



home news

Customer Services: 08458 505 600

Repairs: 0800 783 9295

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Five top tips for crime reduction by Inspector Andrew McConnell

Criminal damage is one of the biggest issues we tackle in Derwentside. This offence covers graffiti, window breaking, damage to cars, pulling down fences and setting property alight. There are some very simple actions that you can do to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim of criminal damage.

1. Keep your gardens tidy and remove any rubble or items that could be used to cause damage, taking the temptation out of other people's hands.
2. Put your bin out on the day of the rubbish collection and not the night before. This reduces the chances of the contents being tipped out or the bin being set on fire. The bin being set alight may cause damage to your home or another property or fence, so this simple measure could save a lot of heartache.

3. Once the collection has been made, bring your bin in!
4. Cars are often targets of criminal damage so if you have off street parking, such as a drive or a garage remember to use them. Most damage to cars happens to those parked in a line in the street. Try to remember to fold back your wing mirror when leaving your car to reduce the risk of it being damaged.
5. Don't leave valuables in sight in your car, as this often leads to windows being broken and your property being stolen.

Taking these few simple steps can reduce criminal damage in your area and prevent you from becoming a victim of crime.

CONTACT US

Tenants can contact Derwentside Homes by calling:
Customer Services 08458 505 600
Repairs freephone 0800 783 9295

If your call is made out of normal office hours and isn't an emergency, please leave a message and someone will call you back the following day.

WRITE

You can write to us at:
Derwentside Homes,
The Greenhouse,
Greencroft Industrial Park,
Annfield Plain,
Stanley,
County Durham,
DH9 7XN.

INTERNET

A range of housing services are now available on our new website –

www.derwentsidehomes.co.uk

Tenants can report a repair, find out who to contact about certain issues, pay your rent or services charges or find out more about Derwentside Homes.

EMERGENCY

We can be contacted in an emergency or out of office hours on:
Freephone 0800 783 9295

Tenants should also note that the new contact details of their local Citizen's Advice Bureau are **01207 218 845**, or bureau@derwentsidecabnet.org.uk



A HELPING HAND FOR TENANTS

Derwentside Homes has launched a new handy-van service to carry out odd jobs for older and disabled tenants and victims of crime.

Tenants can ring if they are having difficulty with small jobs such as changing light bulbs, putting up shelves or fitting locks.

The service is delivering on a promise made to tenants ahead of transfer.

Pat Turnbull, tenant, welcomed the news saying: "There are small jobs around the house which older tenants may find hard to do themselves. Often it's difficult to find a tradesman who will come and carry out the work. This service will be a big help and I will definitely be making an appointment for the handy man to visit."

The service will be free and offered to:

- Tenants over the age of 55
- Tenants that are registered disabled or in receipt of disability benefit
- Victims of crime including domestic violence

Graham Gowland Head of Maintenance Operations said: "We consulted tenants and they helped to shape this new service which will provide invaluable assistance to older and disabled tenants as well as helping victims of crime feel more secure. Often it can be small jobs such as putting up shelves and changing locks that cause difficulty and frustration for some tenants,

so this will hopefully give more peace of mind."

The service does not include major works such as mains electricity, gas, electrical equipment, plastering, painting and decorating, guttering, gardening, or repairs to tenants' personal property.

An appointments system has been set up that operates from 9am to 12 noon and 12.30pm to 3.30pm Monday to Thursday and 8am to 12 noon on Fridays.

To book an appointment call freephone **0800 783 9295** or **08458 505 600**.



Graham Gowland Head of Maintenance Operations, Steve Melvin Director of Property Services and Fenwick Watson handy van man.

see page 2 for details of the jobs the handy-van service will cover

Free neutering and microchipping for your pooch



Derwentside Homes' tenants can now get their dogs neutered for free at any local EasyVets branch.

The move will help save tenants money and is aimed to cut down on stray dogs.

Private owners of Staffordshire bull terriers, Staffordshire terrier crosses, Rotweiller and Rotweiller crosses can also have their pets neutered.

To find out more contact
Burnopfield Clinic
13 Busy Bank, Burnopfield
01207 271504

NEW NO SMOKING POLICY



A new no smoking policy has been created to help provide a healthy environment for staff and customers.

It has been developed to meet the new national Smoke Free Legislation. The policy applies to all Derwentside Homes' staff, visitors and users of Derwentside Homes' premises.

Under the new legislation it is now an offence to smoke in virtually all enclosed or substantially enclosed public places, workplaces and in public and work vehicles.

This means:

- Indoor smoking rooms in public places will no longer be allowed.
- Staff will not be allowed to smoke in vehicles or doorways of Derwentside Homes buildings.
- Tenants can still smoke in their homes, however we would encourage tenants to respect the health and safety of our employees and consider refraining from smoking while staff are in their homes carrying out work on behalf of Derwentside Homes.

Mike Smith, Health and Safety Officer said: "We are appealing to tenants to be mindful of the impact smoke can have on visitors to their homes and to stub out when staff are there to carry out work."

