

**“First, get the
right advice!”**

Staying in your Home

**How to arrange repairs and
adaptations in Newcastle upon Tyne**

**“Don’t
be afraid
to ask”**

**“There is help and advice for
everyone. If you don’t qualify
for one thing, you may be
eligible for another.”**

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Sue Adams of Care & Repair England for inviting us to revise with her their national publication 'In Good Repair' and to develop a local insert. This was the catalyst we needed. Our local insert took on a life of its own and became this comprehensive booklet. The individuals who have contributed a considerable amount of time and effort to developing this booklet are too numerous to mention individually – we thank you all.

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This brochure was produced in 2004 and applies only to people who live in Newcastle upon Tyne. We have done our best to ensure that the information in this booklet is accurate and up to date. However, things do change so it can be a good idea to check specific facts and seek expert advice for more complex situations. The authors cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Members of the Older People and Carers Readers Group

Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is intended for older people and carers who live in Newcastle upon Tyne, although some of the services mentioned may also be available to other age groups. It provides information about how to arrange repairs and adaptations to your home and making improvements to heating and insulation.

Each section offers examples of the kind of work you may need to carry out, and suggests people to contact, ways of paying for the work, and tips on organising the work.

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Fill this in to make your own quick reference guide

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Repairs and renovations for homeowners

Repairs and renovations

Mrs Jones owns her home. She knows that the roof needs some work done to it, but she is not sure where to begin with finding a reliable worker to carry out the repairs or how she will pay for the work.

Who can help?

NewcastleGateshead Staying Put (a Home Improvement Agency) provides a range of services for homeowners in Newcastle upon Tyne. These include:

- advice about what repairs need to be done;
- information about reliable workers (e.g. builder or tradesperson) qualified to carry out the work; and help to obtain quotations;
- advice about the different options for paying for the work;
- talking to insurance companies if you have a valid claim.

This advisory service is free. For a small fee (see section below 'Organising the Work') NewcastleGateshead Staying Put can organise and supervise the work to ensure that it is completed to a good standard.

Where will the money come from?

- If you are aged 60+ and receive state benefits such as Pension Credit or Council Tax Benefit, you may be eligible for a grant through NewcastleGateshead Staying Put. You do not have to repay this grant.

- If your property is worth a lot of money and you are prepared to use this to pay for the work, there are a number ways to borrow money – ask about re-mortgage and equity release schemes. (Age Concern Factsheet 12 – Raising income or capital from your home – provides information on the range of options. It is available from Age Concern England, Freephone 0800 00 99 66).
- There may be charitable sources available to help particular groups of people (for example, people who have had certain occupations, people who have served in the forces, people who have a disability or people who live in Newcastle).
- You may have the money to cover the cost of the work, but want someone to help you through the process.

NewcastleGateshead Staying Put will outline all of the financial options for you so that you can make an informed decision about which is the right way forward for you. They can make applications for grants and charitable moneys on your behalf and introduce you to local banks or building societies.

Organising the Work

NewcastleGateshead Staying Put can organise the builders, the start and completion dates and the final inspection of the work. If you would like NewcastleGateshead Staying Put to do this for you, a fee based on the cost of the job (usually 10%) will be charged. NewcastleGateshead Staying Put contact details are on page 14.



Adaptations for homeowners

Adaptations

Mr & Mrs Black own their property. They are both in their eighties and are having difficulty getting in and out of the bath. They would like to alter the bathroom and possibly install a downstairs toilet. Mr Black is also having difficulty in getting up and down the stairs and they are considering a stairlift. They can afford to have the work done, and would like to do so, but would like some advice.

Who can help?

Social Services provide advice and support to anyone living in Newcastle. They may be able to give advice on the telephone and/or arrange to visit you in your home. They will provide advice on:

- the type of equipment and adaptations that should be installed;
- a list of builders who are experienced in this type of work;
- reduced prices on some items of equipment, for example stairlifts, and on maintenance contracts.

You may also like to contact Disability North, who can provide:

- individual assessment and advice from an Occupational Therapist;
- an opportunity to try out different pieces of equipment;
- information about builders experienced in the type of work you need;
- information about new and second-hand equipment.

