



# Money savers

## Free travel

People aged over 60, or qualifying disabled people, are eligible for a Gold Card - which means you can travel for free on local buses throughout England after 9.30am weekdays and at any time during weekends and bank holidays. Find out more at [www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/gold-card](http://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/gold-card) or call (01246) 217730

## Free days out

There's loads to do on your doorstep in North East Derbyshire and the surrounding area. The National Trust has pulled together a range of fun stuff you can do for free - from visitor attractions and countryside walks to special events and workshops. Find out more at [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

## Discounted stuff for kids!

b\_line is a discount, travel and library card for young people in Derbyshire, which entitles 11 to 18-year-olds to money off a range of goods and services. The scheme is run by Derbyshire County Council - visit the website at [www.derbyshire.gov.uk](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk) to find out more.

## Free swimming

People aged over 60 and 16 and under can swim for free at the Council's leisure centres. Find out how to register for the scheme - which is running at Dronfield Sports Centre, Eckington Swimming Pool and Sharley Park Leisure Centre - on the Council's website at [www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/swim4life](http://www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/swim4life)

# Community

*Here we put the spotlight on you – if you've got a success you want to shout about, an event you need to promote or a project you want to highlight in the NEWS, then get in touch!*

## Anglers raise cash for Chair's Appeal



*Steve Mellor from Clay Cross Angling Association, Cllr Lilian Robinson, Pauline Jackson, Cllr Robison's consort, Mick Bluff from Marshalls Electrical and John Banner, winner of the tournament*

**A fund-raising fishing tournament netted more than £250 for North East Derbyshire District Council's Chair's Appeal, in aid of Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice.**

Members of Clay Cross Angler's Association presented a cheque for £255 to Cllr Lilian Robinson, Chair of the Council, following their annual fishing tournament held at the Smithy Pond in Wingerworth.

The event was sponsored by Marshalls Electrical on High Street in Clay Cross, which donated £100 towards the final fund-raising total.

The hospice provides respite and emergency care for children across North East Derbyshire, South Yorkshire, North Nottinghamshire and North Lincolnshire.

*Become an NEDDC correspondent! If you would like to see your story on this page, please contact Mandy Atkinson on (01246) 217692 or email [mandy.atkinson@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:mandy.atkinson@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk)*

*The deadline for the next edition, which will be received by residents in December 2009, is Friday 9 October.*

Corner

# Advice Line



## We are thinking of renting out our house. Any advice?

Landlords have legal responsibilities you need to be aware of. You can avoid unexpected costs and pitfalls by following the tips from LACORS, the local government regulatory authority:

- Speak to your mortgage lender - you could be in breach of your mortgage agreement if you rent out your home without consent
- Get references from potential tenants
- Prepare a formal tenancy agreement – this will make it easier to deal with any disputes
- Protect deposits through a government-approved scheme
- Obtain an energy performance certificate, or risk a fine
- Check all gas and electrical appliances for safety
- Ensure a suitable fire alarm system is fitted

For more detailed information go to [www.lacors.gov.uk](http://www.lacors.gov.uk)

## I've just found out I'm pregnant. A friend told me I might be entitled to some help towards the costs of the baby. Is this true?

You may be able to get benefits such as Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, depending on whether you work and, if you do, how much you earn and how long you have worked for the same employer.

You can also get a one-off Health in Pregnancy Grant of £190. This will not affect your tax credits or any other benefits. Everyone gets the same amount and you will not be asked about your income.

You can get the grant if you're at least 25 weeks pregnant and you've been given health advice from a midwife or doctor.

Visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) for more information.

## I want to change my mobile phone companies but still keep my old phone number. I have rung my original provider, but they're making excuses for why they can't help. What can I do?

Check your contract for details of when you can leave and how much notice you have to terminate your contract – in most cases this is one month. You can be charged for ending your contract early, but not more than the remaining amount you would have paid under the contract.

