

Nottingham City Homes

# New Lease

The newsletter for Nottingham city leaseholders



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Issue 6  
March 2009

Coming soon!  
The new  
Leaseholders  
handbook see page 2 for more...

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# Coming Soon – the new Leaseholders handbook



Coming in March is the new and up to date leaseholder handbook. This will be issued to all Nottingham City Council's current leaseholders as well as new leaseholders who have completed a sale through the Right to Buy Scheme.

It is written in plain English and much easier to understand. It is also full of information which will help you get the best out of your lease.

## Some of the issues covered in more detail are:

- Service standards
- Repairs
- Looking after your property
- Supporting leaseholders
- Buying the freehold

There are plenty more issues covered in the handbook as well as loads of handy contact details to help you find the service you want. Your copy of the leaseholder handbook will be landing on your doormat soon.

# A date for your diary

Thursday, 12th March 2009  
at 5pm in the Boardroom  
at 14 Hounds Gate

The leaseholder forum is your chance to tell us and Nottingham City Council what you think and help us develop the services that affect you. At this forum we will update you on the grounds maintenance review, management charge review and most importantly discussing the role of the forum.

New faces are always welcome. This is your best chance to have your voice heard directly and have an involvement in making decisions that can affect Nottingham's leaseholders.

If you require transport to and from the Leaseholder Forum, please contact the Leaseholder and Rechargeable Repairs Team (LRRT) on 0115 915 7385 or [leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)



## A word from the Chair

In every issue of *New Lease*, the chair of the Leaseholder Forum Kate Bowley gives us an update on being an 'involved' leaseholder with Nottingham City Homes. Kate has chaired the forum since 2006.

"I'm sure you will have heard by now the brilliant news that Nottingham City Homes reached two stars with excellent prospects accreditation. This is good news for tenants and leaseholders as it will mean major improvements in not only the areas we live in but also the service we are provided.

As we are celebrating success in this issue of *New Lease* I would like to give my thanks and

support to the Leaseholder and Rechargeable Repairs Team (LRRT) for the work in which they have done already and look forward to closely working with them to keep improving the service for leaseholders. Some of the successes they have already achieved are on pages 4 and 5.

Remember they can't make these improvements without your input. So getting involved really does work."

# Two stars and excellent prospects

**Nottingham City Homes (NCH) has officially achieved a ‘two star’ rating given by the Audit Commission following its November inspection. We also have ‘excellent prospects for improvement’.**

**The Audit Commission’s report found a number of strengths – including easy to access services, a focus to vulnerable tenants and effective measures to tackle anti-social behaviour.**

The achievement will mean more than £240 million to be spent on improving thousands of Nottingham’s council homes. The achievement is also good news for leaseholders – these works will improve the area in which you live in and possibly increase the value of your property.

## **The Audit Commission made the following comments on leasehold management:**

- A good range of information developed with service users
- Service charges have been comprehensively reviewed
- A dedicated leasehold team is providing a consistent approach and frontline staff have been trained to handle leasehold matters
- Section 20 notices are handled effectively
- A well established leaseholder forum is shaping service improvements including producing leaseholder information, service standards and monitoring the quality of communal areas This is to make sure leaseholders have as high profile as other service users
- Service charge queries have been reduced due to increased accuracy and the introduction of surgeries
- NCH offers leaseholders the opportunity to buy-in to additional services such as responsive repairs, gas servicing, NCC home contents insurance scheme and free access to money advice service.

We know we can still improve the service for leaseholders. We will continue to work with other teams in Nottingham City Homes, the Leaseholder Forum and readers of New Lease to continuously develop services.

**If you would like to read the Audit Commission’s full report, please visit [www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)**