Organising the work

Social Services can offer support in organising the work and ensuring that it is completed satisfactorily. NewcastleGateshead Staying Put can also assist with organising and inspecting the work to ensure it is satisfactory.

Contact Details: Social Services page 16, Disability North page 13 and NewcastleGateshead Staying Put page 14

Adaptations

Mr & Mrs Brown own their home. They also need adaptations but do not feel able to pay for the work themselves.

Who can help?

Social Services provide help and advice on arranging and paying for the work. They will:

- visit you in your own home;
- talk to you about your needs;
- give advice about equipment and adaptations;
- work with the Grants Team to find the best way to pay for the adaptations.

Where will the money come from?

You may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant to fund this work.

If you are on a low income this grant may cover all or some of the costs. The Grants Team will carry out a means test and tell you how much you may have to pay. If you are required to pay a contribution and feel you cannot afford to do so, Social Services may offer advice about other sources of funding.

The Disability Rights Handbook is a useful guide to Disabled Facilities Grants and other rights for disabled people. Your library should have a copy or it costs £14 from Disability Alliance (telephone: 020 7247 8776).

Organising the work

Social Services and the Grants Team will help you with organising the work. The process may be straightforward and take a minimum of 3 months or it may be complex and take up to 12 months from the Social Services visit and the assessment of your needs. Social Services will keep you informed on progress and the Grants Team will assist with form-filling and check the building work on completion.

Contact Details: Social Services on page 16, Grants Team on page 14.

Repairs and renovations for private tenants

Repairs and renovations

Mrs Green rents her home from a private landlord. Her home is in need of repair and Mrs Green is not sure who is responsible for doing the work and paying for it.

Who can help?

The landlord is usually responsible for carrying out and paying for most maintenance repairs. However you should check your tenancy agreement in case you are responsible for some repairs. If you do not understand the terms of your agreement and would like someone to go through it with you, contact the Tenancy Relations Service or Shelter.

If your landlord is responsible for the repairs and you are having difficulty in getting the work done, contact the Tenancy Relations Service (details on page 16) or Shelter (details on page 15) or Newcastle Law Centre (details on page 14)

If you are concerned about contacting your landlord and would like some support and advice, there are a number of organisations that can help you. See page 17 for details of general advice agencies.

Where will the money come from and who will organise the work?

If you are responsible for the repairs, NewcastleGateshead Staying Put can advise you on how to organise and pay for the work. See the information on page 2.

If the landlord is responsible for the repairs, then the landlord must organise and pay for the work.

Adaptations for private tenants

Adaptations

Mr White rents his home from a private landlord. He is having difficulty getting in and out of the bath and would like to have a shower installed.

Who can help?

Social Services provide help and advice in arranging the work. They will:

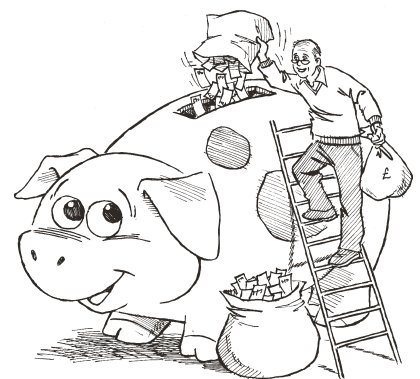
- visit you in your own home;
- talk to you about your needs;
- give advice about equipment and adaptations.

Social Services require written permission from your landlord before any work can be done.

Where will the money come from?

The Disabled Facilities Grant is available to fund this work. If you are on a low income the grant may cover all or some of the costs. The Grants Team will carry out a means test and tell you how much you may be expected to pay.

If you are required to pay a contribution and feel that you cannot afford to do so, Social Services may offer advice about other sources of funding.



Organising the work

As soon as they receive written permission from your landlord, Social Services and the Grants Team will arrange for the work to be done.

Repairs and renovations for housing association tenants

Repairs and renovations

Mrs Jones rents her home from a Housing Association. Her home needs some major repairs and Mrs Jones is not sure how to arrange this.