A helping hand for tenants (from front cover)

Tenants will supply the materials and the handy-van service will help with the following jobs:

- Shelving
- Curtain rails
- Ease sticking doors/windows
- Minor repairs, adjustments to kitchen doors
- Blinds
- Changing light bulbs/lamps
- Tap washers
- Plugs and chains
- Sealant around baths/sinks
- Minor repairs to fences and gates for safety reasons
- Adjustments to internal doors
- Clothes posts/hooks
- Security measures including window locks, door chains and spy holes
- Changing locks
- Fitting stair gates and draft proofing
- Changing smoke alarm batteries
- Bleeding radiators

First crackhouse closure for Derwentside Homes

Derwentside Homes has worked in partnership with the police to close down a crackhouse.

Tenant Zoe Watson of The Crescent in Langley Park, was served with an Anti-social behaviour notice, giving police the power to remove her and board up the property.

The tenants' mother had previously received a similar notice relating to a crackhouse on Railway Street managed by Three Rivers Housing Association. Neighbouring residents have welcomed the move.

Samantha Gibson, Director of Housing Services said: "We will not tolerate drugs in our properties and will work closely with the police to make sure estates are safe. We would like to thank tenants who helped with the investigation because without them, it would be more difficult to take action against the minority of people who cause trouble."



Tread the boards at this year's fun filled tenant conference

This year's tenants' conference is set to be a real curtain raiser

The event on Saturday 22nd September, will be delivered by CragRats, an award winning theatre based communications company, ensuring an engaging, fun and interactive time is had by all.

We will also be bringing back the most popular activities from last year including free bingo and games throughout the day.

Other special guests include Alistair Mackintosh Chief Executive of the Housing Quality Network, who will bring the 'Respect Agenda' to life with his entertaining and passionate style.

The conference will be inclusive, innovative and interactive. By the end of the day you will feel more prepared for your home improvements programme and will have helped to ensure your community receives a first class customer service.

The event will take place from 10am – 3pm at the Civic Centre in Consett. Please book your personal ticket now as places are limited.

Call Val Johnson on 01207 524869 or Susan Clark 01207 524871.

A summary of the event:

- An engaging, fun and interactive session led by CragRats, an award winning **theatre based communications company**.
- Free **bingo** with prizes.
- **Treasure hunt**/lottery style competition with great prizes!
- Guest speaker – **Alistair Mackintosh**.
- Get to know your **community agencies** - Fire Service, Police, Frank Haslam Milan and TPAS.
- **Free travel** and free parking at Consett Civic Centre.
- Admission is free and **refreshments** all day.
- **Pie and peas lunch** is provided – special requirements can be catered for.
- Families are welcome - a **toddler zone/crèche** will be provided.
- All facilities are fully accessible.
- **Fun activities** through-out the day.

Cooking with gas!

Tenants turned out in force to find out about plans to make their homes warmer and cut their fuel bills.

Dozens of people living in Dene, Medomsley, attended a special consultation event about plans to connect a gas supply. It is the only social housing estate in the area that does not have a mains gas supply.

Derwentside Homes has pledged to invest more than £150,000 for the new pipeworks and extension of the gas mains into the estate which could slash up to £200 a year from residents' fuel bills. Working closely with Community Energy Solutions North East (CES), more than 160 homes will benefit when works start in September.

Chief executive of Derwentside Homes, Geraldine Wilcox, said: "We have a number of homes on Dene, which sit side by side with private properties, and it's wonderful news for everyone that we've been able to work closely with CES to ensure all can benefit from extending the gas pipe into Dene.

"We are committed to improving services for tenants and gas heating offers a far



Chrissy Coombe, resident, David Lacey of CES, Eddie Croney, tenant, Geraldine Wilcox, Chief Executive, Derwentside Homes, Edith Croney, tenant.

cheaper and more environmentally-friendly option. The work will coincide with extensive modernisations to homes in the area including new kitchens and bathrooms."

Derwentside Homes' tenant Edith Croney, 68, welcomed the move. She said: "We use coal at the moment, but we would like to switch to gas. It's easier to control and much cleaner."

Dene resident, Chrissy Coombe also supports the plans. She said: "It's great that CES and Derwentside Homes have been able to work together to bring gas to this community. It's going to make the lives of lots of people much more comfortable. It was great that they took time to come and see us and explain how it will all work."



Our Dave hits a bulls-eye with darts legend

Derwentside Homes' darts supremo Dave Hinnigan couldn't believe his luck when he came face-to-face with his hero Eric Bristow at a recent darts exhibition.

Dave, a keen player for more than 30 years, was drawn to play the legend, known fondly as the 'Crafty Cockney' at the first match at The Avenue in High Shincliffe.

And the 58-year-old, who runs the Life Long Learning in the Workplace project for Derwentside Homes, put up a close fight, despite nerves.

Dave said: "I've followed him since the 70s, so have to admit I did have butterflies when my name was called to play him. But I put in a

good game and it went right to the end. I only needed to shoot 56 at the end, so it wasn't a bad performance."

