steps towards achieving our climate goals we invite you to sign a Net Zero Pledge to show your commitment to taking meaningful steps to significantly reduce your own carbon footprint.

You can sign up on our website, and find out a lot more about all of the great work that is being done, and which is planned, at www.newcastle.gov.uk/netzero

‘A huge boost towards net zero’

Public buildings, including schools, libraries, leisure centres, and cultural venues, will receive eco-upgrades after we successfully bid for £27.25m.

From solar panels to “smart” building management systems; heat pumps; new LED lights; energy storage; electrical upgrades and low carbon heating systems; more efficient windows; better wall, roof and pipework insulation; and connecting buildings to the heating network powered by the District Energy Centre at Helix, the work the funding allows us to do will be a significant step to ensuring some of our schools, leisure centres, cultural venues, depots, offices and industrial premises have a more sustainable future.

Thirty-two buildings, including the Theatre Royal, will benefit, resulting in the removal of around 4,050 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year – equivalent to taking 2,828 cars off the road.

And the upgrades – which are scheduled to be carried out by September - could help support and safeguard more than 800 jobs; and potentially save £386,000 a year on running costs, which would obviously be welcome at a time when our budget faces continued challenges.

Bin collection calendars for 2021/22

Your new bin collection calendar for 2021/22 will be delivered during March.

This gives all the dates for your green and blue bin collections for the next year, including details of any changes to your normal collections, for example due to bank holidays such as Christmas.

You can also find these details online at www.newcastle.gov.uk/bins



News in brief

Garden waste collections will resume from Tuesday March 16.

The service, which last year saw over 23,200 households sign up, is just £40 per bin for up to 20 pick-ups between March and December.

Existing customers should have received information on renewing, while new customers can sign up now at www.newcastle.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Our project to install 250 heat pumps, worth on average £7,000 each, for free, is entering its final stages and, as these opportunities don't come around often, we don't want you to miss out on the potential chance to upgrade your heating system.

Remember: You don't need to receive benefits to qualify; you don't have to be an E.ON customer; and suitability is based on your home's characteristics. Find out more and apply now at www.newcastle.gov.uk/heatpumps

Recyclers are reminded that batteries and electricals should not be placed in your bin or its caddy.

In January Walbottle HWRC was twice temporarily closed due to fires it is believed were caused by incorrectly disposed of batteries.

If you need to get rid of them, please use the large network of free-to-use battery collection points, including at supermarkets, large DIY stores and many other shops across the city, or take them to the dedicated Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) areas of our recycling centres."

For the latest guidance on what you can recycle and where visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/recyclingAtoZ

Residents with low incomes and energy inefficient housing can apply to have their homes upgraded after we successfully bid for over £1 million from the Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme.

The first phase of the scheme aims to improve homes with the least efficient three grades of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), bands E, F and G. Check your eligibility and apply for the scheme by contacting our delivery partner E.ON via email, at GreenHomesGrant@eonenergy.com, or phone 0333 202 4820.

Your city, your future – a way forward together



The Covid pandemic has had a profound impact on our city, the people, and the communities we love. The next 12 months are critical as we move forward, so the council and NewcastleGateshead Initiative are working together to set out our city's recovery plan and vision for the future.

First and foremost, we need to tackle the health crisis, rolling out the vaccines, safeguarding the vulnerable, continuing social distancing support and providing testing to reduce infection. We also need to continue to provide financial support for individuals and businesses impacted disproportionately by the crisis. Following the government's publication of a roadmap for re-opening, we are currently planning the safe reopening of our city, working with our partners, communities, and businesses to ensure that at each stage the correct support is in place. Finally, we need to innovate and reinvent our city tackling the profound changes Covid has had on how we do things. We pride ourselves on being a city that makes history and shapes the future. Post Covid, we will define, challenge, and mark out a new path.

We all have a passion for the place we call home and our connected communities have restored hope. Our belief in ourselves and our great city, will drive our determination to strive for something better.

Our city-wide partnerships will accelerate social, environmental, and economic growth. Our commitment to net zero 2030 will create new green jobs. Our exemplar health service will support the development of our recognised life sciences cluster, whilst improving the health of our people. Our digital sector will build on its growth throughout the pandemic, creating jobs and products and services of the future. Economic targets will be matched with environmental and social goals, creating a place where people can live well. We want our progress to be shared by everyone who lives and works in our great city.

We are creating a ten-year vision for recovery, which will set out how we will support the wellbeing of our people and our communities, how we will drive jobs and innovation, how we will continue to develop our city centre, our neighbourhoods, and our digital and transport infrastructure to meet future needs. All of this needs to be underpinned by our commitment to net-zero and a commitment to a more inclusive and equal society.



Have your say on the future of Newcastle

Newcastle's Recovery Plan needs to belong to everyone in the city, and it is important that you have your say. From March until the end of May we are engaging extensively with stakeholder groups.

We will also be running virtual citizen panels to enable everyone to contribute. Please get involved as it is important everyone has their voice heard.

Find out more and give us your views by visiting www.newcastlegateshead.com/haveyoursay



Creating jobs and attracting investment

We are committed to do everything we can to support businesses through this very difficult time and are working with the city's inward investment agency Invest Newcastle to attract new businesses and jobs to our city.



By working together, we are also in a great position to support businesses who are already in the city to grow and thrive. And Invest Newcastle, which is part of NewcastleGateshead Initiative also champion our city internationally and promote what a great place it is to do business. Since it was established in 2013, Invest Newcastle has supported more than 200 new businesses to relocate or expand, helping to create and safeguard more than 9,500 jobs.

Although it's been a challenging time for many individuals and businesses, there is also some really good news. Other businesses have been thriving and growing, and in Newcastle those in life sciences, tech and digital and corporate services have continued to shine.

The games sector in Newcastle is one of the largest, longest running and most successful in the UK. At the end of 2020 Ubisoft Reflections announced plans for expansion and Mkodo, a specialist in mobile apps celebrated taking on 10 new team members, which was quite an achievement during lockdown.

Document Risk Solutions (DRS) is a legal service specialist and have created than 50 jobs since 2017. They have recently moved into a new office building in the city and are looking to take on more staff, with the hope of having 100 employees within the next two to three years including opportunities for local graduates. And Pockit, a mobile banking firm has also moved to region as part of their UK expansion plans.