Who can help?

You should contact your Housing Association, which is responsible for general repairs and maintenance. If you live in sheltered accommodation, you should speak to your housing warden.

Where will the money come from?

The Housing Association is responsible for paying for general repairs and maintenance.

Organising the work

The Housing Association should make the appropriate arrangements and ensure, where possible, that they are convenient to you. If you are not happy with the arrangements and would like independent advice and support, contact the Tenancy Relations Service (details on page 16) or the Newcastle Law Centre (details on page 14).



Adaptations for housing association tenants

Adaptations

Mr & Mrs Smith rent their home from a Housing Association. They require adaptations to the bathroom in their home because Mrs Smith is unable to get in and out of the bath.

Who can help?

Social Services provide help and advice in arranging the work. They will:

- visit you in your own home;
- talk to you about your needs;
- give advice about equipment and adaptations.

Social Services require written permission from the Housing Association before any work is done.

Where will the money come from?

Social Services will approach the housing association, who may agree to fund the work.

You may be able to get a Disabled Facilities Grant to fund the work. If you are on a low income the grant may cover all or some of the costs. The Grants Team will carry out a means test to tell you how much you may be expected to pay.

Organising the work

Social Services will work with the housing association to make the appropriate arrangements to carry out the work.

Repairs and renovations for Council tenants

Repairs and renovations

Mr Brown lives in a home which belongs to the City Council. The gutters are leaking and need to be replaced.

Who can help?

Repaircall will help with repairs and maintenance. Details on page 15.
Your local Community Housing Office will provide advice and assistance.
Details of Community Housing Offices are on page 13.

Where will the money come from?

Newcastle City Council is responsible for paying for general repairs and maintenance.

Organising the work

The Council will organise the work and should, where possible, ensure that the work is carried out at your convenience. If you are unhappy with the service being provided by your Community Housing Office, contact Shelter (details on page 15) or Newcastle Law Centre (details on page 14).



Adaptations for Council tenants

Adaptations

Mr & Mrs Jones are council tenants. Mrs Jones now uses a wheelchair and needs a ramp to get into the house and a lift to get upstairs

Who can help?

Social Services can provide help and advice in arranging and paying for the work. They will:

- visit you in your own home;
- talk to you about your needs;
- give advice about equipment and adaptations.

If substantial adaptations are required, you may be offered the opportunity to move to another house which is more suited to your needs. Contact your local Community Housing Office for details..

Where will the money come from?

Newcastle City Council will cover the cost of the adaptations. It may be possible to do certain works through a Rechargeable Work Scheme. Contact your Community Housing Office for details.

Organising the work

Newcastle City Council will organise the work and will, where possible, ensure that the work is carried out at a time convenient to you.

Heating and insulation for all tenures

Heating and Insulation

Mrs Smith is feeling the cold. Her home needs better insulation and draught-proofing and possibly a new heating system.

Who can help?

Newcastle City Council's Energy Centre provides tailored information packs on heating and insulation for all types of households and home visits for Council tenants. (details on page 13)

Northumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre provide information and advice on local agencies which specialise in heating and insulation services; grants, discounts and cashback offers; a list of approved installers for insulation and heating systems and free home energy checks. (details on page 15).

Winteraction provide services for people aged 55+ and offer free home energy visits; advice on energy efficiency, managing fuel bills and grants. (details on page 16)

Health through Warmth assist people who have cold or damp related health conditions and live in properties that could be made more energy efficient. They offer help with loft and cavity wall insulation, energy advice, heating measures and draught proofing (details on page 14).

If you are a private tenant, housing association or City Council tenant, your landlord is usually responsible for providing adequate heating and insulation. You must receive written permission from your landlord before arranging for any work to be done.



Contact us for housing information and advice

The following agencies provide advice, help and information on housing repairs and adaptations:

Community Housing Offices

Newcastle City Council/Your Homes Newcastle, Civic Centre,
Barras Bridge, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8PR

Website: www.newcastle.gov.uk Tel: 0191 211 5810 Fax: 0191 211 4972

There are twenty two Community Housing Offices in Newcastle. Contact details for your local housing office can be obtained from the above address. Community Housing Offices can help you with rehousing enquiries, repairs and maintenance and neighbour disputes. The Advice and Support Workers can also help you with benefits advice, rent repayments and sorting out debt problems.