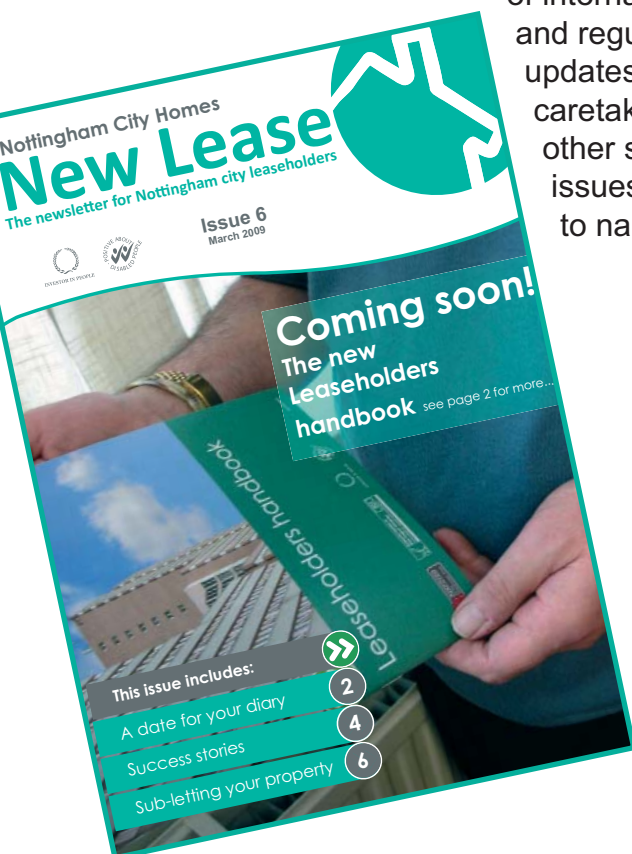
# Success stories

The Leaseholder and Rechargeable Repairs Team (LRRT) have now been going for over 12 months and are continuing to develop the success of our services. We wanted to take this opportunity to celebrate the success that the LRRT have achieved and thank the leaseholders, who without their patience and help this would not have been possible.

LRRT was formed due to the demand from leaseholders, that's why we take all your feedback very seriously and use your input to shape the leasehold service. These are some of our best achievements so far:

**New Lease** – Now on its sixth issue. This has been a very useful tool for communicating citywide with our leaseholders as well as giving leaseholders the chance to give us their views on the decisions that will effect them. These have included advertising the new gas maintenance

scheme, availability of internal repairs and regular updates on caretaking and other service issues just to name a few.



## Training sessions: Introduction

**to your lease** – These were workshops that we given to leaseholders across the city in the summer of 2008. More than 60 leaseholders attended the events, where we gave advice on getting the best out of your lease, rights and responsibilities and cleared up a few grey areas.



**Pro-active leasehold advice** – Some of the feedback we sadly receive is that leaseholders are not made fully aware of the rights and responsibilities that come with buying a lease.

To try and resolve these issues we give all Right to Buy applicants the opportunity to come in and discuss the finer points of leasehold ownership.

These sessions are held with a member of the Leasehold Team and are free.



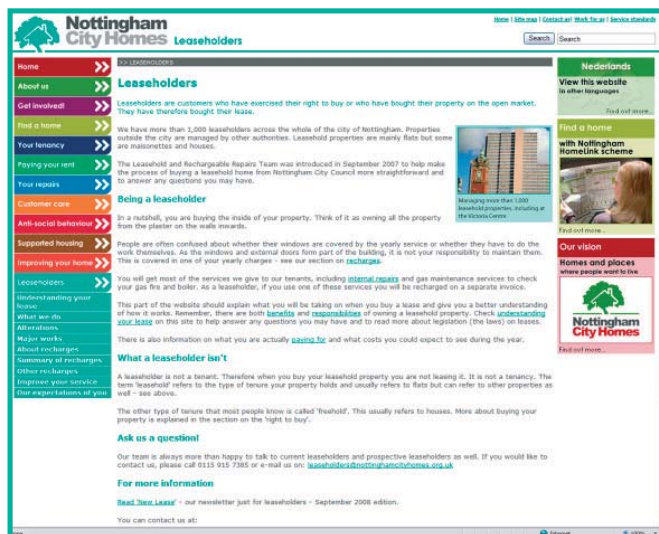
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# Success stories

## continued

**Website** – On Monday 22nd September Nottingham City Homes launched its new and improved website. Leaseholders have now got their own dedicated section on the website. This contains up to date information and explanations on service charges as well as easy links to help you access all of the services Nottingham City Homes can offer you.

The Leaseholder forum members helped us develop the content of the new website. So take a look and visit [www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk) and click on the 'leaseholders' tab to find out more.



**Service charge reviews** – The LRRT is still carrying out service charge reviews. Most of them are complete but there is still the review and citywide consultation to take place on the management charge (see page seven). The reviews that have taken place have been successful in improving the service, improving value for money and cutting direct service costs.

Our biggest success was cutting the surveillance and monitoring annual service charge cost by a massive 50% per leaseholder. We are always striving to keep improving the services and welcome your feedback.

**Extra services** – The LRRT team have worked with some of the other service providers in Nottingham City Homes to help you access their services easier. These have included the gas maintenance scheme, the ability to gain quotes for internal repairs, free debt advice and contents insurance through Nottingham City Council.

To find out more about these great offers please visit our website or contact the LRRT using the contact details on page eight.