Throughout the pandemic, Newcastle and the wider region has shown incredible resilience and many local companies have adapted and used innovation to protect lives and support our economy. Lighthouse Laboratory and Covid Innovation Hub is a partnership between the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and the council. It is the first of its kind in the UK and has created 1,100 jobs for the region, once again highlighting our city's strengths and ability to deliver projects of this scale.



Newcastle is home to many life science businesses

A focus on Newcastle Helix

Newcastle Helix, the 24-acre development in the heart of our city centre, continues to play a crucial role in our future.

It is a place for innovation that brings together industry leaders and top researchers. It is also home to many businesses, so the type of jobs on offer are very varied. There's often a good selection of construction apprenticeships on offer, to help the young people in this city who are just starting out.

Newcastle Helix also has a very important role to play in the city's recovery. Not only because of the ground-breaking work to help people to live smarter, healthier and longer lives, but also because the site continues to grow and attract new investment

It is becoming a popular hot spot for innovative life science companies, with the latest addition being a NHS Innovation Lab, that is working to speed up new approaches for COVID-19 testing and technology. Other new businesses moving to the site include Homes England, Savills, Digital Technology Group, and a whole raft of life science businesses that reinforce Newcastle's status as a city of cutting-edge life science research and development.

Other highlights include plans to develop a 160-bed Moxy Hotel, planning permission for 66 affordable homes to suit all generations and construction of the Spark, a brand-new office building. Transatlantic law firm, Womble Bond Dickinson (WBD) have already announced it move to this new and improved workspace.



Helix will play a crucial role in Newcastle's recovery
Photo credit: Gillespies

Supporting local businesses through the pandemic

We're here to support and champion small businesses in Newcastle, ensuring they have all the grants, advice, up-to-date guidance on operating COVID-securely and latest information to help drive forward our local economy, protect jobs and keep Newcastle businesses in business - for now and future years.

Read on to find out more and please get in touch, as we're here to help you. You can find all of the support available for businesses at www.newcastle.gov.uk/covid19businesssupport

Over £90 million in business grants and financial support

Since the start of the pandemic, our teams have administered over £90 million in business support grants, directly into the bank accounts of Newcastle firms. We know these are incredibly challenging times for business owners, so we have made the process as simple as we can by using a short online form, and payments made within ten working days, often sooner.

Government sets the eligibility criteria and the funding available, but where we have been able to, we have set up grants for people who have fallen through the cracks of other financial support such as the recent grants for taxi drivers and essential businesses with

commercial premises. Around 4,000 taxi drivers were eligible for a one-off £250 payment and essential businesses, who could stay open during lockdown and were suffering financial hardship due to lost trade, such as city centre sandwich shops who relied on office workers for their custom, could apply for a payment of £4,000 to help cover their rents and fixed costs.

We will continue to lobby government for greater financial packages to support business owners across the city and to fill the gaps in their support for the self employed. You can contact us at businesssupport@newcastle.gov.uk if you need any further guidance and support.

Looking for work?

Unemployment figures have been increasing due to job losses and redundancies caused by the impact of Covid-19. If you are unemployed, at risk of redundancy or looking for a career change Jobs@SkillsHub can help.

This service is part of the council's response to Covid-19 and provides:

- Fast access to job opportunities
- Careers advice on training and skills development
- Volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships, and training opportunities
- Advice about starting your own business or becoming self-employed

Jobs@SkillsHub is all about helping Newcastle residents find and access local jobs and helping Newcastle businesses to fill their jobs. This job matching service complements existing services provided

by the Skills Hub who have supported hundreds of people into education, work, or training, working with a range of partners including JobCentre Plus and the National Careers Service.

If you are an employer, you can advertise current vacancies for free and find out more about the latest incentives to help future proof and develop your business, such as paid six-month placements for young people through the Kickstart Scheme.

Jobs seekers and employers can register and find out more by:

- Visiting www.skillsHubnewcastle.co.uk
- Emailing skillshub@newcastle.gov.uk
- Calling 0191 580 660



Did you know?

If you are aged 16-24 and claiming Universal Credit you can apply for Kickstart vacancies.

Several local employers are offering paid 6-month work placements in various sectors. Speak to your work coach at the Jobcentre for more information. If you need support to apply for these vacancies, Jobs@SkillsHub can help with cv writing, interview preparation and more.



A future vision for Newcastle's high streets

We are lucky to have vibrant high streets across Newcastle – from Chillingham Road to West Road – offering a wealth of retail choice and community-focused services. Unfortunately, as we look ahead to the phased reopening of our high streets, we know the businesses we love and rely on face a challenging time.

Our retailers, cafes, bars and services can be proud of the innovation they have shown since the pandemic began, making use of outdoor spaces and improving online and local delivery services, but what does the future hold?

To support this, NewcastleGateshead Initiative is leading a project with us, National Innovation Centre Ageing and other partners to understand what local people want from their high streets and will be working with businesses on initiatives to help our high streets recover and grow.

Go to www.newcastlegateshead.com/high-streets to find out more on how you can get involved in this exciting project to help shape the future of our high streets.



West Road - Wingrove



Shields Road - Byker



Chillingham Road - Heaton

Help support your local high street heroes

Follow us on social media channels on [facebook.com/OurNCL](https://www.facebook.com/OurNCL) and twitter.com/Our_Newcastle for tips on how to support local businesses and tell us about your high street heroes!

Nearly 400 businesses supported to sustain, recover, and safeguard jobs

Led by Newcastle City Council, Citylife Business Support is a North of Tyne funded programme providing free support to SMEs to help them navigate the challenges of Covid-19 recovery. To date nearly 400 businesses accessed this service and we know more small and medium businesses in all sectors need support to sustain, recover and safeguard jobs.

Delivery partners Business & IP Centre Newcastle and NewcastleGateshead Initiative (NGI) deliver a package of support to enable businesses to develop and implement new models of delivery to help them recover and plan for their future.

BIPC Newcastle provide one-to-one advice and workshop sessions with Citylife experts, and NGI produce a free online events programme based on current business challenges, resilience, and innovation.