Disability North

The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 1PH
Tel: 0191 284 0480 Fax: 0191 213 0910 Minicom: 0191 285 7261

Disability North provides advice and information on equipment for older people and people with disabilities. The display area at the Dene Centre has bedroom, kitchen and bathroom areas where you can try out different items of equipment and receive specialist advice from an occupational therapist. An appointment can be made for individual assessments and demonstrations. Telephone advice is also given (Monday - Friday 10.00am - 4.00pm).

Energy Centre

Energy Centre, 2-10 Archbold Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1BZ.
Tel: 0191 211 5766 Fax: 0191 211 5785.

Newcastle City Council's Energy Centre provides energy advice and develops projects to help domestic homes reduce their energy use. Services available include an information pack, face to face advice, talks to community groups, access to grants towards cavity wall and loft insulation, central heating and other energy efficiency measures.

Grants Team

Grants Team (Private Sector), Social Policy and Corporate Initiatives, Strategic Support Directorate, Scottish Life House, Block D Floor 2, Archbold Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1DB. Tel: 0191 211 6849. The Grants Team is a department of Newcastle City Council. The team is responsible for assisting you in applying for Disabled Facilities Grants and Renovation Grants.

Health Through Warmth

Health Through Warmth, 2-10 Archbold Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1BZ. Tel: 0191 211 5782. Health Through Warmth assists people who have cold or damp related health conditions. You can be referred to this service by your district nurse or by contacting the service direct.

NewcastleGateshead Staying Put

Unit F16, Marquis Court, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead, NE11 0RU.
Tel: 0191 482 4977 Fax: 0191 482 4981
email: newgatstayingput@anchor.org.uk.

NewcastleGateshead Staying Put is a home improvement agency which provides advice and help to older/disabled homeowners in Newcastle to carry out repairs, improvements or adaptations.

Newcastle Law Centre

1st Floor, 1 Charlotte Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4XF.

Tel: 0191 230 4777 Fax: 0191 233 0295

Newcastle Law Centre provides legal advice, assistance and representation to individuals on low income and groups living or working in Newcastle. The Law Centre offers specialist advice and appointments in housing, employment, immigration and asylum and discrimination law. (Monday - Friday 9 - 5pm). General advice about other areas of law is provided at drop-in advice sessions and on the Newcastle telephone advice line.

Telephone advice line: 0191 261 7016 (Monday - Thursday 1 - 4pm)

Open-door advice sessions - Monday and Thursday 10 - 12pm
(no appointment necessary).

Northumbria Energy Efficiency and Advice Centre

9/10 Charlotte Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4XF

Tel: 0191 233 2544 Fax: 0191 230 3630

Energy Advice Freephone: 0800 512012

email: advice@tyneleac.demon.co.uk website: www.saveenergy.co.uk

Northumbria Energy Efficiency and Advice Centre provides advice and information on grants and heating and insulation systems. They will direct you to the most appropriate agency for you.

Repaircall

Tel: 0191 277 8888 Email: repaircall@newcastle.gov.uk

Repaircall is a helpline for repairs and maintenance of City Council properties.

Opening hours: Monday – Friday 8.00am – 6.00pm

Emergency repair service: Monday – Friday 6.00pm – 8.00am and all day

Saturday and Sunday including Bank Holidays.

Shelter North East Housing Aid Centre

1-2 Blackfriars Court, Dispensary Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4XB

Tel: 0191 232 3778 Fax: 0191 230 2829

email: tyneside@shelter.org.uk

Shelter provides practical help and advice on housing issues. The service is free and confidential. To seek advice or arrange an appointment to see an adviser call: 0191 232 3778 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday 10.00am - 1.00pm.

Social Services Directorate

Social Services is part of Newcastle City Council. It offers information and advice and support to vulnerable people and their carers.

Newcastle Social Services has two customer services teams.

