

## New homes incoming...

9 new Unity homes near completion in Huddersfield

Find out more on page 6



Season's greetings  
from everyone at  
Unity

### Christmas Opening Times

Mon 24th December (Christmas Eve) - **CLOSED**

Tue 25th December (Christmas Day) - **CLOSED**

Wed 26th December (Boxing Day) - **CLOSED**

Thur 27th December - **CLOSED**


Fri 28th December - **CLOSED**

Mon 31st December (New Year's Eve) - **CLOSED**

Tue 1st January (New Year's Day) - **CLOSED**

Wed 2nd January - **10.00am - 5.00pm**

### Out of Office Numbers

 **Emergency Repairs - 01757 244 510**  
(e.g. serious floods and leaks, total loss of water, the only toilet is blocked.)

 **Emergency Gas Repairs - 01274 603 333**  
(e.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unity's office is closed.)

 **Transco (gas leaks) - 0800 111 999**

### 3. Are you expecting a repair?

Make sure you answer the call from GTD - otherwise you may miss your appointment

### 3. Have you moved home recently?

Don't forget to update your address!

### 4. Universal Credit

Find out how Unity has been affected so far

### 5. Gas safety

Remember to stay safe from carbon monoxide

### 6. Unity's Affordable Homes Programme

Read about the new homes that are set to be added in 2019

### 8. How is Unity performing?

Take a look at how we're doing in 2018/19.

### 9. New year, new you?

See how our Employment Services can help improve your skills

### 10. Tenant Christmas party

Take a look at what our involved tenants got up to at their Christmas party

### 11. Unity recognises First World War Anniversary at 31st AGM

## Free online tools!

Unity has recently purchased some new online tools that can help you to get the most out of your income.

All you have to do to access these useful tools is visit our website and select one of the links provided.

[www.unityha.co.uk](http://www.unityha.co.uk)

### Benefits & Budgeting



Unity tenants now have access to free online tools that can help you maximise your income!

[Benefit calculator](#) – Our benefits calculator will help you find out what benefits you can claim, including if you would be better off receiving Universal Credit

[Online budgeting tool](#) – Our user friendly budget planner is free to use and should only take minutes to complete if you have all your financial information to hand.

[More Welfare Support & Advice](#)

## Benefit Calculator

**Are you claiming the best benefits for you? You could be missing out...**

Our benefits calculator will help you find out what benefits you can claim, including if you would be better off receiving Universal Credit.



The calculator is free to use, and the details you provide are anonymous.

Before you start, make sure you have information about your savings, income, pensions and existing benefits (for you and your partner).

## Budgeting Tool

**Do you need help making sure you don't overspend?**

The first vital step in taking control of your finances is to create your own personal budget plan. Our user friendly budget planner is free to use and should only take minutes to complete if you have all your financial information to hand.



## Are you expecting a repair?

If you are expecting a visit from GTD to do some repairs in your home, make sure you answer their phonecall confirming the appointment.

Please save GTD's number so that you answer their calls. You can also use these numbers if you need to rearrange or cancel your appointment.



0113 263 7932



07545 900012

## Don't forget to switch off Christmas decorations

As the festive period has arrived, many of you will have put up Christmas decoration. Although Unity has no problem with tenants having Christmas decorations, we would like to remind all of you to **please turn off all decorations when you leave your home or go to bed.**



## Census prize draw winners! Three prizes awarded for returned census forms

During August we sent out a Census form to all of our tenants. Unity carries out a census of all our tenants about once every four years so that we have accurate information about our tenants.

If you returned your census before Friday 28th September, you were entered into a prize draw.

Once the deadline had passed, three responses were chosen at random to select the winners.

The prizes were as follows:

**First Prize:** Computer tablet

**Second Prize:** £100 in vouchers

**Third Prize:** £50 in vouchers

**Thank you to everyone who returned their census forms.**



Customer Services Assistant, Kam, presented the first prize.

