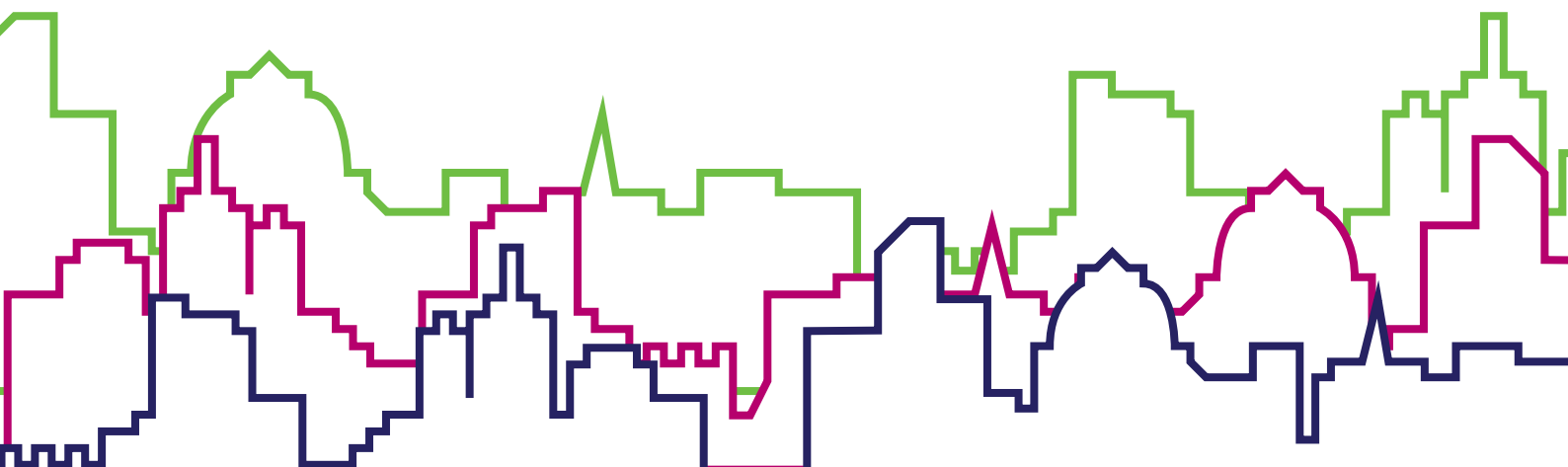




## Employment Services Strategy 2015

Unity recognises the need to support our tenants and the residents in the neighbourhoods in which we work by providing employment and training services.



# Background & Introduction

## Rationale

Unity continues to recognise the need to support our tenants, and the residents in the neighbourhoods in which we work by providing employment and training services. Unity Employment Services Team aim to support tenants back into employment.

Helping to equip customers with the tools required to find employment increases the likelihood of them meeting their tenancy obligations, ultimately ensuring their rent is paid, and on time.

Unity Employment Services Team has worked hard to establish contacts within the local training and employment sector so that our customers have a variety of services they can access depending on their individual requirements.

## Identifying the need for Employment Services

The previous Tenants Into Work (TIW) project discovered there was a need to assist people that were furthest from the labour market. The Employment Services Team want to offer each customer the support they need to find employment, however due to their personal circumstances, individuals may also need additional support. The one to one sessions are a vital tool in identifying all barriers to accessing potential employment or training opportunities and can often be a good platform to signpost to other Unity Services. To assist the long term unemployed return to work, and stay in work, it is vital to help address all the potential barriers they may face as they have a huge effect on employability and their ability to remain in post.

Over the last 4 years the Employment Services Team has helped over 400 people into work or training placements. The Employment Services team will build on previous outcomes.

