

Local line telephone numbers

Frequently Asked Questions

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| 1. What changes have the Council made to its central, contact centre telephone number? |
| The Council now offers ten local area code telephone numbers for customers to use when calling the central contact centre. These are offered alongside the existing 0845 600 6400 telephone number, so that you have the choice of how to contact the Council. |
| 2. When will I be able to start using the new telephone numbers? |
| The local area code numbers will be available for you to use from Monday 13 th January 2014. |
| 3. Why are new telephone numbers being offered? |
| Local line numbers may be cheaper for you to call, depending on the telephone service provider you use and the payment package you have in place. In particular, most mobile phone companies will offer free calls to local area code numbers as part of 'free minute' packages, but may charge for calls to 0845 numbers. If you are unsure about the most cost effective way to contact the Council, please ask your telephone service provider about their charges. |
| 4. What is happening to the existing 0845 600 6400 contact centre telephone number? |
| The 0845 600 6400 contact centre telephone number will still be available for you to use in the same way as you previously would have. This number will be available alongside the ten local area code numbers, so that you have the choice of how you wish to contact the Council, depending on what is most cost effective for you. |
| 5. Why are there ten new numbers instead of just one? |
| The geographic area of Northumberland is covered by ten different telephone area codes. The new contact centre telephone numbers provide you with a telephone number which is locally recognisable to you, no matter which area of the county you are calling from. |
| 6. Which local area code number should I use? |
| The easiest number to use is most likely the one which relates to the area code for your place of residence, which will be the same area code as you own landline telephone, if you have one. However, there will be no difference in cost if you choose to call one of the other area code numbers and your call will still be directed to the same contact centre. A list of the ten local area code numbers is provided below, alongside information about the areas of the county these numbers cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 01670 627000 (areas covered include: Ashington, Bedlington, Blyth, Cramlington, Felton, Hartburn, Longhorsley, Lynemouth, Morpeth, Red Row, Scots Gap, Stannington, Ulgham and |

Whalton).

- **01661 520005** (areas covered include: Belsay, Ponteland, Prudhoe, Stamfordham, Stocksfield and Wylam).
- **01665 660733** (areas covered include: include Alnmouth, Alnwick, Amble, Charlton Mires, Chathill, Embleton, Longframlington, Longhoughton, Powburn, Seahouses, Shilbottle and Whittingham).
- **01668 260355** (areas covered include: Bamburgh, Belford, Chatton, Milfield, Wooler and Wooperton).
- **01669 220355** (areas covered include: Harbottle, Hepple, Netherton and Rothbury).
- **01830 570085** (areas covered include: Kirkwhelpington and Otterburn).
- **01289 540455** (areas covered include: Ancroft, Beal, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Holy Island (Lindisfarne), Lowick, Norham and Paxton).
- **01434 400388** (areas covered include: Allendale, Allenheads, Bellingham, Blanchland, Corbridge, Great Whittington, Haltwhistle, Haydon Bridge, Hexham, Humshaugh, Newbrough, Riding Mill and Slaley).
- **0191 5009044** (areas covered include: Seaton Delaval)
- **01890 230233** (areas covered include: Branxton, Carham, Cornhill on Tweed, Ford and Etal and Kilham).

7. If I call a local area code number, will I speak to someone based in that area (for example, if I call 01434, will I speak to a Council employee based in Hexham)?

No. Our contact centre is based in Cramlington and that hasn't changed. The local area code numbers are all directed into that central contact centre. However, by providing a local area code number, you now have the option of calling a number you recognise, which may also save you money, depending on the calls package you get from your provider

8. How much is it costing the Council to provide ten local area code numbers alongside the 0845 600 6400 telephone number?

The only cost to the Council is line rental costs of £600 per year.

9. How much will it cost me to call the local area code numbers / 0845 600 6400 telephone number?

Local line numbers may be cheaper for you to call, depending on the telephone service provider you use and the payment package you have in place. In particular, most mobile phone companies will offer free calls to local area code numbers as part of 'free minute' packages, but may charge for calls to 0845 numbers.

If you are unsure about the most cost effective way to contact the Council, please ask your telephone service provider about their charges.

10. Does the Council generate income from the 0845 600 6400 telephone number?

No. The Council makes no money from calls to this, or any of the local area code numbers. Call

charge fees are billed and paid directly to your telephone service provider.

11. Why has a Freephone 0800 number not been introduced?

This option was considered, however research showed that in most cases, mobile telephone providers do not include 0800 numbers within their 'free minute' bundles and therefore charges are usually in line with those for 0845 numbers.

Additionally, there is a cost to the Council for calls received from an 0800 number, which based on the 1.7 million minutes of calls made to the Council's contact centre in 2012/13, would result in a prohibitive cost to the Council (approximately £30,000 per year) (approximately £30,000 per year) in a time where reducing costs is paramount.

12. What will happen to other numbers e.g. helplines and numbers for specific site offices and services?

At present there are no changes to any other telephone numbers other than the central contact centre.

13. Will there be changes to the way services are delivered in my local area?

We've got a whole range of projects underway to improve local service delivery which we'll be talking about throughout 2014, but the changes to the contact centre telephone number are about helping you make the most efficient use of your call packages.