


# Who does what?

Now that transfer has officially taken place Derwentside Homes is your new landlord.

Derwentside Homes now owns and manages 7,000 homes, meaning that the Council's responsibilities to you have changed.

We are now responsible for: 

- Rent collection
- Providing the repairs service
- Allocating homes
- Improvements to homes and estates
- Estate and environmental management
- Keeping tenants informed about housing issues
- Providing aids and adaptation in older and disabled tenants' homes
- Running the sheltered accommodation service



The Council will still have a role and certain responsibilities for housing.

Together both organisations will work in partnership and hold regular meetings to talk about how promises are being kept.

The Council will also still be involved in the way the housing service is run with five nominees on the Board of Derwentside Homes.

The Council will:

- Work with Registered Social Landlord partners and others to develop housing policy
- Keep responsibility for securing accommodation for homeless people
- Be responsible for Housing Benefit
- Be responsible for the housing strategy for the district
- Manage Supporting People funding



## 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 can now be accessed on our new website –

**[www.derwentsidehomes.co.uk](http://www.derwentsidehomes.co.uk)**

This site can be used to find out who to contact about certain issues, pay your rent or services charges or find out more about Derwentside Homes. In the near future you will be able to report a repair.



## EMERGENCY

We can be contacted in an emergency or out of office hours on:

**Freephone 0800 783 9295**



# home news

**Customer Services: 08458 505 600**

**Repairs: 0800 783 9295**

## A NEW START

### A MESSAGE FROM GERALDINE WILCOX, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF DERWENTSIDE HOMES

Welcome to Derwentside Homes and a new beginning for housing across the district.

The transfer of the Council's 7,000 homes officially took place on December 4, heralding a bright future for tenants, their families and staff at the new organisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our tenants for placing their trust in the organisation and voting overwhelmingly in favour of transfer.

Many people have spent the last year working hard to ensure that we are in a position to deliver the promises we made to you before you voted.

In the months ahead, you will see that your trust is well placed.

This is the start of a new era.

Working together, with tenants, staff and the Council that has served the community so well over the years, we can ensure that the next chapter in the history of housing in Derwentside is a good one.



Geraldine Wilcox

New start, new look - see centre



Join the Tenants' Forum - see centre



Contact us - see back



## SAY 'HELLO' TO HOME NEWS

Over the past 18 months you have been kept up-to-date about transfer issues with the Council's Homechoice newsletter.

Now transfer has taken place we have a new style newsletter – Home News.

This newsletter will keep you informed about the organisation, its progress in delivering the multi-million improvement programme and how you can get involved in running the service.



# New start – new look

Now that Derwentside Homes has arrived, tenants will start to see some changes – all part of creating a new look for the future.

## Housing offices

The housing offices are in the same place, but they will have new Derwentside Homes signs up and will be stocked with new Derwentside Homes leaflets and pieces of information.

## Front counter staff

To create a smart, professional image, front counter staff will wear new uniforms. Staff chose the new uniforms after a fashion show event in the summer.

## Construction services

The repairs teams have also been issued with new uniforms, which carry the Derwentside Homes logo.

## ID cards

All staff will carry a new Derwentside Homes identification card, which carries their photograph. Remember if you are ever unsure, please ask to see the member of staff's ID.

## Leaflets to answer your questions

Derwentside Homes has produced a number of information leaflets, containing specific information about the new organisation.

They cover subjects including rent, anti-social behaviour, your rights, adaptations and services for older and disabled people and exchanging your home.

These leaflets will be available from any Derwentside Homes' service point, and can be picked up by calling Customer Services on 08458 505 600.



# Look out for your new handbooks and your Tenancy Agreement

This newsletter is one of a number of documents tenants will be sent to mark the launch of Derwentside Homes.

This newsletter has been sent to you with a legal notice informing you of the official changes in your landlord.

The legal notice informs you that:

- 4 ownership and management of the Council's homes has been officially transferred and
- 4 that Derwentside Homes is now your new landlord.

Also enclosed is your Repairs and Maintenance Handbook

This document provides you with information about Derwentside Homes' repairs service and in turn what you are responsible for.

The Repairs and Maintenance Handbook tells you what you need to know and who you need to contact to arrange a repair at your home.

It also includes useful reference guides, so you can report your repair to us with greater accuracy.

You should keep your Repairs and Maintenance Handbook in a safe place, together with your Tenants' Handbook.

You will also shortly get your Tenants' Handbook

Over the past few months, we have been working with the Tenants' Forum and Communication Group to shape your new Tenants' Handbook.

Your Tenants' Handbook covers key issues such as your responsibilities, how to pay your rent and how we will communicate with you.

Please keep it in a safe place.



And...your new Tenancy Agreement

In the next few weeks, your copy of the Assured Tenancy Agreement will be delivered to your home.

This sets out what you can expect from Derwentside Homes, your obligations as a tenant, your security of tenure and your rights.

All tenants at the property will need to sign both copies of the new agreement. You will keep a copy and we will keep a copy.

There will be a FREEPOST envelope to return a copy of the Tenancy Agreement back to us. Full instructions will be with the pack.



## Tenants' Forum – working for you

Derwentside Tenants' Forum will still be working with your landlord to help improve the housing service.

The forum's members act as a vital point of contact with Derwentside Homes' Shadow Board, and are often its 'eyes and ears'.

Every tenant can play a part in the forum's activities and let Derwentside Homes know what is important to them.

If you would like to find out more about the Forum, or want to become a member, contact Susan Clark, Tenant Resource and Information officer on 08458 505 600.

## STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS....

### We have Housing Corporation registration

Previously we have told you about Derwentside Homes' progress towards achieving registration with the Housing Corporation, the Government's regulator of Registered Social Landlords in England.

We are pleased to announce that we were registered with the Housing Corporation on Monday, November 20.

The Housing Corporation will ensure that Derwentside Homes keeps its promises to tenants and staff.

It will receive regular performance information from us and visit regularly to ensure everything runs smoothly.