## Have you moved home recently? Don't forget to update your address!

There are a few key people that you have to tell about moving into a new home, so that you don't miss any important documents and to avoid your personal information falling into the wrong hands.

The Royal Mail can redirect your mail to any UK or overseas address for 3, 6 or 12 months from £33.99 for each different last name.

Here's a checklist of some of the most important address changes that you need to organise:

## Have you informed the following:

- TV License.....
- DVLA (Driving licence/Vehicle registration).....
- Banks/Building Societies.....
- Schools.....
- Water Company.....
- Gas & Electric Suppliers.....
- Benefits Agency/Employer.....
- Doctors & Dentists.....
- Council Tax.....
- Post Office.....

# Universal Credit

## How has Unity been affected?

As you will know by now, Universal Credit went Full Service (Digital) on the 10th October 2018. This means that working age people in Leeds can no longer get old benefits.

It also means that a tenant, who makes a new claim for help to pay rent, will have to apply for Universal Credit. In most cases, Universal Credit is paid to a tenant once per month, to cover all bills and rent. Tenants must then pay Unity. To ensure your rent is paid regularly, if you go on Universal Credit, **Unity recommends that you set up a direct debit.**

Unity is extremely pleased that at this early stage Universal Credit has not significantly increased the arrears of those tenants that have moved on to Universal Credit. This is due to the great efforts of our tenants to ensure that they continue to pay the rent when they can. It is also thanks to the efforts of our staff in supporting tenants to understand the Universal Credit application process and what help is available.

### Here is a summary of how Universal Credit has affected us so far:

Number of claims so far **35**

Number of claims not already on Housing Benefit **21**

Most preferred method of payment **Allpay card**

Average arrears increase due to Universal Credit after four weeks **£55**

### Don't lose out on Council Tax Support

Claim numbers are falling dramatically as people claim Universal Credit but forget to claim Council Tax Support from Leeds City Council as well.

#### What is Council Tax Support?

Council Tax Support reduces the amount of council tax you have to pay. The amount of support you receive is dependent on your income. You could get support with up to 75% of your council tax bill. If you qualify as a member of a protected group then you could get help with your entire bill.

You may be eligible for support if you:

- are a resident in the UK
- pay council tax on your home
- are on a low income

If you think that you may be eligible for Council Tax Support, visit [leeds.gov.uk](http://leeds.gov.uk) for more information.

If you have any questions about Universal Credit or are going on to Universal Credit, contact your Income Management Officer as soon as possible. We will explain what you can claim, what you need to pay us, what help you can get and other support you can continue to get from Leeds City Council.



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Income Management Team Leader

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#### Matthew Hull

Income Management Officer

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#### Russell Sergeant

Income Management Officer

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# Take control of condensation in your home

One of the most common complaints Unity receives from people living in our properties is about 'damp', when in fact the problem is caused by condensation. As a tenant, you are responsible for ensuring there is no condensation in your home. Unity will not deal with issues involving condensation.

## Top tips for dealing with condensation during winter:

After a bath or shower, open a window and close the bathroom door

Dry clothes outdoors or in a dryer. If drying clothes indoors, open a window in that room and shut the door

Never block, stuff or cover air bricks. You will almost certainly have problems with condensation if you do

Never place wet clothes directly on radiators as moisture seeps straight into the walls

Treat mould as soon as you see it to prevent it from spreading

Don't push furniture against walls. Leave a gap of at least 5cm for warm air to get to the walls

It's better to keep your heating on lower for longer, rather than higher for a short-time.