# Sub-letting your property

**Over the last few years more people have been choosing to sub-let their flats.**

**Under the terms of your lease you are free to sub-let your property – so we've put together a checklist of things you need to do if you're thinking of doing so:**

1. You must check your mortgage allows you to sub-let your property. It may be necessary for you to change to a Buy-to-Let mortgage. Please contact your mortgage provider for more information
2. You need to properly vet all potential tenants with the terms in your lease and any other in which you feel they should abide by. Remember to write these in the tenancy agreement you issue them before they move into your property.
3. Look into using a lettings agency for finding you tenants and managing the sub-letting for you. Although you will have to pay them a management cost, they are experts in this market and will have better experience in securing you responsible tenants. Letting agents can be found on the internet and in the yellow pages.

**We can't make you tell us when you sub-let your property, but to help safeguard your leasehold we strongly recommend you supply us with the following information:**

1. a forwarding address so that invoices, formal notices and any other documentation can be sent directly to you
2. details of any managing agent, if you choose to use one
3. a contact number for you and your managing agent, if you have one, in case of emergencies
4. the names and contact details of your sub-tenants
5. a certified copy of the tenancy agreement with the sub-tenant.

Please could you send any information to the LRRT, our contact details are on page eight.



# Management charge review update

**You may be aware that we are reviewing the management charge element of our service charge.**

**The first review session has already taken place – but we know this is certainly a subject that many leaseholders will want to express their view on.**

At the moment we add 15% to the cost of all repairs and services to finance the leasehold team.

But we agree with the Leasehold Forum that this is not a fair system. Some leaseholders have never paid anything towards management costs – but still receive a service charge invoice, a copy of New Lease and can use the leaseholder team, visit housing offices and call the repairs contact centre.

At the moment the management fee being collected is not covering the cost of the LRRT. These are all matters that need to be addressed. This is why a full city-wide review will take place before any decision will be made on the charging and costs of the management charge to be added to each invoice.

In January, the LRRT did a timesheet analysis on the time of the team members to try and get an estimate of how much of their time is spent on chargeable leaseholder issues. This analysis is currently being collated and will be used as a vital factor in calculating the proposals for future management fee charging.

The initial proposals will be presented at the second review session in March 2009 which will be made up of Leaseholder Forum members.

From that review session the choice of management charge proposals will be sent to all leaseholders in the city for full consultation. This is to make sure all leaseholders' views are heard before a final decision is made on which way of charging is implemented.

## Update on Digital Switchover

**As you will be aware the United Kingdom is going through an exciting digital change and Nottingham is going to have to revolutionise its housing to adjust.**

By 2011 Nottingham's housing must be ready for the change, as all analogue TV signals will be switched off. The TV aerial in your flat, and any non-digital equipment will need to be upgraded or replaced. To watch television after the switchover you will either have to have a set top box such as Freeview, Sky or an integrated digital television.

To make sure that all communal television systems are compatible with the switch over Nottingham City Homes will be replacing them between 2009 and 2011 with an Integrated Reception System (IRS). IRS is a versatile

system delivering both digital terrestrial television and satellite television.

The beauty of the system is that you will be given the option as a customer to choose the provider of your digital television channels.

We know that our leaseholders will have a lot of questions on how the programme will be integrated in your areas. Our engineers are putting the timetable together now. Write in with your questions to the LRRT and we will publish those most frequently asked in the next edition of New Lease.



# Contact us

**Leaseholder and Rechargeable Repairs Team**  
Tel: 0115 915 7385  
14 Hounds Gate, Nottingham, NG1 7BA  
E-mail: [leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:leaseholders@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Repairs Contact Centre**  
Tel: 0115 915 2222  
Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year  
E-mail: [repairs@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:repairs@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)  
Don't forget you can report your repairs on-line at:  
[www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](http://www.nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Anti-Social Behaviour Hotline**  
Tel: 0115 915 2020