Eligible SMEs can access:

- Up to eight hours of free support from Business & IP Centre Newcastle (BIPC) Citylife experts.
- Workshops tailored to specific business needs.
- A free events programme based on current business challenges, the funding landscape, resilience, and innovation

One of the businesses which has accessed the service said:

"It is a great service which is easy to access and has valuable expertise to offer. When you run a business, it can be hard to step back and see where you could improve or to find the time to undertake training. This targeted support may just be the help you need to make some changes to your business that could help navigating these difficult times a little easier."

Faye Clark, Finale Shoes

To sign up and get expert advice and help for your business visit <https://www.bipcnewcastle.co.uk/>



Our Newcastle, the future is now for the city centre

As we look to a new era for our city, we are very excited to unveil a multi-million-pound plan to transform our city centre.

This has been the long-term vision of the council, and something we have been working with partners on for a number of years. We feel that now is the right time to launch our plan, start developing a new city centre and kick start the city's recovery from Covid.

By bringing significant investment to the city centre we can make sure Newcastle remains a place where local people find jobs, businesses can thrive, people want to live, and tourists want to visit.

We all know that Newcastle is a fantastic and vibrant city, somewhere that welcomes visitors with open arms and offers that infamous Geordie hospitality. These plans will build on this and make our city centre somewhere that's not just about shopping and retail. We want to create a healthy, green city with outdoor spaces and activities that people, and their families can safely enjoy together.



The best cities never stand still. They become places for people to enjoy, and Newcastle is one of those cities.

The first phase of the programme will start from this summer and focus on the transformation of a number of the key city centre streets and areas, making improvements and looking at how the city centre could benefit from more pedestrian areas.



Left: Northumberland Street

Above: Ridley Place

Ridley Place

This will become a pedestrian dominated space for local independent retailers and for markets and popup retail food and beverage. A destination to dwell, socialise, eat and drink.

Saville Row

A place for arts, innovation and design. Somewhere that independent retailers can proudly show-case local products and art.

Below: Saville Row



Northumberland Street

We have begun to talk to people and businesses in these areas to give them more detail about our plans and to find out what they think. And we will be extending this in the coming weeks and months, so more people have the chance to be involved.

Here is some more detail of our plans:

Grey Street

We want this to become a vibrant street which is used for cultural events and performance, al fresco dining and as a place to sit and admire the historic and architectural wonder of the street. The aim is to return this historic and majestic street into the primary pedestrian route between the city centre and Quayside.

Grey Street - How the primary pedestrian route between the city centre and Quayside might look

We will be transforming the street into a simple, elegant and welcoming environment, with trees, greenery and places to sit and relax. Or maybe to enjoy the informal performances that will be taking place there.

And we won't rest on our laurels. We have ambitious plans for other areas of the city centre, including the Grainger Market, Old Eldon Square and Blackett Street, and further funding and investment will allow this to happen.

For more information about our plans for the city centre and to tell us your views, visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/citycentre

The Grainger Market - at the heart of our plans

The Grainger Market is absolutely critical to our plans for Newcastle.

It has been part of the fabric of the city centre since 1835 and has recently played such a vital role in supporting the city through the Covid pandemic. We look forward to it opening fully again when non-essential retail is permitted to do so.

The market, like the rest of the city centre, is ready to be awakened. It will become the

city's centre of produce and food culture but always retain its charm, sitting proudly in its Grade 1 listed building. And our plans mean the architecture of and entrances to this treasured iconic building will again shine.

To keep up to date with all the news from the Grainger Market visit the Facebook page [@GraingerMarketNewcastle](https://www.facebook.com/GraingerMarketNewcastle)

Changing spaces

As part of our plans to transform the city centre we need to change the way we use different spaces, with people, not vehicles, as the number one priority.



People enjoying previous summer time changes on Blakett Street

Before the pandemic we had already published information about proposals for making the streets around the Monument more people-friendly by changing access for vehicles.

We spoke to people and businesses about these plans and the feedback we received has helped to shape a new set of proposals.

We're going to publish information on our website that shows how we've taken into account people's views. If you want more

information on this please get in touch with citycentre@newcastle.gov.uk.

We will be providing details on what the new pedestrianised areas will look like, what the new delivery and servicing arrangements would be and what changes we'd need to make to on-street parking.

Later this year there will be a formal consultation where you'll have the chance to comment before any changes are put in place.

Changes to Blue Badge parking from July

If you're a Blue Badge holder, you'll know that you can park free of charge in any of the 2,000 on-street parking spaces in Newcastle.

More than 100 of these spaces are disabled parking bays, which are located within easy reach of shops and services.

There are also priority parking and accessible bays in council-run car parks, which again provide easier access for Blue Badge holders.

It's important we manage demand for our car parks and ensure there continues to be enough accessible spaces available.

From July 1, we will be introducing a charge for Blue Badge parking in our car parks, although holders will receive an extra hour of free parking to allow any additional time needed to get back to your vehicle.

This won't affect on-street parking, which will of course, continue to be free of charge for Blue Badge holders.

Planning for cleaner, greener and more accessible transport routes

Last summer we made a number of changes in the city centre to make it easier for people to travel in a safe and socially-distanced way as initial lockdown restrictions were lifted.

It meant more people-friendly and safer space for walking and cycling.

Two areas where we made big changes were on Grey Street and Queen Victoria Road.

Now we're looking at how we can make some of those changes permanent using £3.8m funding we've got from the Active Travel Fund.

We're already talking to people, businesses and organisations affected so that we can understand what their needs are and how we can best meet their different requirements.



Temporary measures on Grey Street

We're also continuing to monitor the temporary arrangements that are in place to understand how they are working and how they might need to be altered.

Newcastle's digital transformation to world player

- Zen Internet brings the fastest broadband services available to Newcastle over CityFibre's full fibre network
- The new service costs £40 per month with free activation (usually £29.99) as a special launch offer from Zen

Newcastle has become one of the very first areas in the UK to enjoy access to Zen's gigabit-speed broadband service over the CityFibre network. This is the fastest internet speeds available to any household in the UK, right on your doorstep. The new 'Full Fibre 900 Plus' service is already available across thousands of homes in Newcastle and the build is accelerating to reach almost every home and business by 2025.