### Top Tip

Check out our leaflets on our website

[www.unityha.co.uk](http://www.unityha.co.uk) for different tips and advice

## Gas safety

### Stay safe from Carbon Monoxide

#### What to do if you smell gas or suspect carbon monoxide?

Some of our properties are fitted with carbon monoxide alarms to alert you. Every year there are around 40 deaths from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK. If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas leak, you should:

- Stop using all appliances, switch them off (including the boiler), and open doors and windows to ventilate the property
- Evacuate the property immediately
- Call the gas emergency number on **0800 111 999** to report the incident
- Don't go back into the property – wait for advice from the emergency services
- Seek immediate medical help – you may not realise you've been affected by carbon monoxide, and going outside into fresh air won't treat any exposure by itself

#### What are the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

- Dull headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Confusion
- Blurred vision
- Loss of consciousness



#### Gas Safety Tips

- Don't use any gas appliances that you think may be broken or faulty
- Never cover a gas appliance, such as a boiler
- Make sure you know how to turn off the gas supply in the event of an emergency
- Do not block or cover outside flues
- Fit a carbon monoxide detector within your property

# Unity's Affordable Homes Programme

## New homes set to be added in 2019

During the past two years, through our Affordable Homes Programme, Unity has completed 58 new homes with a further 106 properties ready to go. That leaves 56 new homes still to be identified in order to meet our overall allocation of 220 homes by the end of March 2021. Our track record on delivering new homes suggests that, whilst challenging, it is well within our range. Take a look at our progress...



### Quarmby Road, Huddersfield

#### 9 houses

Planning for our second development outside of Leeds was agreed in December 2017. Jack Lunn Construction have been on site for some time and are due to complete in January 2019.

Due for  
completion  
January 2019

### Ancester PH, Wyther Park

#### 8 flats & 6 houses

This area of previously Council owned land was competitively marketed and the Association was successful in being chosen as the preferred developer.

ESH construction began on site in October 2017 and have made good progress. Practical completion is due in January 2019.

Due for  
completion  
January 2019



## Leopold Street, Chapeltown Thirty 1 & 2 bed flats

The proposed development is a joint venture between Unity Housing and Chapeltown Co Housing Group (Local Interest Company).

Unity's properties will be a mix of 1 & 2 bedroom flats for over 55's. ChaCo will be building thirty four new homes consisting of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses and flats. Extensive negotiations are on-going between all parties and the development is due to start on site early 2019.

Due to start  
on site early  
2019

## Beckhill Grove, Meanwood Twenty eight 2, 3 & 4 bed houses and 2 bungalows

After marketing the site to all Registered Providers across the city, the Council have confirmed UHA as the preferred partner to develop this site. The proposed properties will complement the 125 homes the association already owns and manages on the Stonegates estate.

Unity received planning permission in March 2018 and ESH Construction have started on site.



Due for  
completion  
December  
2019

## Construction vacancies Opportunities on our new developments

We are currently looking for general labourers to work on our developments in 2019.

Applicants must have a CSCS card. Find more information on our website:

<http://unityha.co.uk/careers>

**Noma Moyo**

**Employment Outreach Officer**

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✉ [noma.moyo@unityha.co.uk](mailto:noma.moyo@unityha.co.uk)

**Kelly Jennings**

**Outreach Support Worker**

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**Paid  
positions!**



# How is Unity performing?

## Take a look at how we're doing in 2018



### Housing Services

Key Performance Indicator	Q1	Q2
Rent arrears (%)	4.32	4.33
Income collection (%)	103.9	101.35
Average re-let time (days)	15.4	13.7



### Complaints & Compliments

Complaints	Q1	Q2
Total number of complaints received	6	4
% responded to on time	100%	100%
No. resolved at stage one	6	3
No. resolved at stage two	0	1
No. resolved at stage three	0	0



### Maintenance

Key Performance Indicator	Q1	Q2
Average gas safety checks completed (%)	100%	100%
First time fix	91.5%	91.7%
Appointments made and kept	94.9%	96.7%

#### Repairs responded to within timescale:

Emergency (%)	99.9%	99.1%
Urgent (%)	99.9%	99.4%
Routine (%)	99.6%	99.8%

#### Tenant satisfaction

Satisfaction with repairs	98.3%	96.1%
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### You said

3 complainants stated that they were inconvenienced due to the previous contractor failing to attend a repair within agreed timescales

A tenant expressed dissatisfaction with Unity's anti-social behaviour service

### We did

Unity have appointed a new responsive repairs contractor who have since carried out the outstanding repairs to the tenants satisfaction.

