



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Housing Services

Moving into a Darlington Borough Council Home

A Housing Services Guide to Moving into
a New Build Home at Neasham Road



Moving into a brand-new home is an exciting experience, whether it's your first home or you've rented a home before from Darlington Borough

Council. Homes are complex structures that can take a little time to settle in. Here are some things worth being aware of so you know what to expect.

Moving in

You are moving into our new development at Neasham Road, meaning that your property may be located on a working building site.

Whilst all reasonable measures have been put in place to reduce any risks whilst the site is active you should be aware of the following:

- The highway is not fully completed and will not be until works to other phases are complete, this means you should take additional care when walking or driving to your property. We recommend you keep your speed to under 10mph to ensure safety for all.
- The pavement is not completed to the full street, pedestrian access to Neasham Rd is via the 'kissing gate' next to 42 and 44 Butterfield Drive.
- A number of people will be moving in over the next few weeks or months, be aware that there will be deliveries and removal vans so please park considerately.

- You should ensure that any visitors to your home are aware it is located within a site, and it is your responsibility to make them aware.
- All site areas are fenced off and have security measures in place, you, your visitors and children should not access the site areas for any reason, this includes the site office and site car park. Any unauthorised access of these areas may be treated as trespassing and action taken against your tenancy or you may be reported to the Police.
- Building and construction work is due to be ongoing until 2025/2026, this will mean there will be construction noise, dust, deliveries, and construction workers on site until then.
- Current site hours start at 7am and include weekend working.

Standards of finish

Every house is different and has been individually built. Inevitably that means there will be some variation in the finished appearance due to the nature of the materials used and the ways in which they

are applied. Slight variations are normal and to be expected, so don't expect complete uniformity with your neighbour's home.

Settling in

Your home will require a period to settle in and this includes allowing it to dry out gently.

During this period, you may notice minor cracks in walls, gaps in joinery and white deposits on the walls – all are completely normal in new homes and may occur regardless of the measures you take to ensure that they do not.

Here are some of the common issues you may come across and what you can do:

Drying out

Generally, it will take around nine months to one year for your new home to dry out.

Small cracks in the walls and gaps in joinery are both common signs of shrinkage. This happens when timbers and other materials contract as they dry out. It's extremely unlikely that these cracks are anything structurally significant, and they can normally be put right very easily with ordinary filler and a simple lick of paint during routine redecoration.

To keep cracks and gaps to a minimum, you need to allow all the materials used in constructing your home to dry out gradually. Shrinkage is accelerated by heat, so try to keep an even temperature throughout your home and, if you move in during the winter months, don't be tempted to turn the central heating up to its highest setting.

Leaving your windows open (or at least the vents within their frames) will help to ventilate your home and allow moisture to evaporate more naturally. Leaving wardrobe doors open during the day will also help with airflow and reduce any moisture build up.

The length of time your house takes to dry out depends on how it was built and what sort of weather conditions there are when you first move in. Generally speaking, it will take around nine months to a year.

Do not use wallpaper for decoration for at least the first 12 months to allow for appropriate drying out. The use of wallpaper will damage the plaster, increase the drying out period and could increase condensation in your home.

Efflorescence

The appearance of a white deposit on the wall (known as efflorescence) can also be an effect of the drying-out process. These white deposits are actually natural salts that come out of the wall materials and are quite normal. These salts are not harmful and usually disappear over time. However, if deposits or damp marks appear on internal walls, it could indicate something more serious, such as a water leak. If that's the case, you need to contact us on 01325 405333 or email housing@darlington.gov.uk.



Condensation

Usually caused by steam or water vapour coming into contact with cold surfaces, such as walls, ceilings, and windows. It can be the result of evaporation of moisture from building materials, which is quite common in new homes.

However, if allowed to persist, condensation can result in the appearance of mould on interior surfaces and even on furnishings. Ventilating your home by opening windows and not drying clothes out indoors on radiators can help reduce this.

If however, this continues please contact us on 01325 405333 or email housing@darlington.gov.uk.

Fencing

Your fencing has been pre-treated prior to installation, we request that you do not paint any part of the fencing as this will invalidate any warranty and you will be recharged.

Gardens

Your garden has been top-soiled and grass seed has been sown, this will take some time to become established, the following steps will help to improve your lawn:

- Grass seed needs warmth, light and moisture, light watering for the first few weeks can help.
- Do not cut the grass until it is at least 10cm long, do not cut it too short for the first few mows to help it become established. As the lawn thickens you can start to cut it shorter. It will look patchy at first.
- If any weeds come up, you should remove these by hand whilst the lawn grows.

Please remember if you are wishing to carry out any improvement works to your home or garden you must request permission from us before starting any work. There may be restrictions on what you can and cannot do and you could be requested to remove any works that do not have our permission.

Outside taps

We are unable to give permission for outside taps, this is due to legionella compliance.



Water meter

Your home has been fitted with a water meter; you are responsible for setting up your account with Northumbrian Water Ltd. Your water meter is located in the footpath to the front of your property.

Sure stop valve

A sure stop valve is located under the sink in your kitchen. This will isolate the water should you need to do so for any reason.