CEO, Zen Internet (and former Sage executive) Paul Stobart is excited about what it will mean for the city's productivity and why it can support Newcastle in becoming a world player. He says, "Digital transformation is only possible if consumers and businesses have access to really fast, high quality broadband and that is what CityFibre is now bringing to the area."

Newcastle – a world player

Paul continues, "With today's technological advancements and what is going to be a permanent change to working habits you can participate anywhere in the world right here from Newcastle."

Full fibre broadband will bring a range of benefits to Newcastle transforming customers' digital capabilities with up to 900 Mbps of bandwidth when both downloading and uploading. It provides a solid connection for home working, home schooling, entertainment and keeping connected with the outside world. Visit www.zen.co.uk/newcastle for details.



Yet another price hike?

Don't get caught out paying more for your broadband.

With our price for life, your price stays the same, even when your contract ends.

Award-winning broadband at gigabit-speed is now rolling out across Newcastle.



Visit zen.co.uk/newcastle or call us on 0191 691 9130

Creating cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhoods in Newcastle

Our city is committed to tackling climate change, cleaning up the air we breathe and creating a more liveable city – one that puts people first.

How we move around the city and our neighbourhoods plays a key role in this. We need bold action to create places we want to live and work – with better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities.

With coronavirus restrictions in place for a while longer, it is important that we not only create space for social distancing but also take steps to improve our health, through active travel and reduced air pollution from vehicles.

This is why we are developing plans to reduce the amount of vehicle traffic travelling through neighbourhoods across the city. You can see the proposals as we develop them by going online to www.newcastle.gov.uk/neighbourhoods. Some of the first neighbourhood plans include Heaton and parts of the Ouseburn, along with Arthur's Hill and Fenham.

We've also produced this handy (short!) guide on some of the steps we'll take to reduce traffic and the benefits that brings.

Making better neighbourhoods

The first priority for reducing traffic in neighbourhoods is to create more people-friendly streets in your local area. This means that the movement and safety and wellbeing of people is prioritised over those routes being used by cars.

By using planters or similar changes to restrict vehicle access at key points, we can reduce the number of vehicles using local streets, meaning that traffic should use main routes, not cut through local streets.



Planters such as the one used on Stoneyhurst Bridge could be installed to restrict traffic in neighbourhoods.

As streets will only be used for vehicle trips starting or ending in the area, traffic volumes should drop significantly. Speed of vehicles should also decrease as people are likely to drive more carefully knowing they're in their local area.

We're focused on deterring through traffic – not removing all traffic. Every property in any area will still be able to be accessed by motor vehicle including delivery drivers, refuse trucks and emergency vehicles, but we'll be stopping people driving through neighbourhoods.

What are the benefits?

With less traffic cutting through local streets, local areas will become much safer and attractive places for the people who live there and for children

to play. This also encourages more people to walk and cycle on short local journeys, which is good for everybody (including those who still need to drive!)

Making these changes will help to create safer, cleaner and greener neighbourhoods. They can have a big impact on tackling air pollution, reducing congestion, improving residents' health and wellbeing and increasing safety on residential streets.

They also create closer communities by providing more space for people to enjoy, opportunities to chat to neighbours (socially distanced of course) and children to play out safely. Local shops become more attractive as they're easier and safer to access. We all want to be able to return to a sense of normality, but we also need to recognise that we should address the issues we had before to make sure people have a better quality of life.

Next steps

Visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/neighbourhoods for full details of schemes that are planned for your local area. You can also get in touch at neighbourhoods@newcastle.gov.uk if you wish to suggest schemes in your area.

Last summer, we closed five local bridges to vehicles to reduce traffic cutting through local streets.

We are currently reviewing the data we've gathered, including feedback from the emergency services and public consultation, before making a long-term decision on the bridges. The closures will remain in place while we complete this review. Find out more www.newcastle.gov.uk/bridges.

Culture: The catalyst for recovery

Culture is the lifeblood of Newcastle. It is what makes the city tick.

From our theatres to our music venues, from our night life to parks, our vibrant arts and creative sector plays a vital role in the lives of communities.

It brings people together, providing thousands of jobs, improving residents' wellbeing, and putting the city on the map regionally, nationally and internationally as a fantastic place to live, work or visit.

The last year has been exceptionally tough for everyone involved in the arts, but we know that culture will play a key role in helping our city to recover from the effects of this pandemic, supporting economic development, public health, and quality of life.

Before looking to that recovery however, we have sought to provide help and support to offer the sector some sense of stability.

We have been extremely effective in lobbying the Government and Arts Council England on behalf of our local organisations, ensure emergency funds and grants from the £1.57 billion Cultural Recovery Fund provided them with the finance needed to survive.

Indeed Newcastle and the wider North East has been awarded more per head than any other region in England.

Councillors also gave the green light to continue our £622,500 a year support for the Newcastle Culture Investment Fund until 2026.

That money will, via Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, in the immediate future be targeted to secure the future of the city's cultural assets, sustain them through the remaining months of

the pandemic, and then enable them to function productively in the "new normal."

And we have worked with the North of Tyne Combined Authority to see money ringfenced for cultural sector growth channelled into recovery, with a £3.25million Culture and Creative Recovery Fund set to be established.

Moving forward we are now entering into a period where, through increased investment and the establishment of a strong events programme, we aim to ensure that our offer in the future reflects our ambition to be one of the UK's leading culture capitals.

This will begin in summer as we transform key central and quayside areas, then continue through our Christmas offer and beyond.

Newcastle Arts Team Residency Programme

The Covid Age is a film and research project, aimed at collecting and sharing experiences from Newcastle residents of ageing through Covid-19 pandemic.

Film Maker, Danielle Giddins will produce 6 films in response to capturing local, personal stories of life living through lockdown from people of all ages. Ongoing work will be showcased on an online gallery and a sharing exhibition will take place when restrictions allow.

We are asking members of the public to get involved and submit photographs, written stories, home videos, drawings, or any other piece of art that captures their memories and stories from their lived experiences during this time.

This is a partnership project between Newcastle Arts Development and Public Health Teams, and the National Innovation Centre for Ageing at Newcastle University.

Website: www.thecovidage.co.uk
Email: thecovidageproject@gmail.com
Phone: 07946 346 427

To find out more about Newcastle Arts Team Residency Programme please visit www.newcastle.gov.uk/artist-residencies.