**Bestwood Housing Office**  
Elmbridge, Bestwood Park, Nottingham, NG5 5PF  
Tel: 0115 915 3301 Minicom: 0115 915 3407  
E-mail: [bestwoodoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:bestwoodoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Bulwell Housing Office**  
1 Gilead Street, Bulwell, Nottingham, NG5 8NA  
Tel: 0115 915 3212 Minicom: 0115 915 3212  
E-mail: [bulwelloffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:bulwelloffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Southglade Housing Office**  
Southglade Road, Bestwood, Nottingham, NG5 5GU  
Tel: 0115 915 9701 Minicom: 0115 915 9716  
E-mail: [southgladeoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:southgladeoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Aspley Housing Office**  
14 Strelley Road, Strelley, Nottingham, NG8 3AP  
Tel: 0115 915 3121 Minicom: 0115 915 3126  
E-mail: [aspleyoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:aspleyoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Bilborough Housing Office**  
95 Bracebridge Drive, Bilborough, Nottingham, NG8 5PL  
Tel: 0115 915 0491 Minicom: 0115 915 0485  
E-mail: [billboroughoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:billboroughoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Radford Housing Office, Mary Potter Centre**  
Gregory Boulevard, Hyson Green, Nottingham, NG7 5HY  
Tel: 0115 883 8220 Minicom: 0115 883 8225  
E-mail: [radfordoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:radfordoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Clifton Housing Office, Clifton Cornerstone**  
Southchurch Drive, Clifton, Nottingham, NG11 8EW  
Tel: 0115 878 6287 Minicom: 0115 878 6101  
E-mail: [cliftonoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:cliftonoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Lenton Housing Office**  
5-6 Church Square, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 1SL  
Tel: 0115 915 3740 Minicom: 0115 915 3740  
E-mail: [lentonoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:lentonoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**St Anns Housing Office**  
2 Robin Hood Chase, St Anns, Nottingham, NG3 4EZ  
Tel: 0115 915 6905 Minicom: 0115 915 6911  
E-mail: [stannsoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:stannsoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

**Victoria Centre Housing Office**  
4-21 Victoria Centre Flats, Nottingham, NG1 3PA  
Tel: 0115 915 3730 Minicom: 0115 915 3730  
E-mail: [victoriacentreoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk](mailto:victoriacentreoffice@nottinghamcityhomes.org.uk)

## Receive this newsletter in other languages and formats

If you are unable to read this New Lease newsletter please contact your housing office, or call us on 0845 330 3131.

We can arrange for an interpreter to explain it to you, or send you a spoken word version on tape or CD.

If neither of these are suitable, we can translate this into your chosen language. This newsletter is also available in large print.

### Chinese (Cantonese)

如果你不能夠閱讀這承租人通訊(新契約),請聯絡你的地區房屋辦公室,或致電 0845 330 3131。我們可以安排一位翻譯員去為你解釋,或寄送一份口述版本的錄音磁帶或光碟,或用大字體或盲人用點字法寫成的書面版本給你。如果這些都不適合,我們可以把這刊物翻譯成你所選擇的語言。

### Czech

Pokud nemůžete přečíst tento bulletin pro nájemce (New Lease), kontaktujte nás prosím ve Vašem místním Úřadu pro bydlení, nebo zavolejte na číslo 0845 330 3131. Můžeme pro Vás dojednat tlumočnicka, který Vám ho vysvětlí, nebo Vám můžeme poslat verzi mluveného slova na kazetě nebo CD, nebo také psanou verzi ve velkém tisku nebo Braillově písmě. Pokud pro Vás nic z toho není vhodné, můžeme tuto publikaci přeložit do Vámi vybraného jazyka.

### French

Si vous ne parvenez pas à lire ce bulletin localitaire (New Lease), s'il vous plaît contactez votre bureau de zone de logement, ou appelez-nous sur 0845 330 3131. Nous pouvons prendre des dispositions pour un interprète de l'expliquer à vous, ou vous envoyer une version parlée sur bande magnétique ou un CD, ou une version écrite en gros caractères ou en braille. Si aucune de ces options ne convient, nous pouvons traduire cette publication dans votre langue choisie.

### Gujarati

શું તમારી પાસે ઘરની સ્વાધનસામગ્રીનો વીઠો છે? તમારા ફર્નિચર, સ્વાધનસામગ્રી અને કપડાંને નુકસાન થાય કે ચોરાઈ થાય, તો શું તમને નવી વસ્તુઓ ખરીદવાનો પરવાની શકે છે? અમારી વીમા પોલિસી ઓછા પ્રીમિયમ સાથે આવે છે અને તમે તમારા બાડા સાથે તેની અડવાડો સુકવણી કરી શકો છો. 0115 915 4920 પર બાડા ડીમ પાસેથી અથવા તમારા વિસ્તારની આવાસન ઓફિસની મુલાકાત લઈને અવિદ્યાર્થન ફોન મેળવો.

