

# **Your guide to your District and Group Heating system**



## What is District and Group Heating?

District and Group Heating consists of a central boiler system which supplies the heating and hot water requirements for a block or group of properties. Newcastle City Council manages over 2,000 properties that are supplied by heating in this way.

District and Group Heating has many social, economic, and environmental benefits. It makes communities more sustainable, reduces energy consumption and cuts pollution and carbon emissions which supports our climate change agenda.

### Heat Network Regulations

District and Group Heating suppliers are subject to obligations contained within the Heat Network Regulations. A heat supplier is defined as any person or organisation, such as Newcastle City Council, that supplies and charges for the supply of heating, cooling or hot water to customers through a heat network.

You can find out more about the Heat Network Regulations by visiting:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/heat-networks](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/heat-networks)

## How to use your heating and hot water system

District and Group Heating uses a variety of equipment to provide you with heating and hot water in your property. The type of heating system will depend on your type of property, but they should be used in the same way as individual central heating systems which most people will already be familiar with.

Each scheme will have different controls which could be one, some, or all of the following parts:

- Room thermostat
- Programmer
- Thermostatic radiator valves
- Switchee online

## Room thermostat



The room thermostat is used to control the overall temperature of your home. It senses when the house is warm enough and turns the heating off automatically when it reaches the desired temperature.

## Programmer



If you have a programmer or central heating timer, you can use it to control when the heating and hot water comes on and goes off in your property. The programmer allows you to set the timer according to your lifestyle so the heating and hot water can be available at a time of your choosing. For example, you may want your heating to come on when you are getting up at the start of the day.

## Thermostatic radiator valves



Thermostatic radiator valves are usually fitted on each radiator and have a range of temperature settings. Usually 1 is the lowest/coolest and 5 is the highest/warmest. They work by reducing the flow of hot water into the radiator as shown by the setting on the thermostat. They can be used to provide lower temperatures for rooms that you don't use as often. They shouldn't be turned off completely as this can contribute to problems such as damp and mould.

## Switchee Smart Thermostat



Switchee is a smart connected thermostat which provides you with greater control over your heating and hot water to suit your individual needs. It can be used via the touchscreen or by a customer mobile app.

## Dealing with faults and maintenance of your District and Group Heating system

As with all heating systems, unfortunately sometimes things can go wrong, but we are here to help. We have a dedicated team that look after our District and Group Heating system.

An example of a fault could be:

- Radiators not warming up after heating has been switched on.
- Radiators are still hot when the heating is switched off.
- Your meter reading doesn't change even though you are using heating and hot water in your property.

If you are experiencing any problems with your heating equipment, this should be reported straight away so the fault can be resolved.

You can do this in several ways:

- By calling our repairs team on 0191 278 7878
- By email at [repairs@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@newcastle.gov.uk)
- By visiting the repairs section of 'my account' via our website at [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)

### Your responsibilities

Your meter needs a power supply to record the energy usage in your property. You must ensure switches are always left in the 'on' position. If they are switched off, then your energy charge may be incorrect which could result in a high debit or credit on your heating account.

If you are experiencing any problems with your heating equipment, please report this as soon as possible so the fault can be resolved.

Prolonged loss of heating can also lead to problems such as condensation, damp, and mould. If you have not reported a fault such as the examples given above and this has cost you more for your energy usage, Newcastle City Council will only be able to compensate you from the date the repair was reported by you.

### Help using your heating system

If your system is working fine but you need extra support on how to use it, then please do not hesitate to contact us on 0191 278 7878 and our team will be happy to help.

# Paying for your heating

## When to pay for your heating charges

If you're a Newcastle City Council tenant your heating charges are added to your rent account on a weekly basis, therefore the charges should be paid along with your rent. For example, if you normally pay your rent by direct debit each week your heating charges should be paid this way too.

If you're a leaseholder or freeholder, you will have a heating charge account and the heating charges are applied to this account on a weekly basis. Payments should be made in advance of the charge being due. If you want to pay over a longer period (for example fortnightly, four weekly or monthly) you must contact us to make this arrangement.