Looking ahead...

As plans for easing lockdown restrictions take shape there is a chance fans may be able to return to sports stadiums, crowds may enjoy music festivals and colourful parades might once again take over the city streets.

High profile events have already been announced for 2021 for Newcastle – add these dates to your calendar and enjoy them safely.



22 – 24 July - Pride 2021
- This year's Pride festival will take place online – expect big celebrations and bright colours as



Newcastle's incredible LGBTQ+ community reconnect and party in style. UK Pride status will roll over to 2022.

4 – 5 September - Dacia Magic Weekend – Super League teams return to St James' Park for a weekend of incredible rugby action.

23 - 24 October - Rugby League World Cup opening weekend –

The hard-hitting tournament kicks off on Saturday 23 when England take on Samoa at St James' Park followed by Scotland's first game against Italy at Kingston Park on Sunday 24.



Social Workers in Schools programme launches

Five secondary schools in Newcastle are benefiting from the Council's new Department for Education funded programme which has embedded individual social workers into their school communities.

The schools selected – Benfield School, Kenton School, Sacred Heart Catholic High School, St Cuthbert's Catholic High School and Walbottle Academy were selected at random by an independent group from working with the Department for Education.

The school based social workers are part of the Council's Children's Social Care services but being based within their school they create stronger relationships with school pupils, teachers, pastoral staff, and families in order to provide better outcomes for young people across Newcastle.

The social workers also work with feeder schools for each of the schools where there are younger children in the families receiving support from Children's Social Care.

The school specific approach to safeguarding and protection helps to strengthen relationships with people, such as teachers, who work with the young people every day and will help more bespoke, wrap around support packages to be put in place at the right time for children and their families.

Kelly McGuinness, Social Worker in School at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School says: "Being integrated in the school and local community has promoted a better understanding of young people's lived experiences and supported positive changes to their lives and that of their families".

The initial one-year pilot programme will be reviewed nationally this summer and schools in Newcastle have invested to continue to develop the model.



Kelly McGuinness, Social Worker in School speaking with Richard Collinson, Assistant Headteacher Safeguarding, SENDCO and Inclusion St Cuthbert's Catholic High School.

Do something life changing

We have children waiting for their forever families, in particular sibling groups, school-age children and children with additional health or emotional needs.



If you are thinking about adoption, please get in touch
Telephone **0191 643 5000**
Email adoptnortheast@northtyeside.gov.uk
www.adoptnortheast.org.uk

Get ready for Census 2021

The census is coming and this time it's going to be different. For the first time you will be able to complete the census online making it easier to access for more people than ever before.



The census is coming

Sunday 21 March

it's about us
census 2021

The census is about all of us and by taking part you can help shape services in your community. The census informs decisions about issues that are important to you, decisions about things like education, healthcare and public transport.

Sunday 21 March is Census Day. Everyone is required by law to complete the census and if you don't you could be fined up to £1,000 so it's important that you know how to take part.

In early March, you should have received your census letter with an access code that you will need to fill

in the form. If you haven't received a letter or can't find your access code get in touch to request a new one.

To complete the census go to www.census.gov.uk, click the 'start census' button, enter your access code and you're ready to go. Some questions are voluntary, and you won't get into trouble if you don't answer those ones but please complete them if you can. Personal information such as names and dates of birth are protected by law and not shared with anyone. You can't be identified from the statistics that are published.

Don't worry if you don't have access to the internet or find it difficult to complete forms online as you can still request a paper form. You can find the information on how to do this in your census letter.

You can also get help or advice on how to complete the census by contacting the census helpline by calling the freephone number **0800 141 202**, texting **86677** or using the webchat at www.census.gov.uk/. If you need help in another language call the language helpline on **0800 597 2021**. If you are Deaf or hearing impaired and use Relay UK dial **18001** followed by the freephone number.

Welcome back to school and college

This month it has been wonderful to see schools able to welcome back the children and young people who have been learning at home since January.

We hope that pupils are enjoying being back at school among their classmates.

We know that the last few weeks have been difficult for many families, as well as being a very challenging time for our schools.

Our thanks go to parents, carers school staff and children and young people for their efforts and hard work during this time.

Now that schools are open to all pupils again, it's important to remind everyone that measures continue to be in place to help keep people safe, prevent the

spread of the virus and ensure that schools are safe.

Schools will have been contacting parents about the arrangements they have in place, which will vary depending on the size and layout of the school.

It's really important that we all continue to follow the guidance. If there is anything you are unsure about please check with your child's school.

Schools will be keeping families up to date in the event of any further announcements from government.



Testing update

If your child is in secondary school – Year 7 or above – they will have been invited to take a lateral flow device (LFD) test for Covid prior to them returning to school.

This means that secondary schools have been operating a phased return to allow for testing to be done.

Testing is voluntary and will only be done with your consent or the consent of your child, if they are over 18. The testing is to identify people who may not have symptoms (asymptomatic) and respond quickly to this to reduce transmission and keep us all safe.

Secondary pupils who are tested are able to return to school following their first negative result. Those who have not agreed to be tested may still return to the classroom, in line with the phased arrangements the school has in place.

You should not send your child to school or college if they, or someone they live with, has tested positive for Covid, has Covid symptoms or if they are unwell. Please continue to follow the existing public health guidance on self-isolation to help prevent the virus spreading.



School travel

If your child normally travels to school using public transport remember that they must follow the Hands, Face, Space guidance.

Everyone aged 11 or older must wear a face covering, including on school buses unless they are exempt on medical grounds.

Bus drivers may refuse to let someone on the bus if they don't have a face covering so please make sure your child has theirs.

Where possible pupils are asked to use contactless methods of payment and are reminded of the need to regularly wash their hands.

Nexus and bus operators are providing extra buses and drivers to help ensure pupils can travel to school safely and to improve social distancing for all passengers.

If you can, please try to walk or cycle to school. If you do need to drive your child to school for part of the journey, please park away from the school and walk the rest of the way to reduce congestion at the school gates.

Exams update

If your child was due to sit GCSE or AS and A level exams this summer, here's a reminder of the arrangements that the government has put in place.

Students will not be asked to sit formal exams and grades will instead be awarded based on teacher assessments.