	Prior to 2012 (TIW outputs)	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total
<b>Employment</b>	38	35	44	60	177
<b>Training</b>	69	36	45	61	211
<b>Voluntary work</b>	2	14	12	20	48

## Potential Barriers

When tenants meet the Employment Services Team they normally have, but not limited to, one or more of the barriers listed below:

- Lack of experience
- Lack of confidence
- No recognised qualifications
- Out of date qualifications due to regulatory changes
- Limited employment history
- Returning to work after a career break
- Criminal record conviction spent or unspent
- Long term health problems
- No knowledge of benefits
- English as a second language
- Difficulties reading and writing
- Fleeing domestic situations
- Benefits sanctioned
- Severe debts
- Economically inactive
- Having unrealistic expectations

Each person that the team meets has an individual reason for unemployment. It is part of the Team's scope of services to ensure that each customer develops an individual plan tailored to meet their specific needs. Their journey will be tracked on through a new grading process (ladder of change model) based on the customers 'job readiness' and positioning from the job market at any given time.

The Employment Services Team has worked with customers that are suffering from mental health problems with depression being the most common. The team work with support agencies that can provide the medical and counselling needs that help our customers move past these issues or deal with the issues in a more positive way. This aids the customer to re-address priorities and engage better within the labour market.

## The impact of unemployment on tenants

Recent changes in Government Policy will impact our customers. The introduction of household benefit caps and changes to

Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) to Employment Support Allowance (ESA) will encourage more people to seek employment.

There are planned changes for the National Minimum wage affecting those under the age of 25 which will come into effect from October 2015. Budget announcements relating to a new compulsory living wage will assist those aged 25+ in employment, increasing the hourly rate to £7.20 from April 2016 up to £9 an hour by 2020. It will give a pay rise to six million workers however it is expected to cost 60,000 jobs and reduce hours worked by four million a week, according to the Office for Budget Responsibility.\*

As job opportunities will become more scarce, we will have to work more closely with our customers to help eliminate their barriers to work and ensure they are able to compete in a more competitive market.

## Objectives of the Employment Services Strategy

Unity's primary objective for Employment Services is to 'work with partners to encourage and support the regeneration of our target neighbourhoods'. The Priority for the Team is to 'Deliver services aimed at securing training and employment for our tenants and families'. The aims of Employment Services are:

- Assist our tenants finding employment and training opportunities and to maintain their roles
- Minimise tenancy failure and arrears
- Develop and review robust policies and procedures to reflect the professional services being offered by the team
- Develop and maintain the network of agencies, advisors, and service providers to maximise the effectiveness of signposting
- Maximise the potential for working in partnerships to deliver projects
- Give confidence and motivation to customer to seek and maintain employment.

The Employment Services team will assist the delivery of Unity's Business Plan 2015/2016 Objectives. The team will work closely with other departments to meet the targets set in the service delivery plan.

The Objectives and priorities that The Employment Services team will contribute towards are:

Objective	Priority
<b>Objective 1</b> – Provide and continue to develop high quality mixed tenure housing which reflects needs and aspirations.	Work with partners and introduce revised programmes aimed at understanding the wider needs and aspirations of the communities in the neighbourhoods within which we work
<b>Objective 2</b> – Provide high quality affordable housing services	Review our role in providing Housing Plus services and supplement our core housing services
<b>Objective 3</b> – Involve and work with our tenants and the communities we serve to inform and improve services	Encourage and participate in neighbourhood regeneration initiatives relevant to our existing tenants and to areas in which we carry out new development
<b>Objective 4</b> – Work with partners to encourage and support the regeneration of our target neighbourhoods.	Deliver services aimed at securing training and employment for our tenants and families.  Engage with our partners and local communities to review and update our understanding of the current and future needs of local people living within our target neighbourhoods in order to inform our
<b>Objective 6</b> - Be a progressive and expanding business with a sound resource base	Continue to improve our management and staff development programmes and comply with relevant performance standards e.g. IIP, CSE

## The Strategy

The Association aims to achieve these objectives through the following areas:

- Establish and maintain professional working Employment Services practices at Unity.
  - Undertake an initial assessment with all referred customers. This will establish the customers' goals and the next steps. This is also the first opportunity to make referrals to relevant programmes / organisations for their needs.
  - Signpost customers where services can not be offered in house.
  - Regular progress meetings with customers to assess progress against goals set and tailor services to their requirements e.g. application forms, CV's, interview preparation, review training, I.T. support, advice and general guidance.
  - Review and monitor employment and training opportunities, disseminating information to customers, partners and other agencies.
  - Maintain and review all project data enabling clear reporting mechanisms and auditable delivery targets.
  - Community engagement activities
  - Promote the services provided by the Employment Services Team through an effective marketing strategy
- Establish and maintain working partnerships with other agencies and employment service providers to provide easily accessible facilities and to increase tenant uptake.
  - Delivery of training programmes.
  - Promote good practice through partnership and joint working.
- Training staff and partner organisations to be aware of the services the Employment Team can offer.

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- Liaise with benefits services, to maintain a fluid transition through welfare reform, to keep tenants informed.
- Work with customers to promote the resources available to them. In addition to promoting and increasing the uptake of other relevant tenants services.
- Keep all staff, particularly front line staff aware of up to date Employment Services Procedures, changes in partnership services etc.
- The strategy will be up to date, innovative and practical to meet the needs of the Association's tenants and local communities.

This strategy forms the basis of Employment Services Policy. Specific procedures will be developed as the service expands.

## Delivery

The Employment Services Team will continue to work from Unity's main offices; however 'The Hub' at Unity Business Centre has been established and will be the base for delivery of training courses and outreach programme. The Hub will be developed to provide a local resource base and 'job club' activities.

Programmed courses and employability workshops will be run from the Hub as well as drop in sessions and one to one support.

Those who participate in activities at the Hub will:

- Develop job-seeking skills
  - Preparation of curriculum vitae and covering letters  
How to complete application forms, with emphasis on person specification criteria
  - Preparation for and attending interviews
  - Use of telephone job seeking
  - How to access different job sites and complete on line applications

- Have access to the internet
- Have the opportunity to explore local work opportunities
- Develop their own strengths and skills and match them to local work opportunities
- Develop a network of contacts which can actively assist them in obtaining work/training

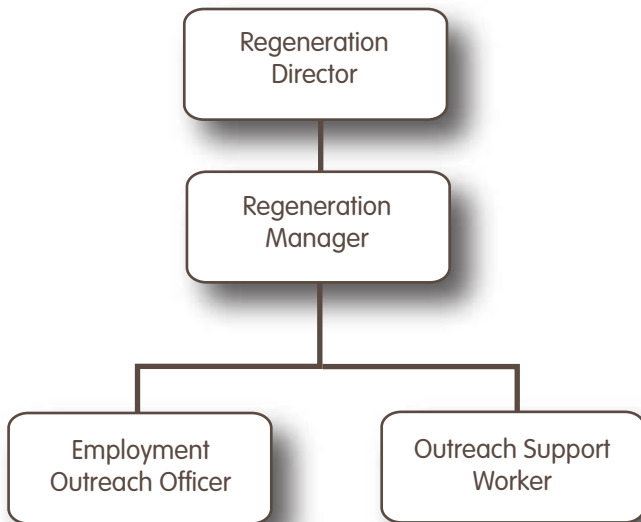
It is intended that the Hub be locally renowned and be used by our partners or other agencies to provide a wider range of employment services.

## Whole organisation strategic approach

The Employment Services Strategy and Action Plan are written to complement existing strategies and policies.

## Team Structure & Monitoring

The Employment Services Team sits within Unity's Regeneration Department. The reporting structure for the Team is as follows:



Referral to and uptake of the services provided, will be monitored by the Employment Outreach Officer and Outreach Support Worker. Effective performance measurements will include numbers of people into training, employment and voluntary work and tenant satisfaction.

Partnership work with other agencies will be monitored to measure the effectiveness of the services and identify areas of best practice.