They are open Monday to Friday from 8.45am to 5.00pm.

If you live in the east of the city, contact Gosforth Customer Services:

5 Lansdowne Terrace East, Gosforth, NE3 1HF

Tel: 0191 277 2077 Fax: 0191 277 2100 Textphone: 0191 277 2085

If you live in the west of the city, contact Newburn Customer Services:

Newburn Road, Newburn, NE15 8QJ

Tel: 0191 277 2555 Fax: 0191 277 2550 Textphone: 0191 277 2611

If you are not sure which office to contact, phone 0191 211 6363 and we will tell you the number of your local office.

If you need to talk to someone out of hours, Monday to Friday after 5.00pm or at weekends, contact our Emergency Duty Team. Phone 0191 232 8520 and ask to speak to an emergency duty social worker.

Tenancy Relations Service

Housing Advice Centre, 112 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6SQ

Tel: 0191 232 5400

The Tenancy Relations Service is a part of Newcastle City Council. It gives advice and assistance on housing law to private sector tenants and landlords, including housing associations. Issues of advice include repairs, rents, possession, access and inspection.

Advice is available by prior appointment or at the drop-in sessions. Drop-in sessions are on a Tuesday afternoon 1.00 - 3.30pm. Short appointments of 15 minutes are available on a first come, first served basis. Drop-in is not normally suitable for complicated issues although initial advice can be given. Home visits by appointment.

Winteraction

St Andrews House, 90/92 Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6SG

Tel: 0191 230 5318 Fax 0191 230 5316 website: www.pcdc.org.uk/winteraction

Winteraction works to tackle the effects of cold homes on the health and well being of people living in Newcastle. It proves a one-stop shop for information on how to keep warm, access grants and advice on fuel debt.

General advice

If you would like further information or to talk to someone before you begin or you are not happy with the advice you have been given, the following agencies may be able to help you:

Age Concern Newcastle

Mea House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Tel: 0191 232 6488 Fax: 0191 235 9925

email: mariann.douglas@acnewcastle.org

Age Concern Newcastle provides advice and information to older people. They also offer advocacy and representation on cases concerning welfare benefits, housing and community care. A home visiting service is available to those who are housebound.

Carers Centre Newcastle

6 Saville Place, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8DQ

Tel: 0191 260 3030 Fax: 0191 230 1500

Carers Centre Newcastle provides services for carers from a city centre venue which is to be launched in April 2004. A drop-in information and support service will be available Monday - Friday 10.00am – 3.30pm. The Centre supports individual adult and young carers and carers' groups..

Caring Hands

34 Wretham Place, Shieldfield, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1XU

Tel: 0191 261 5234 Fax: 0191 261 5251

Email: caringhands.charity@btinternet.com

Caring Hands offer benefits advice to older people in Shieldfield, Battlefield and parts of Jesmond and Heaton on Tuesday between 10.00am and 3.00pm. Home visits are available on request. Caring Hands offer a range of other services including handyman, laundry, equipment loan, luncheon club and befriending.

Citizens Advice Bureaux

Citizens Advice Bureau, St Cuthberts Chambers,
35 Nelson Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 5AN
Tel: 08701 264015

Opening times: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10.00am – 3.00pm
(no appointment necessary)

Telephone advice: Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 10.30 – 12.30pm

Citizens Advice Bureau – Patient Information Centre

Wingrove Advice Centre, The Entrance Lodge, Newcastle General
Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6BE Tel: 0191 273 6666

Opening times: Mon. 10.30am – 12.30pm (no appointment necessary)

Citizens Advice Bureaux provide advice on a full range of subjects.
Referrals can be made to a Tribunal Assistance Scheme, a Legal Advice
Scheme and to the Debt Advice Service.

Minority Ethnic Community Support Service

Callerton House, 4 Callerton Place,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5QN

Tel: 0191 273 3264 Fax: 0191 226 1596

Open: Monday 1.00 pm – 3.30pm, Weds and Fri 9.30am – 12.00 noon

Drop-in session on Tuesday 9.30am – 12 noon at Millin Centre,
152 Elsmere Road, Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne.