These assessments will take into account the course work students have done and will also reflect how well they are performing in each subject.

Guidance from the exam boards will help make sure teacher assessments are fair and consistent across the country.

Checks on the processes being followed by schools will also be carried out. This will include visits to some schools and colleges in June and July.

Students will be able to appeal if they don't think the grade is a fair reflection of their work and ability.

Your child's school will need to submit students' grades to the exam boards by 18 June.

Students will receive their final AS and A level results on 10 August and GCSE results will be given on 12 August.

For some courses, including vocational, technical and other general qualifications, the grades will be awarded in different ways and you should contact your child's school or college for individual course details.

Results for these courses will be published at the same time or before the results for GCSEs, AS and A levels.

If you'd like more information the Department for Education guidance can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2021

From worst house to Wish House

A property in Newcastle once condemned as Britain's worst doer-upper has been turned into a much wished for home with help from Newcastle City Council's empty homes team.

The house in Byker, which hit the national headlines after a local estate agent shared photos of the property, is now a home once more after standing empty for over 10 years.

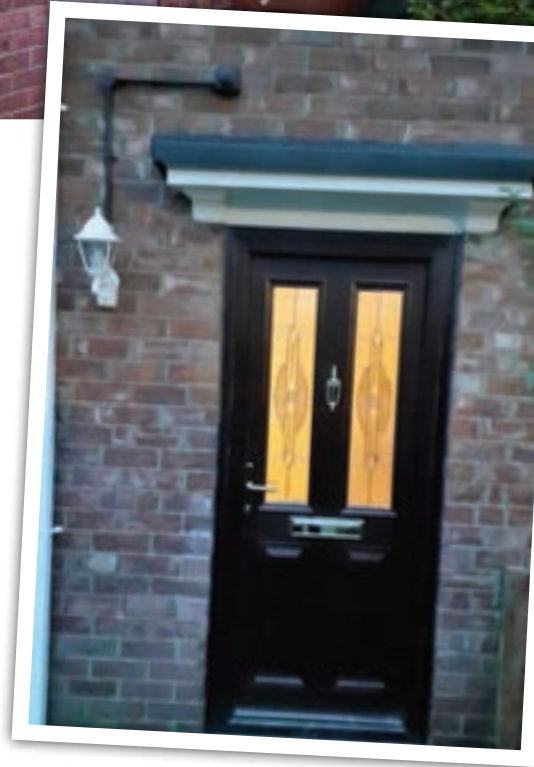
The story behind this property is not a tale of an absent owner or neglectful landlord who failed to take care of the house but an example of how a once much loved home can fall into disrepair.

When the previous owner of the property, which is now known as The Wish House, was no longer able to look after themselves and moved into

residential care there was no one to look after the house and it fell into disrepair.

When the owner passed away the property remained empty and continued to slowly deteriorate. Over the years water began to leak through holes in the roof, rubbish was dumped at the property and vermin moved in.

Over the years Environmental Health received numerous complaints and regularly removed rubbish and boarded up the property to stop people getting in. There were also attempts to set fire to the



property and eventually it was in such a poor state of repair that it required a full refurbishment.

The previous owner had no known living relatives so there was no prospect of it being brought back into use.

As the council's Environmental Health Team had incurred costs from the work they had done to secure the property they decided to begin Enforced Sale proceedings to recover their costs.

The property was sold at auction in September 2019 and that's when the Empty Homes Team stepped in. They contacted the successful bidder and have been working closely with them ever since. The team have helped with advice and guidance as well as encouraging the new owner to apply for an Empty Homes Grant of up to £5,000 to help with the cost of the repairs.

The support from the Empty Homes Team has really benefitted the purchaser, Mr Ranganai Moyo, who said "As a first time property developer, it was a fantastic experience working with the Empty Homes Team to refurbish The Wish House which has been empty for nearly a decade. They provided me with valuable advice throughout on things such as the 15% VAT exemption on labour and materials.

Above: **Wish House exterior before and after**

I am really grateful to the team for the support throughout the refurbishment. The Wish House is now a lovely property and a nice environment for family use."

And new tenant Kimberly Black is just as happy saying "I'm very happy with the house and the work that's been done in the property."

The Wish House is just one example of how Newcastle's Empty Homes Team have been able to help turn an empty house back into a home. If you own an empty house that is in need of repair get in touch by emailing Frances.Shieber@Newcastle.gov.uk or calling **07780 954 861** to see if the Empty Homes Team could help you.

Creating a better, safer private rented sector

The private rented sector plays an important role in Newcastle's housing market. Over recent years it has grown significantly and there are now over 50,000 privately rented homes in the city.

Many of the homes in the private rented sector are older properties and it's vital that these are well maintained and managed. Most landlords take their responsibilities seriously and provide good quality housing but there are a small number that don't.

Properties that aren't looked after properly can make an area a less attractive place to live and work, lead to increased anti-social behaviour and have a negative impact on the wellbeing of the whole community.

Newcastle City Council is committed to creating a safer, better private rented sector where people feel comfortable and secure. In some areas of the city we have introduced property licensing to help raise standards for the benefit of everyone living there.

What is property licensing?

Property licensing gives the council the power to make landlords accountable for managing their properties and tenants. Licensing means the landlord will have to meet certain standards to rent out their properties. Licensing also strengthens and protects tenants' rights.

How will I know if my landlord needs a licence?

Not all private rented properties in Newcastle need a property licence. If you share your home with two or more unrelated people, or if you rent a home in certain areas of the city your landlord might need a property licence. You can check if the home you live in should have a licence at www.newcastle.gov.uk/propertylicensing

If you think your property should have a licence you should ask your landlord and ask them for a copy or you can check the online register at www.newcastle.gov.uk/propertylicensing



Private Rented Service Newcastle work with landlords and tenants to improve private rented housing

How does a licence protect my rights?

Property licensing makes landlords more accountable for the properties they own and manage. When landlords need to apply for a property licence it means we know who is responsible for the property. They will also need to provide the council with certain information such as copies of safety certificates, will be expected to undertake ongoing training and to maintain their properties to a good standard.

Will I have to pay more rent if I live in a licensed property?

You should not have to pay more for a licenced property and a landlord cannot pass on the charge for a licence to the tenant. Rent levels are determined by market rates and we have not found that property licensing results in landlords putting up rents.