Customer progress will be tracked (through the ladder of change model) and Officer's caseloads will be monitored through the use of ICT and bespoke database. The database will help capture the needs and aspirations of the customers, which in turn will help to coordinate direct marketing campaigns for specific opportunities, as they arise.

## Performance Targets

The following table illustrates how performance will be measured in 2015/2016:

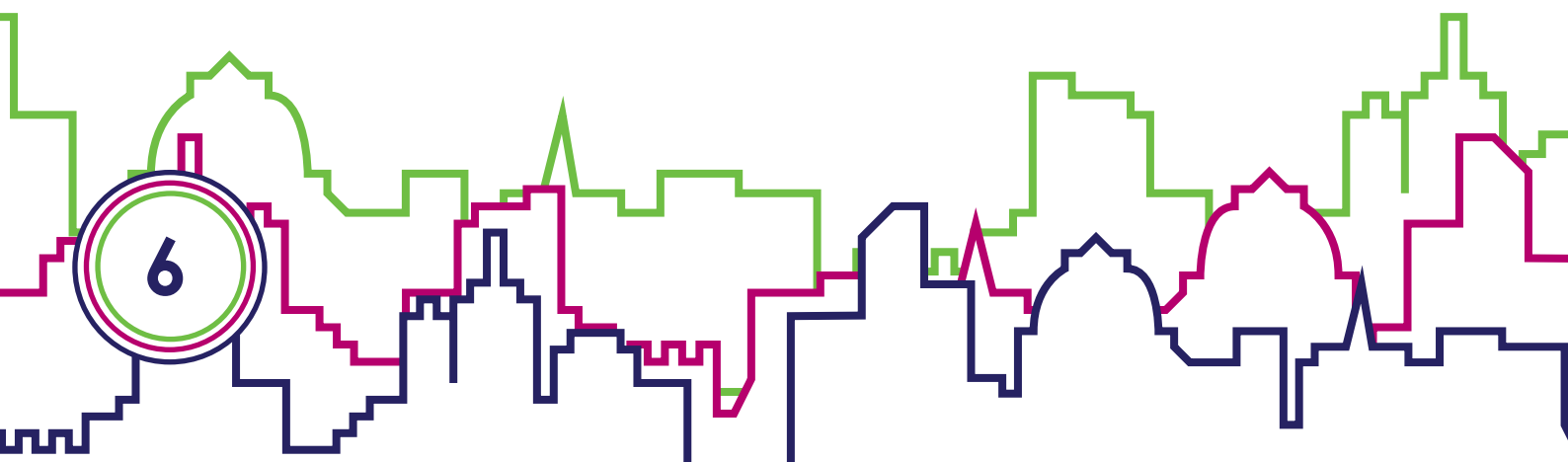
Performance	How and when measured
Annual target of 70 customers accessing employment	Measured & reported fortnightly at SMT, monthly at team meetings, Quarterly at Operations committee / Board
Achieve an annual target of 100 customers accessing training courses	Measured & reported fortnightly at SMT, monthly at team meetings, Quarterly at Operations committee / Board level
Organise 25 work / voluntary placements per annum	Measured & reported fortnightly at SMT, monthly at team meetings, Quarterly at Operations committee / Board level
Tenant satisfaction	Satisfaction survey taken at completion of initial assessment and at end of casework involvement

Indirect results of uptake shall also be monitored; such as referral rates and placements/employment secured by third party organisations.