This service provides welfare rights and general advice to members of
ethnic minority communities. Home visits are available by arrangement.

Newcastle Advocacy Centre

Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service, Mea House, Ellison Place
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

Tel: 0191 232 7445 Fax: 0191 230 5640

email: advocacy@cvsnewcastle.org.uk

The Newcastle Advocacy Centre can put individuals in touch with a citizen advocate who can help them to find information, talk things through, support them at meetings and appointments and help them talk to professionals. The service is available to anyone who has mental health problems, learning disabilities, physical disabilities or is an older person living in Newcastle.

Newcastle Tenants Federation

1st Floor, 1 Pink Lane ,Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 5DW

Tel: 0191 232 1371 Email: info@newcastletenantsfed.org.uk

Newcastle Tenants Federation is an independent voluntary organisation representing tenants and residents groups throughout Newcastle upon Tyne. Its main aim is to support the establishment of representative and democratic tenants associations and develop these groups so that they can play a full part in decisions about their housing. Newcastle Tenants Federation holds regular Open Nights for tenants groups on issues such as repairs and housing management.

Quality Mark

Helpline: 0845 300 80 40 Website: www.qualitymark.org.uk

Quality Mark is a national government-backed scheme which provides a list of local contractors who have been independently assessed and who will provide a proper quote, contract and warranty.

Remap

40 Brumell Drive, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 3RB

Tel: 01670 515109

One size doesn't fit all. If you have a particular need and find that none of the equipment available commercially suits you, Remap design and make free technical aids. They visit you in your home to discuss the difficulty with you and assess if it is possible to produce a suitable aid.

Ricability

Tel: 020 7427 2460 Textphone: 020 7427 2469

Email: mail@ricability.org.uk Website: www.ricability.org.uk

Ricability is an independent research charity that publishes impartial guides to a wide range of equipment and services which are of use to older and disabled people.

Search Project

74 Adelaide Terrace, Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9JN

Tel: 0191 273 7443 or 272 0436 Fax: 0191 272 5135

Email: searchproject@yahoo.co.uk

Open: Mon, Tues, Weds, Thurs 10.00am - 1.00pm (no appointment needed)

Search Project provides general advice and benefits advice to older people in the West End of Newcastle. A home visiting service is available to those who are housebound.

Useful Information about Home Repairs and Emergencies

Be prepared for an emergency

- *Keep a torch by the bed, plus candles and matches in an easy to find place, in case of a power cut.*
- *Leave a spare key with a friend or neighbour so that you won't need to pay for a locksmith if you lock yourself out*
- *Make sure you know how to turn off:*

Water

Electricity

Gas

Make a note here about where to find the water stopcock, fuse box and gas tap.

Gas Leak Tel: Water Supply Tel:

Electricity Supply Tel: Other:

USEFUL CONTACTS

Odd Job Service Tel: Plumber Tel:

Care & Repair/Staying Put..... Other:

KEEPING SAFE FROM ROGUE BUILDERS

- *If in doubt keep them out – never agree to building work being done by people who knock on your door saying your home needs repairs or offering 'bargain' prices*
- *Don't pay in cash – and don't pay before the work is finished*

Are you losing your independence?

Is your quality of life suffering because infirmity or disability does not allow you to climb the stairs to the toilet or bedroom?

Are you finding it a challenge to keep up with maintaining your home?

Do you dread winter as the heat from that gas fire disappears under doors and windows that do not fit?

Whether you own your home, or rent from the City Council, a Housing Association or private landlord, there is advice and support available to ease these worries. We urge you to read this booklet. There is a wealth of information within its covers for everyone.

‘If only I had known ...’

is something we heard time and again during our work on House for Life 1.

We hope that this booklet will encourage people to seek good advice, avoid costly mistakes and find the help they need to live comfortably and independently in their own homes.

If you would like further copies of this booklet or have comments on the information please contact:

Older People and Carers Readers Group
Elders Council of Newcastle
14 Great North Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 4PS

Tel: 0191 233 0200
Fax: 0191 232 3917
email: better-life@btconnect.com

Elders Council of Newcastle

Newcastle Carers Centre



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