### Hindi

यदि आप इस पट्टेदार सूचनापत्र (नया पट्टा) को पढ़ने में असमर्थ हैं तो कृपया अपने क्षेत्रीय हाउसिंग कार्यालय से सम्पर्क करें, या हमें इस फोन नम्बर 0845 330 3131 पर कॉल करें। इसे आपको समझाने के लिए हम किसी अनुवादक का प्रबन्ध कर सकते हैं, या टेप या सी डी के रूप में इसका बोला हुआ शब्द संस्करण या बड़े अक्षरों में लिखित या ब्रेल संस्करण हम आपको भेज सकते हैं। यदि इन में से कोई उपयुक्त नहीं है तो हम इस प्रकाशन को आपकी चयनित भाषा में अनुवाद कर सकते हैं।

### Kurdish (Sorani)

ئێمگەر ئێوه ناتوانیت نێم بۆتۆکرۆیهی خاوەن سەقو فۆلانه (leaseholder) بە تێبەگەیت (ئێنگڵۆبۆسی سەقو فۆلانه New Lease), ئێوه ناتوانیت بە یۆمۆتێی بە فۆرمانبەری خاوەنەری ئۆجەبۆیه بەکە یان تەلەفۆنمان بۆ بەکە بۆ 0845 330 3131. ئێمه دێتوانین مۆتەر جێبەجێت بۆ دابین بۆکەین بۆ ئێوهی کە ئێوه بۆ رۆوینکاتۆه یان بەشێوهی تۆماتۆرۆ او لاسەر کاسێت یان سی دی یان بە شێوهی ئۆوسراو بە چاڵی گۆره یان بە ئۆوسین بۆ گۆزیر بۆت بۆتێرین. ئێمگەر نەسەتەت جێبەجێت بۆ ئێنگۆنێت ئێوه ئێمه دێتوانین نێم بۆتۆکرۆیهی بەت بۆ ئێه جۆمه بەکەین بۆ ئێه زامانی کە هەلێدێتۆزێت.

### Polish

Jeżeli nie potrafisz czytać tego biuletynu dla dzierżawców (New Lease), prosimy skontaktować się z Pana/Pani lokalnym housing office, lub zadzwonić pod numer 0845 330 3131. Możemy zorganizować tłumacza, który objaśni Panu/Pani treść tego biuletynu, wysłać Panu/Pani mówioną wersję na kasetcie audio lub na płycie CD, albo pisemną wersję drukowaną dużą czcionką lub w języku Braille'a. Jeżeli żadna z powyższych opcji Panu/Pani nie odpowiada, możemy przekłamać tę publikację na wybrany przez Pana/Panią język.

### Portuguese

Caso não consiga ler este Boletim Informativo Arrendatário (Novo Aluguel) leaseholder newsletter (New Lease), favor entrar em contato com o housing office (departamento de habitação) de seu bairro ou telefone para 0845 330 3131. Podemos arranjar um intérprete para lhe explicar, ou enviar uma versão falada em fita ou CD ou uma versão escrita em letras grandes/ impressão maior ou em Braille. Caso nenhuma dessas opções lhe forem convenientes, podemos traduzir esta publicação para seu idioma de escolha.

### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਲਿਖਿਓਲਡਰ ਆਫ ਰਿਊਜ਼ੈਂਟ/ਖਰਾਦ (ਨਵੀਂ ਲੀਜ) ਨਹੀਂ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਸਕਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਏਰੀਆ ਹਾਉਸਿੰਗ ਅਫਸਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਨੰਬਰ 0845 330 3131 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ। ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਦਰਾ ਸ਼ਾਬਾਦਿਤ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੀਟਰ/ਸੁਆਹਿਬੀ ਚਾ ਬੰਦੋਬਸਤ ਕਰ ਦੇਵਾਂਗੇ ਜਾਂ ਇਹ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਟੇਪ ਜਾਂ ਡੀ ਡੀ 'ਤੇ ਦੇ ਦੇਵਾਂਗੇ ਜਾਂ ਇਹ ਇਹ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਬ੍ਰੇਲ (ਅੱਖ 'ਤੇ ਨਾ ਦੇਖ ਸਕਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਲਈ) ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਦੇਵਾਂਗੇ। ਜੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਲਾਭ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਪੁਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਰਕਮ ਕਰਵਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

### Urdu

یہ نئے ہولڈرز کا نئے لیز (نئی لیز) ہے۔ اگر آپ پڑھنے یا لکھنے میں مشکل محسوس کرتے ہیں تو براہ کرم اپنے علاقے کے ہاؤسنگ آفس سے رابطہ کریں یا 0845 330 3131 پر فون کریں۔ ہم اس بات کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں کہ کوئی ترجمان یا بھلا پ کو تمہارے لیے مطبوعات آپ کو نیپ ڈی ڈی پر ریکارڈ کی ہوئی آڈیو صورت میں یا بڑے حرفوں کی مطبوعاتی یا بریل کی صورت میں بھیجیں یا اگر ان میں سے کوئی بھی طریقہ آپ کے لیے مناسب نہیں ہے تو ہم اس شامیت کا ترجمہ آپ کی منتخب کردہ زبان میں کر دیتے ہیں۔