Water saving features

Your wc's have been fitted with dual flushing systems to assist in reducing your water usage.

Pipework

The pipework under your sink is small and will not take any food stuffs or waste, please make sure you do not cause a blockage by putting this down the sink.

You should not flush wipes, nappies, or any foreign objects down the toilet as this will cause a blockage.

You will be recharged should we have to unblock sinks, toilets or drains, and this is due to your actions.

Utility meters

Your home has a smart gas and electric meters, you are responsible for setting up your account to pay your gas and electricity bills.

Your gas meter is located on the outside wall of your home.

Your electric meter is located on the outside wall of your home.



Cooker installation

Any cooker installation must be completed by a registered tradesperson and a certificate of installation provided to Housing Services for the property records.

Brickwork and render

You should not drill any holes into the brickwork as this may damage the property. If you need to, please ensure any holes are drilled into the mortar joints.

Drilling into internal walls

You must take appropriate care to avoid drilling close to electrical wires or pipework. You should not drill near to light switches or sockets and always check the other side of the wall.

Thermostats

You have two thermostats in your home, one located downstairs the other upstairs. They control the temperature of both areas separately.

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms

Hard-wired smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are fitted in your home, we will check these on an annual basis, but you should check them monthly to ensure they are working. If you find a fault report it immediately to us on 01325 405333 or email housing@darlington.gov.uk.

Door security

A doorbell has been fitted to your front door, along with a spy glass and chain for your security. These should not be tampered with or removed.

Ventilation

You should ensure you ventilate your home as much as possible by opening windows and trickle vents whenever possible which will help reduce humidity within your home and assist it to dry out.

Extractor fans have also been fitted to increase airflow in your home, these should not be turned off for any reason.

Loft access

We are unable to give you access to the loft area of your home. Lofts have not been designed to take any additional loads and cannot be used for storage.



Tenants Panel and Online Tenants Panel

Are you passionate about your home and want to make things happen in your neighbourhood?

Housing Services want to know how we can improve and you can help us do this.

All this can be done from the comfort of your own home!

We want you to shape our services going forward.



**WE NEED
YOU!**

Can you

- Become a champion for your area
- Complete online Surveys
- Review our policies and give us your opinions
- Contribute to our Housing Connect magazine
- Promote our tenants panel in your neighbourhood.

How to become a member

Contact our Customer Engagement team via:



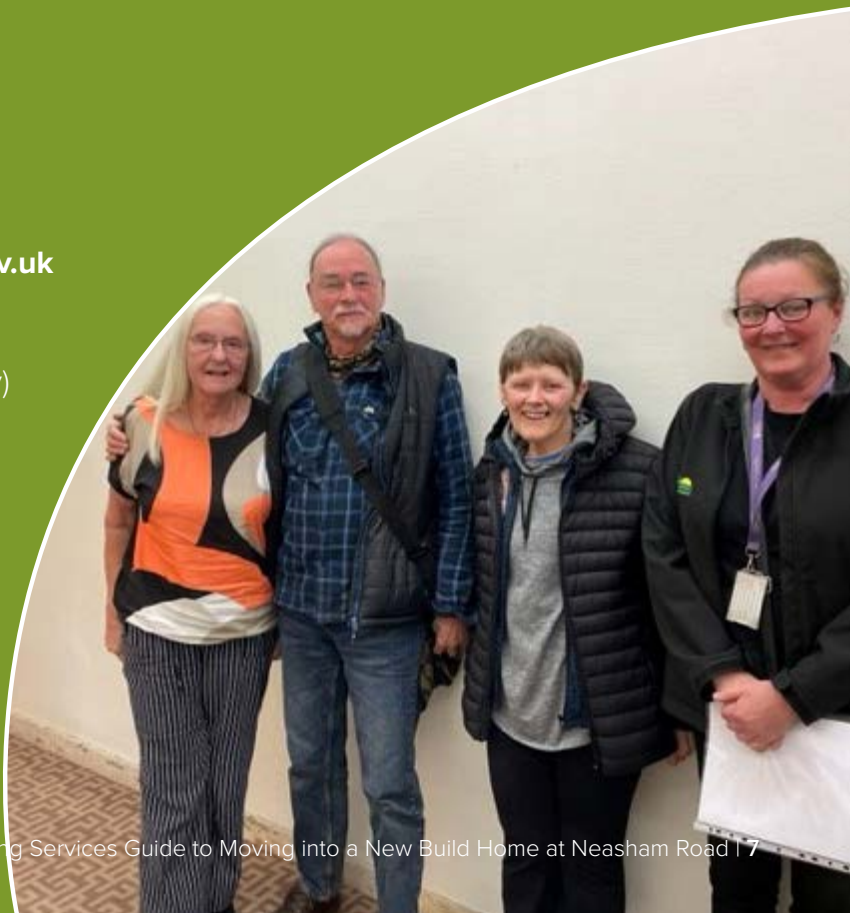
customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk



07917040599 (during office hours only)



01325 405333 press option 7 and ask for the Customer Engagement Team



Housing Services contact details



01325 405333



housing@darlington.gov.uk



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