Our Scrutiny Panel conducted a review of the service and made recommendations. An action plan has since been produced and implemented by the Housing Manager.



# New year, new you?

Unity Employment Services are here to help

## Do you need help getting online?

### Job Club/Digital Inclusion

Our Job Club/UK Online Centre is a drop in session where Unity's Employment Services staff will help you find work opportunities and help you to use computers, including MyWork Search.

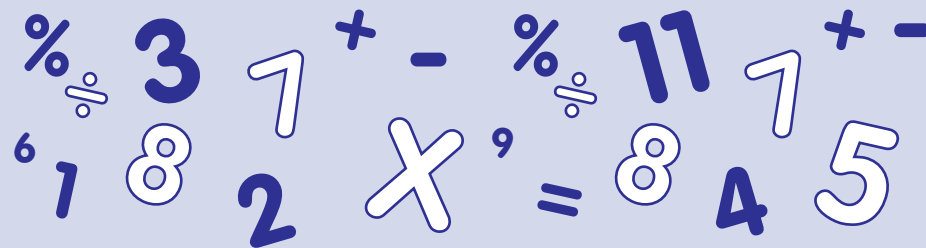
**Where:** Unity Business Centre,  
26 Roundhay Road, LS7 1AB

**When:** Monday **10:00 - 12:00**  
Wednesday **14:00 - 16:00**

## Are you interested in having use of an iPad at home?

Unity have teamed up with Leeds Lending Library and can offer to our tenants "iPads on LOAN" - We will be operating a waiting list in **2019** so please get your name down.

If you would like to take home an iPad to practice your digital skills, please contact a member of our team (see bottom of page).



**New course coming soon!**

## Are you or any of your family members wanting to brush up your skills in Maths?

Unity's Employment Service will be running a Maths class every Friday afternoon from **January 2019**.

For more details please get in touch (see the details at the bottom of the page).



**For more details, contact a member of our Employment Services Team**

**Noma Moyo**

**Employment Outreach Officer**

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# Meet our new Board members!

## We've made some new appointments

**Unity Homes and Enterprise has appointed seven new board members following a competitive process.**

### Elizabeth Cook

Elizabeth has substantial experience of the housing sector at senior officer and board level, working for local councils and several housing associations with responsibility for housing services.

### David Richmond

Most of David's working career has been spent within a local authority. He has had extensive experience of partnership working with a 'hands on' work ethic.

### Kalsoom Iqbal

Kalsoom's career has mainly been in the housing and care environment. She has experience at all levels, currently quality assurance and contracts.

### Abdul Rashid

Abdul is a qualified accountant, who has worked in a variety of roles within commercial and public sectors.

### Abdul Hamied

Abdul's background is primarily within the NHS, although he has also been involved at other housing associations at board level.

### Nahim Ruhi-Khan

Working for Leeds City Council, Nahim has gained significant experience at a senior management level in a number of different roles, including operations, repairs and property management.

### Andrew Welsh

Andrew's main area of expertise comes from many years working within the education sector, working with governance, HR and corporate services roles.

## Tenants' Group and Scrutiny Panel enjoy Christmas party

Involved tenants from our Tenants' Group and the Scrutiny Panel got into the Christmas spirit at this year's xmas party.

This year the Tenants' Group conducted a 'mystery shopping' exercise of Unity's customer services, met with new repairs and maintenance contractor, GTD, and have worked closely with our senior management team to give key feedback on a variety of topics. Two involved tenants were actually involved in the selection of our new repairs contractor, and had an input on the final decision.



Our Scrutiny Panel have also been busy. Not only have they monitored Unity's quarterly performance, they investigated our approach to anti-social behaviour. This involved interviewing members of staff involved in the service and making recommendations which have since been actioned by our Housing Manager.