## For further advice and information contact your local bureau:

**Clay Cross** Mon 10am - 2pm  
126, High Street, to Fri  
Tel: 0844 8489800

**Dronfield, Peel Centre** Mon 10am - 2pm  
Tel: 0844 8489800 & Thur

**Eckington Library** Fri 10am - 2pm  
Tel: 0844 8489800

**Renishaw Community Centre** Tue 10am - 2pm  
Tel: 0844 8489800

**Killamarsh Clinic**, (appointment only)  
Parkside Shopping Centre Tel: 01246 868843

**Gosforth Valley Medical Centre**,  
(appointment only) Pentland Road  
Tel: 01246 419040 (patients only)

**Ashover Primary Medical Centre**,  
(appointment only) Milken Lane Tel: 01246 590711

**Staffa Health Surgeries**, (appointment only)  
Holmewood, Stonebroom, Pilsley  
Tel: 0844 4772433, 0844 4771896,  
0844 4771897 (patients only)

For more information visit [www.ned-cab.org.uk](http://www.ned-cab.org.uk) or call 0844 8489800.

To switch companies, your original phone company must give you your PAC (Porting Authorisation Code). Request this in writing but you can ask for it by phone, or in person at the company's high street store. They must give this to you within two working days.

Do not cancel your direct debit until you have written confirmation of the termination of the contract. Once you have your PAC, and confirmation of termination of contract, you can ring the new company and switch services.

If your mobile phone company does not comply with your request, you should speak to them about it first. If you have made a formal complaint to the phone company and this hasn't solved the problem, you can try using the company's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) scheme. Your phone company might belong to one of two ADR schemes which have been approved by Ofcom.

You can find out more on the website at [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

# At your service

**To ensure services are delivered to the levels tenants have said they want Rykneld Homes has introduced a suite of Service Standards. The Service Standards define the level of service tenants can expect to receive and will enable tenants to hold Rykneld Homes to account for its performance. They cover the tenant facing areas of the service including, Income Collection, Moving Home, Home Safety checks and more. How Rykneld Homes performs against these will be published quarterly in the tenant magazine “Homing-In”. These are available on our website at [www.rykneldhomes.org.uk](http://www.rykneldhomes.org.uk)**



Rykneld has already made great strides to organise itself in the most effective way to deliver services which represent value for money for the rent payer. This has included:

- Introducing fit for purpose policies and strategies such as the Financial Inclusion Strategy which has delivered basic bank accounts for tenants who have previously been unable to access such services from the high street banks. An agreement has been reached with HSBC to provide bank accounts which do not incur any charges.
- A simplified and improved complaints policy and procedure to ensure that Rykneld becomes more responsive to tenants feedback on services
- A simplified and consistent monitoring of tenant satisfaction across service areas. This is demonstrating that tenant satisfaction is high with levels in excess of 90%.
- The promotion of Direct Debit using the Creature Comfort characters. This has increased the take up of Direct Debit from 15% to 20% since November.
- The on-going modernisation of the Warden Service has included the review of all tenants Support Plans to a high quality assured standard.

Whilst great work is taking place there is no room for complacency with many more planned improvements to be delivered in the coming months.

## Finding a Home

In this edition of The News we take a look at how Rykneld Homes has developed its allocation and lettings service ‘Choice Move’ and review the allocations for last year. Choice Based Lettings has been introduced by Rykneld Homes through its Choice Move service. This has had significant benefits in terms of customer choice and the



transparency with which allocations are made. Applicants are now able to bid on a specific empty property from a selection advertised by type and area. Choice Move also undertakes proactive out-reach work where it can help applicants access the service.

Vulnerable applicants are proactively supported if they have difficulty using the bidding system. A weekly newsletter is sent to inform applicants of what properties are available and automated bidding is also available for the property type and area should applicants have indicated they are unable to bid.

The service is more customer focussed than previous lettings services in that it offers accompanied viewings. Applicants are shown around empty

properties giving the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues with their Neighbourhood Champion. This also enables Rykneld Homes to help put in place any required support systems by signposting applicants to its partners such as Citizens Advice Bureau or Social Services or refer applicants to its own Tenancy Support Champion. Rykneld Homes Tenancy Support Champion provides an advocacy service to support applicants to enable them to sustain their tenancy, for example, supporting their Housing Benefit claim and resettlement support. For each person accessing the support service an individual Support Plan is put in place which details support needs and objectives to identify their needs.