Where can I get help if I think my landlord is breaching a licence?

If you think your landlord has breached their licence you can get advice and support from the property licencing team at propertylicensing@newcastle.gov.uk

Tenants and landlords don't need to suffer in silence

Tenants and landlords in Newcastle who are struggling financially due to COVID-19

and feel like they have nowhere to turn are being urged not to suffer in silence.

A recent report from Generation Rent found over half a million privately rented households in the UK are currently in arrears and 58% of tenants are worried that they will lose their home when the ban on eviction ends.

Renters in Newcastle are facing a rising debt crisis as their incomes have dropped significantly during the current pandemic. And although evictions are currently on hold that doesn't help the landlords who rely on the rent they receive to manage their businesses and support themselves.

Newcastle City Council is supporting local residents by adopting an approach that includes targeted advice and a focus on preventing homelessness.

Private Rented Service Newcastle (PRSN) is providing support and advice to private sector tenants and landlords throughout the pandemic including support to tenants to access welfare benefits and negotiating with landlords. Landlords should not have to feel that eviction is the only solution as this is time consuming, costly and can be avoided through early intervention.

Tenants and landlords in the private rented who need advice or support can contact PRSN by emailing privaterentedservice@newcastle.gov.uk or by visiting www.privaterentedservice.co.uk

Help to keep your home gas safe

When did you last have your boiler serviced or fire checked? A gas leak, fire or carbon monoxide poisoning can cause serious injury or even death.

Know the warning signs

An appliance that isn't working properly can be a risk to you, your family and your home. Warning signs include:

- A pilot light that keeps going out
- A lazy yellow flame instead of a crisp blue one
- Black marks or stains around an appliance
- Feeling sick, drowsy or dizzy at home but better when you go out

Gas Safety Grants

Care and Repair Newcastle could help with the cost of servicing, checks or repairs with a grant from Gas Safe Charity. If you're a homeowner living in Newcastle you can apply for a grant of up to £250 if:

- You have a low household income; or
- You or your partner are disabled

Get in touch to find out more

Online: www.careandrepairnewcastle.co.uk/gas-safety
Email: careandrepairnewcastle@newcastle.gov.uk
Phone: 0191 2115836



Care & Repair Newcastle Helping turn the house you love into the home you need

A home with a view at Addison Court

With stunning views across the Tyne and a name that honours a Viscount who once counted Clement Atlee amongst his staff you could be forgiven for thinking that Addison Court is a new high cost, luxury housing development.

The scheme, which is located in Scotswood, is named after Lord Dr Christopher Addison the man widely recognised as the father of council housing after he ordered councils to build thousands of new homes 'fit for heroes' after World War 1.

The high-quality homes will offer onsite care and support for older people who need help with day to day tasks, a range of facilities and activities to create a real sense of community and provide residents with the privacy and security of their own home.

Addison Court is the council's newest assisted living scheme and with design features including landscaped gardens and an onsite restaurant you may be right about the luxury but not the high cost. Building is expected to complete later this Spring and the new homes will be available for affordable rent soon after.



Councillor Linda Hobson, Cabinet Member for Housing and Ian Avis, Regional Construction Manager at Tolent, admire the views across the Tyne from the roof of Addison Court

Housing options for independent living

As we get older, we often find the things we found easy become a bit more difficult. If you're struggling with the cooking, worried about managing the stairs or need a bit of help with getting dressed in the morning there are a range of housing options that could help you live independently for longer.

If you're having mobility issues or struggling to manage in your current house a home designed or adapted to meet your needs, such as a bungalow or level access home, could be the right option for you. These homes benefit from adaptations like easy to access electric sockets, wider doors for wheelchair access and you could even have an Ostara alarm installed in case you need help in an emergency. These homes may be part of a new development or an existing property, including in some cases your own home and could be adapted to meet your needs.

If you'd like the chance to socialise with people your own age then retirement housing, sometimes known as sheltered housing, might be the choice for you. These schemes usually comprise of around 20 to 40 flats or bungalows and a communal lounge. The development will usually have a scheme manager and each home will be linked to a 24-hour care alarm system.

Assisted living developments, like Addison Court, offer a bit more support. These schemes are specially designed to

help residents with care packages to live comfortably and independently for as long as possible. With a care team onsite 24 hours a day assisted living offers planned care and support during the day with staff on hand in case you need additional unplanned care. However Assisted Living cannot meet the needs of people who receive planned care and support overnight.

There are also a range of other housing options available depending on the level of care and support that you need. You can find out more about the supported and specialist housing available for older people in Newcastle at www.yourtimeyourspace.org/ or by visiting the Information Now website at www.informationnow.org.uk/article/housing-for-older-people/

If you're not sure which is the best option for you or would like some help to assess your needs Your Home Your Future from Care and Repair Newcastle could help. You can find out more at www.careandrepairnewcastle.co.uk/my-home-future/

Move now with Housing Plus

Affordable homes to rent for people over 55

Your Homes Newcastle offers rented bungalows and apartments exclusively for people over 55, all designed with quality, comfort and home security in mind.

Benefits of Housing Plus from Your Homes Newcastle:

- ✓ Independent living for longer
- ✓ No fees or deposit to pay
- ✓ Repairs and maintenance team on hand and costs covered
- ✓ Optional furniture rental available
- ✓ Housing Plus staff nearby to help if needed
- ✓ Optional daily companionship and wellbeing calls
- ✓ 24-hour alarm and response service from Ostara.

Properties are available across Newcastle and are all offered at social and affordable rents. Depending on your circumstances you may be able to get additional financial assistance with your rent. Our teams can help you complete a confidential eligibility assessment to check.

Move without delay

We have a number of properties available and ready to move into now.

The health and safety of our customers and staff is our top priority, so all our viewings and moves follow social distancing guidelines, including:

- ✓ Initial video tours available
- ✓ If you want to visit in person, staff will meet you at the door but won't accompany you inside
- ✓ Strict social distancing and PPE in place
- ✓ Additional cleaning

Contact the Housing Plus team and quote 'Citylife' to find out more or register your interest:

- Call 07880 305 972 or 07929 825 987
- Email housingplus@yhn.org.uk
- Visit www.yhn.org.uk

You can also contact us with any queries you have about the work we do to ensure the safety of our customers during Covid-19.