## How to pay for your heating charges

Your charges can be paid using the following methods:

### **Direct Debit:**

Direct debit is the easiest way to pay. If you're interested in setting this up, please give us a call on 0191 278 1232 for tenants or 0191 278 8757 for leaseholders and freeholders. Our Officers can explain the process, and if you're happy to proceed, set it up for you. It's a really simple process and only takes a few minutes over the telephone.

### **Online:**

It's quick and easy to pay your rent. Visit [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) and search 'My Account'.

### **Personal Internet Banking / Standing Order:**

If you want to use personal online banking to pay your rent or heating charges, please use the following bank details to make payment/transfer.

- Bank/Building Society Name: Lloyds Bank plc
- Sort code: 30-93-71
- Account number: 63352060

You must quote your 11 - digit reference number and the full amount to be paid.

Pay at any Post Office or PayPoint outlet with a swipe card or bar code. Please give us a call on 0191 278 1232 for tenants or 0191 278 8757 for leaseholders and freeholders if you need a swipe card or bar code.

## Help with your heating charges

If you are struggling to pay your heating charges, then help is available. You may be entitled to financial support for heating costs via the UK government.

Check if you can get:

**Winter Fuel Payment** - If you were born before 25 September 1957, you could get help to pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'. Most people get the Winter Fuel Payment automatically if they're eligible.

**Cold Weather Payment** - you may be eligible for cold weather payments if you get certain benefits, and the temperature drops to 0°C or below for 7 days in a row.

**Warm Home Discount** - This is a discount on your bills if you get Pension Credit or live in a low-income household.

You can find out more information about government schemes and check if your eligible via [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment).

We also have a dedicated Financial Inclusion team who can provide advice and support to customers who may be struggling to manage their finances. We can provide help with making and maintaining benefit claims, maximise available income, help to manage household budgets and signpost to other relevant services.

You can contact the financial inclusion team via 0191 278 7878. Alternatively you can request support at one of our housing offices. More information about this service can be found on our website at [www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/moneyadvice](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/housing/moneyadvice).

## Help with saving energy

You can make big savings by reducing the amount of energy you use to heat your home or using your heating more efficiently. Turning your thermostat down by 1°C can save up to 10% on your heating bills.

It is important though that you do not let your home get too cold – this will cause condensation and mould which could damage your health. The recommended temperature for a living room is 21°C, while a bedroom should be 18°C or above.

If the weather is not too cold, set your timer so that your heating only comes on when you are at home. During really cold weather, leave your heating on a low level by turning down your thermostat. If you are going out in the evening or going away for a few days, set the thermostat to a low temperature such as 13°C. That way you will reduce your heating bills without the risk of your water pipes freezing or having damp and mildew develop.

More energy saving tips can be found on [www.energyadvicenortheast.co.uk/use-less-energy](http://www.energyadvicenortheast.co.uk/use-less-energy).

## Frequently asked questions

### How reliable is the system?

Overall district heating schemes are very reliable. They are continuously monitored by dedicated teams who maintain the plant and equipment supplying hot water and heating to your home.

### How do you read my meter(s)?

Your meter(s) are read remotely which means the meter readings are sent to us automatically so we shouldn't need to access your property to take meter readings.

### Can I read my own meter?

Yes, residents can read their own meter(s) as they can access the meter readings in their property. Bungalows have a separate in-house display unit that provides meter readings as the meters are located in the loft area.

If you need any further support on how to access your meter readings, then please contact us on 0191 278 7878 and we will be happy to help.

### What happens if I move home?

A final meter reading will be taken remotely on the day of your move, and you will be issued a statement.

The statement final balance will show the difference between the charge that was applied to your rent/heating account and the actual heat/hot water usage. This difference will be applied to your rent/heating account.

If this results in your rent/heating account showing a debit balance, then you are obliged to pay this amount to us.

If this results in your rent/heating account showing a credit balance, this can be refunded to you.

### I have further questions who do I contact?

If I have any further questions about the District and Group heating system or payment queries, please do not hesitate to contact our Contact Centre on 0191 278 7878. You can also contact us via the 'contact us' form on our website at [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk).