# Employment Services Action Plan 2015/16

Strategic Aim	Activity	Link to Business Plan Objective	Resources/cost	Target Completion Date	Date Achieved	Commentary of progress
1. Establish and maintain professional working practices	Develop departmental specific procedures.	Objective 6	Staff time	Sep 2015		To obtain working library of policies, procedures and processes for Employment Services.
	Regular review and audit of implemented policies and procedures.	Objective 6		Annually		Audit programme will be developed.
	Share best practice with partner organisations.	Objective 6		Ongoing		Regular attendance at update and community meetings to help benchmark our services.
	Develop and maintain network of agencies and other organisations.	Objective 6		Ongoing		Develop network to assist signposting.
	Identify potential gaps in external service provisions and develop spin off projects to meet demand e.g. format of digital inclusion and funding opportunities.	Objective 3		Ongoing		Deliver range of in house workshops to meet customer demand. Work closely with partner organisations to provide other training and learning opportunities e.g. GOALS with Leeds Federated.
2. Establish and maintain working partnerships	Maintain existing partnerships / relationships e.g. Connect & Leeds Fed.	Objectives 2 & 4		Ongoing		Regular review meetings and partner updates at Officer and Director levels.
	Mandela. Review working arrangements with UHURA project	Objective 4		Ongoing		Awaiting results of UHURA project review – once complete this will feed into the SLA and shape a future working relationship.
	Establish community links with local education providers to assist careers advice and support their families back into work.	Objective 4		Ongoing		Create stronger links at grass root level and find path for engagement with hard to reach families.
	Review wider community engagement activities and develop long term strategy.	Objectives 1 & 6		Mar 2016		Formulate a strategy to shape future service provision.



Strategic Aim	Activity	Link to Business Plan Objective	Resources/cost	Target Completion Date	Date Achieved	Commentary of progress
	Work on joint bids for funding of future projects.	Objectives 1 & 6		Ongoing		Identify and obtain external sources of funding as and when spin off projects are developed.
	Continue to attend worklessness strategy groups and evaluate Unity's and the Hubs role in the future.	Objectives 1 & 6		Oct 2015		To help develop the Hub as a community recourse base.
3. Promotion and effective marketing strategy	Develop and implement calendar of events for regular workshops and drop in sessions at the Hub.	Objective 4		Annually		Implement a programme of regular activities to strengthen the Hub's presence and our service provision.
	Review of previous marketing exercises to determine new strategy for moving forward.	Objective 1		Ongoing		Communication methods to be reviewed to achieve best dissemination for the target audience.
	Set up and review data collection and update processes to assist reporting mechanisms e.g. database and text modules within IBS.	Objective 6		July 2015		Database will be used to capture initial survey information, produce snapshot reports and track /monitors customer progress.
	Represent Unity and promote all services at marketing events such as open days, fairs, partnership events etc.	Objectives 3 & 4		Ongoing		Regular attendance at annual galas, community events and partner organisations.
4. Training (Delivery of)	Digital inclusion. Continue to support existing training opportunities, make referrals and fulfil course delivery. Review delivery mechanisms and establish new projects as and when required.	Objectives 1 & 4		Ongoing		Developed the 'Digital inclusion workshops from the Hub. Identified need for intermediate level digital inclusion course. To continue to review requirements and delivery methods for future projects.
	Interdepartmental working - delivery of in house training sessions.	Objectives 2 & 3		Ongoing		Regular attendance at team meetings, training sessions and circulation of newsletters / briefs.
	Review project teams skill set and develop in line with PDP's and Unity's Training Plan.	Objective 6	Possible external course costs, staff time out of office	Ongoing		Implementation of actions within PDP's, regular review of team targets within Team Meetings and one to ones.

Strategic Aim	Activity	Link to Business Plan Objective	Resources/cost	Target Completion Date	Date Achieved	Commentary of progress
5. Targets	Establish reporting mechanisms for qualifying the teams' achievements.	Objective 6		May 2015	May 2015	Reports generated from database and revised statistics table produced for discussion at Team meetings and for information at SMT/Operations Committee meeting.
	Review satisfaction card and implement.	Objectives 1 & 3		Dec 2015		Satisfaction cards produced to gauge customer satisfaction after initial meeting and completion of service.

\*Source: adapted from [BBC.co.uk/news/business-33463231](http://BBC.co.uk/news/business-33463231) and NHF Briefing: Summer Budget 2015