**Congratulations and thank you to all tenants who have been involved with Unity over the past year.**

# Unity recognises First World War Anniversary at 31st AGM

In September, Unity was joined by some very special guests as we hosted our 31st AGM. This year's Unity Annual Report had a First World War theme, in recognition of the Armistice centenary and in tribute to the vital contribution of BME Commonwealth soldiers in that conflict and since.

Opening the meeting at The Sheepscar function rooms in Chapeltown, Unity Chair Shruti Bhargava said it was important that the association continued its "social purpose," which she defined as, "our commitment to improving lives in areas with high BME populations and turning them into vibrant multi-cultural neighbourhoods."



Ali Akbor, who has led Unity for almost two decades, told its Annual General meeting, "Unity is proud to be a forward-thinking, outward-looking organisation that is driven by a collective determination to deliver for the communities we serve. We have a housing crisis in this country, which the Government freely acknowledges must be tackled. As Chief Executive of Unity Homes and Enterprise, I will continue to reach out to ministers and anyone else in Whitehall who wants to work with us to build the homes we need to improve local people's lives."

Special guest speaker Colonel Karl Harris told the audience about the positive good work being done by the British Army's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network, which he chairs.

He said: "This is such an important year. The role that men and women of colour from all communities have played in the British Army for a hundred years and beyond is a story that isn't necessarily told as much as it might be."

And Lucy Moore, First World War Projects Curator at Leeds Museums and Galleries, gave a wide-ranging presentation on her research into the life of Bengali-born, First World War soldier, Jogendra Nath Sen.



Kala Sangam opened the event in style with a Bhangra performance

**Our 2017-18 Annual Report is available to download**

Our Annual Report is now available for download from our website:  
[unityha.co.uk/publications](http://unityha.co.uk/publications)



## Contacting Unity

**T:** 0113 200 7700

**E:** [uha@unityha.co.uk](mailto:uha@unityha.co.uk)

**W:** [www.unityha.co.uk](http://www.unityha.co.uk)

### Publications

You can access any of Unity's publications, including leaflets, newsletters and reports, for free on our website:

[www.unityha.co.uk/publications](http://www.unityha.co.uk/publications)

### Office Hours:

Monday: 9am - 5pm

Tuesday: 9am - 5pm

Wednesday: 10am - 5pm

Thursday: 9am - 5pm

Friday: 9am - 5pm

If you have an emergency repair when the office is shut, please ring our emergency repairs number (see below). If we have to change our emergency repairs number for any reason you can get the new one by phoning 0113 200 7700 and listening to the message.

**Emergency Repairs**  01942 845 343

e.g. serious floods and leaks, total loss of water and electricity, the only toilet is blocked.

**Emergency Gas Repairs**  01274 603 333

e.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unity's office is closed the next day.

**Transco (gas leaks)**  0800 111 999

**Repairs by email:** [repairs@unityha.co.uk](mailto:repairs@unityha.co.uk)

For information at your fingertips, visit our website at [www.unityha.co.uk](http://www.unityha.co.uk) for leaflets, latest news and community information.


For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact **Karan Pugal** on **0113 200 7751** or email [Karan.Pugal@unityha.co.uk](mailto:Karan.Pugal@unityha.co.uk)

## Leeds City Council Services

### Adult Social Care

 0113 222 4401

### Anti-Social Behaviour

 0113 222 4402

 [onestop@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:onestop@leeds.gov.uk)

### Children Social Care

 0113 222 4403

### Council tax and housing benefit

 0113 222 4404

 [lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk)

### Complaints and compliments

 0113 222 4405

### Environmental health

Contact the Council's environmental services to get bulky items taken away for free.

 0113 222 4406

 [refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk)

### Roads and pavements

 0113 222 4407

 [highways@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:highways@leeds.gov.uk)

### Registrars

 0113 222 4408

### Planning

 0113 222 4409

### Minicom

 0113 222 4410

## Problems understanding?

If you need any of our information translating or if you need an interpreter, please contact us. We can also provide this information in large print or on CD if you need us to.



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