All Housing Plus properties benefit from an onsite Housing Plus staff member offering a friendly face and day-to-day support as well as help with arranging repairs and ensuring communal areas are clean and secure.

Sam Brewer is based at Bamburgh House in Westerhope. Sam has worked for Your Homes Newcastle for 13 years and said: "After people move in to one of our properties they often tell us how safe and comfortable they feel in their new homes, which is what it's all about for us.

"We're on hand to help when anyone needs us, whether that's with practical issues like reporting repairs or paying rent, or just being a friendly face to talk to so people don't feel isolated or lonely.

"We also offer a daily call for people who might need a little extra support or to give extra peace of mind for our customers and their families, which has been a lifeline for many during the pandemic."

Mrs Wood moved into our Allerdale development in Chapel House in September. She said:

"Moving in felt very safe even during Covid. Everyone kept their distance and gave me plenty of space.

"My property is lovely and spacious with plenty of storage and it's nicely situated in an area I know near the shops.

"Katie and Vicky are my Housing Plus workers and they're on the end of the phone if I need anything. I think there can be stigma around moving into older people's housing but I think it's perfect."



Pictured top: Sam Brewer, Housing Plus Officer at Bamburgh Court

Pictured above: Allerdale Court offers assisted living homes for older people



Available now:

Bungalow at Welbeck Green, Walker



Your Homes Newcastle has a one-bedroom Housing Plus bungalow available now on the Welbeck Green development in Walker. Exclusively for people over 60, the rent is £106.80 per week with no fees to pay, all repairs and maintenance costs covered and the added benefit of Ostara's 24-hour alarm and response service.

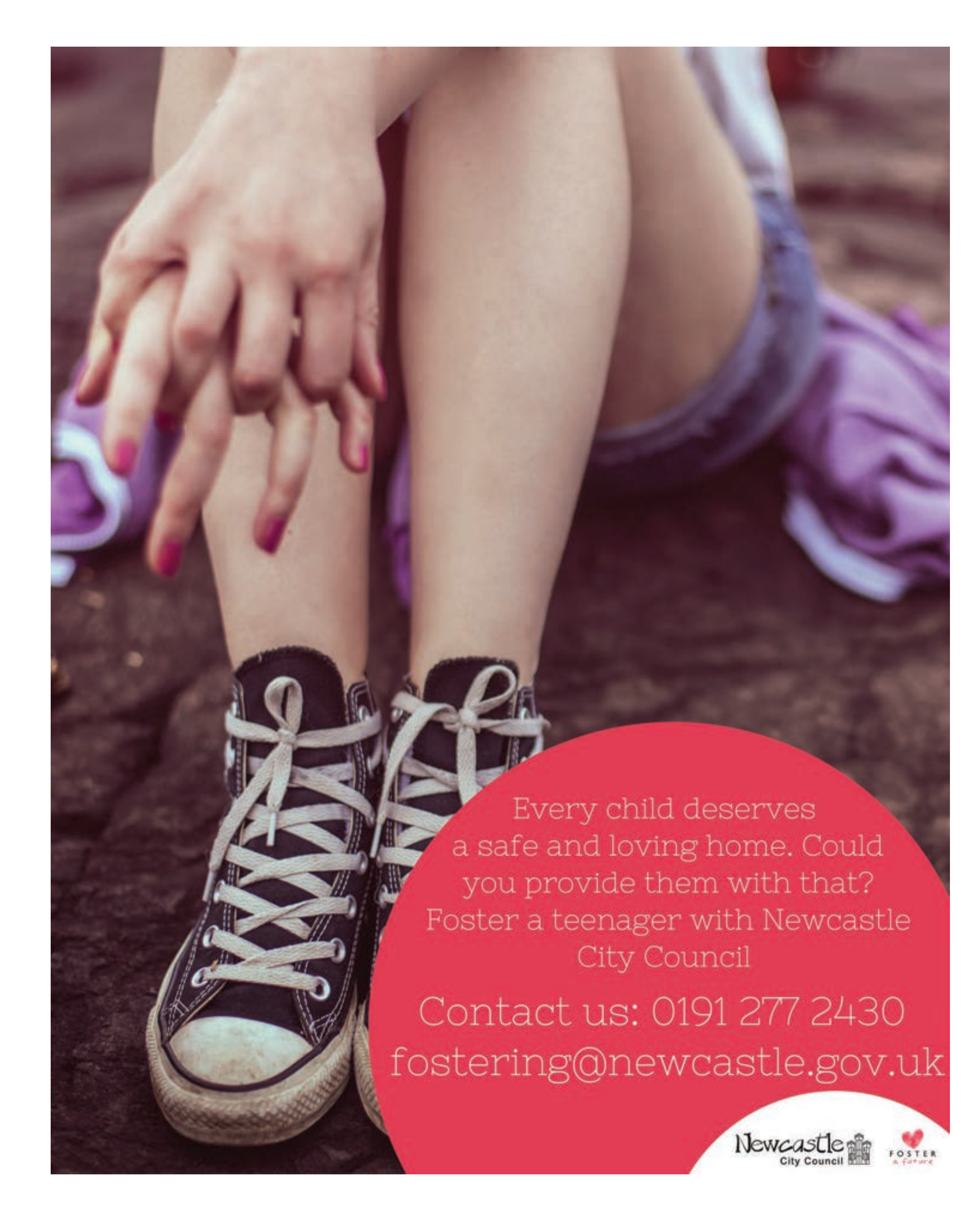
Available now:

Apartment at Bamburgh House, Westerhope



A one-bedroom apartment is available to rent now in Bamburgh House in Westerhope. Exclusively for people over 55, the development is fully refurbished, designed with quality, comfort and home security in mind. The rent is £133.36 per week with no fees to pay, all repairs and maintenance costs covered and the added benefit of Ostara's 24-hour alarm and response service.

Call us direct on 07880 305 972 or 07929 825 987 or email housingplus@yhn.org.uk and quote 'Citylife' to find out more.



Every child deserves
a safe and loving home. Could
you provide them with that?
Foster a teenager with Newcastle
City Council

Contact us: 0191 277 2430
fostering@newcastle.gov.uk