Dave has won numerous trophies over the years and is proudest of winning the Double Top competition when the match was poised at two all and beat Alan (Ton Machine) Glazier to win the competition.

He has played for the county and shoots arrows regularly at the Rams Head, Langley Park and Lanchester Social Club.

Seeing improvements – programme is on track

The improvement works programme for the first four years is underway. The next issue of Home News will include a comprehensive schedule of these works. Below are the scheduled programmes for August through to October 2007.

This information is for guidance only. If your home is undergoing any of these works, you will be contacted by post **and** visited personally prior to the start date, when you will be given contact details for the officer dealing with your scheme.

All properties involved will be surveyed to ensure that the works are necessary.

Tenants pleased with kitchens and bathrooms



Joe Smith "Delighted"

Tenants living in Delves Lane, Consett, are pleased with improvements to their homes. Jimmy Penrose said: "All the works were tip top, I have no complaints at all. I am completely satisfied and would like to thank the staff." His neighbour Tina Davies added "Everything went well. A bit of an upheaval when you are getting on in years. But the completion was well worth it. Very pleased indeed."

Central Heating and Rewire Scheme

August	South Meadows, Wordsworth Gardens, Dipton
September	Murray Terrace, Coleridge Gardens, Tennyson Gardens, Dipton
October	Tennyson Gardens, Delight Row, Dipton

Central Heating only

August	Penshaw Gardens, East Stanley
September	Penshaw Gardens, Thorntree Terrace, East Stanley
October	Thorntree Terrace, East Stanley

Central Heating, Rewire, Kitchen and Bathroom Renewal

August	Laurel Terrace, Poplar Terrace, Burnopfield
September	Pine Avenue, Maple Terrace, Cedar Crescent, Burnopfield, Norfolk Road, Moorside
October	Cedar Crescent, Thornhill Gardens, Albion Gardens, Burnopfield, Norfolk Road, Warwick Avenue, York Avenue, Moorside
November	Albion Gardens, Lambton Gardens, Burnopfield, York Avenue, Moorside

Kitchens And Bathroom Renewal

August	West Terrace, Burnhope
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Door and Window Renewal

August /September	Aged Miners Homes, Thomas Street (Bungalows only) Craghead
September	Fines Park, Clavering Place, Annfield Plain

Ways to pay your rent

All tenants have been issued with swipe cards, which allow them to pay their rent at a host of different outlets, nationwide.

They replace your old rent cards, and include your account details to allow you to easily keep track of your payments.

These cards can be used at any PayPoint terminal or in Derwentside Homes' area offices. We will send you a rent statement every three months.

Here's a quick reminder of how you can now pay your rent with Derwentside Homes:

- ✓ By using your swipe card at any Derwentside Homes cash office, Post Office or PayPoint facility
- ✓ At any of our cashier facilities, using cash or a cheque
- ✓ By phone – using debit or credit card. Please quote your tenancy number
- ✓ By Direct Debit. If you would like a Direct Debit form, contact us on **08458 505 600**
- ✓ By Standing Order (you will need to contact your bank or building society)
- ✓ By post – send a cheque or postal order made payable to 'Derwentside Homes Ltd'
- ✓ Using our website – www.derwentsidehomes.co.uk – by means of a credit or debit card

If you change address or your card is lost or damaged, contact customer services on **08456 505 600** for a replacement.

New website proves a hit

Derwentside Homes' new website received more than 3,000 hits in two weeks.

The new site provides customers and other stakeholders with vital information, about services as well as news, corporate documents and ways to get involved. Log onto www.derwentsidehomes.org.uk and tell us what you think.



You can pay your rent using PayPoint at the following local outlets

DH9

Carole's General Dealer	10 Pennine Gardens	South Stanley
Catchgate Foodstore	4 North Road	Catchgate
Co-op	4-6 Tyne Road	South Stanley
Co-op NE	Station Road	Annfield Plain
Costcutter	1 Rodham Terrace	Shield Row
Costcutter	50 Flint Hill Bank	Dipton
Dipton News	London Cottage	Dipton
Dipton Supermarket	3, Cooperative Buildings	Dipton
Happy Shopper	New Front St	Tanfield Lea
Khan's Foodstore	23 West Rd	Annfield Plain

DH8

The Village Store	Delves Lane	Delves Lane
Alldays	33-34 Front St	Leadgate
Booze Buster	10 Front St	Consett
Co-op	Middle St	Consett
Co-op	115 Durham Rd	Blackhill
Deneburn Stores	20 Deneburn Terrace	The Grove
Khan's Foodstore	21-23 Front St	Leadgate
McConnell News	23 Medomsley Rd	Consett
Spratts Stores	16 Derby Drive	Moorside
Spar	131 Durham Rd	Blackhill

DH7

Co-op NE	Esh Rd	Langley Park
Co-op NE	1 Newhouse Rd	Esh Winning
Lanchester News	19 Front St	Lanchester

NE16

Rai Mini Market	18 The Leazes	Burnopfield
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NE17

Co-op NE	Derwent St	Chopwell
Spar	11 South Rd	Chopwell