If you would like the information in this letter in a different language or in large print, please take this letter to your nearest housing office or customer service centre where a member of staff will help you. Visit [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) to find your nearest housing office or customer service centre and its opening times. You can also contact the person named on the front of this letter by calling the number shown.

العربية  
Arabic

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على المعلومات الواردة في هذه الرسالة بلغة مختلفة أو بأحرف كبيرة، يرجى أخذ هذا الخطاب إلى أقرب مكتب إسكان أو مركز خدمة عملاء حيث سيساعدك أحد الموظفين. قم بزيارة [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) للعثور على أقرب مكتب إسكان أو مركز خدمة عملاء لك وأوقات الدوام. يمكنك أيضًا الاتصال بالشخص المذكور اسمه في مقدمة هذه الرسالة عن طريق الاتصال بالرقم الظاهر.

বাংলা  
Bengali

আপনি যদি এই চিঠির তথ্যটি অন্য ভাষায় বা বড় মুদ্রণে চান তবে দয়া করে এই চিঠিটি আপনার নিকটস্থ হাউজিং অফিস বা কাউন্সিলের সার্ভিস সেন্টারে নিয়ে যান যেখানে কর্মীদের কোন একজন আপনাকে সহায়তা করবেন। আপনার নিকটস্থ হাউজিং অফিস বা কাউন্সিলের সার্ভিস সেন্টার এবং এটি খোলার সময়গুলি সম্পর্কে জানার জন্য [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) সাইটটি ভিজিট করুন। আপনি প্রদর্শিত নম্বরে কল করে এই চিঠির সামনে নামযুক্ত ব্যক্তির সাথেও যোগাযোগ করতে পারেন।

简体字  
Chinese Simplified

如果想获取该信息的其他语言版本或大字印刷版本，请携带本信件前往最近的客服中心或住房部门，将会有专人为您提供服务。前往 [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) 了解最近的客服中心或住房部门地址以及办公时间。您也可以拨打信中开头的电话，联系开头提及的相关人士。

فارسی  
Farsi

اگر می‌خواهید اطلاعات این نامه به زبان دیگری یا با حروف بزرگ‌نوشته شده باشد، لطفاً این نامه را به نزدیکترین دفتر مسکن یا مرکز خدمات مشتریان خود ببرید تا یکی از کارکنان به شما کمک کند.  
از وب سایت [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) دیدن کنید تا نزدیکترین دفتر مسکن یا مرکز خدمات مشتری و زمان کاری آن را ببینید.  
همچنین می‌توانید به شماره نشان داده شده در قسمت جلوی این نامه زنگ بزنید و با شخصی که ذکر شده است تماس بگیرید.

Français  
French

Si vous souhaitez lire les informations contenues dans cette lettre dans une autre langue ou en gros caractères, veuillez remettre cette lettre au bureau du logement ou au centre de service client le plus proche dans lesquels un membre du personnel pourra vous assister. Connectez-vous au site [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) pour trouver le bureau du logement ou le centre de service client le plus proche et leurs horaires d'ouverture. Vous pouvez également contacter la personne dont le nom figure en tête de cette lettre en appelant le numéro indiqué.

Polски  
Polish

W przypadku osób, które pragną uzyskać informacje zawarte w niniejszym piśmie w innym języku lub dużym drukiem, prosimy o przyniesienie niniejszego pisma do najbliższego wydziału mieszkalnictwa lub centrum obsługi klienta, gdzie pracownik udzieli pomocy. Odwiedź stronę [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk), gdzie znajdziesz najbliższy wydział mieszkalnictwa lub centrum obsługi klienta oraz godziny ich otwarcia. Możesz również skontaktować się z osobą wskazaną na pierwszej stronie niniejszego pisma, dzwoniąc pod wskazany numer.

Português  
Portuguese

Se desejar que as informações contidas nesta carta sejam redigidas numa língua diferente ou em letras grandes, por favor, dirija-se ao seu gabinete de habitação ou centro de Apoio ao cliente mais próximo, onde um membro do pessoal o ajudará. Visite [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk) para encontrar o escritório de habitação ou centro de atendimento ao cliente mais próximo e seus horários de funcionamento. Você também pode entrar em contato com a pessoa nomeada na frente desta carta ligando para o número mostrado.