

# Unity News

Summer 2017

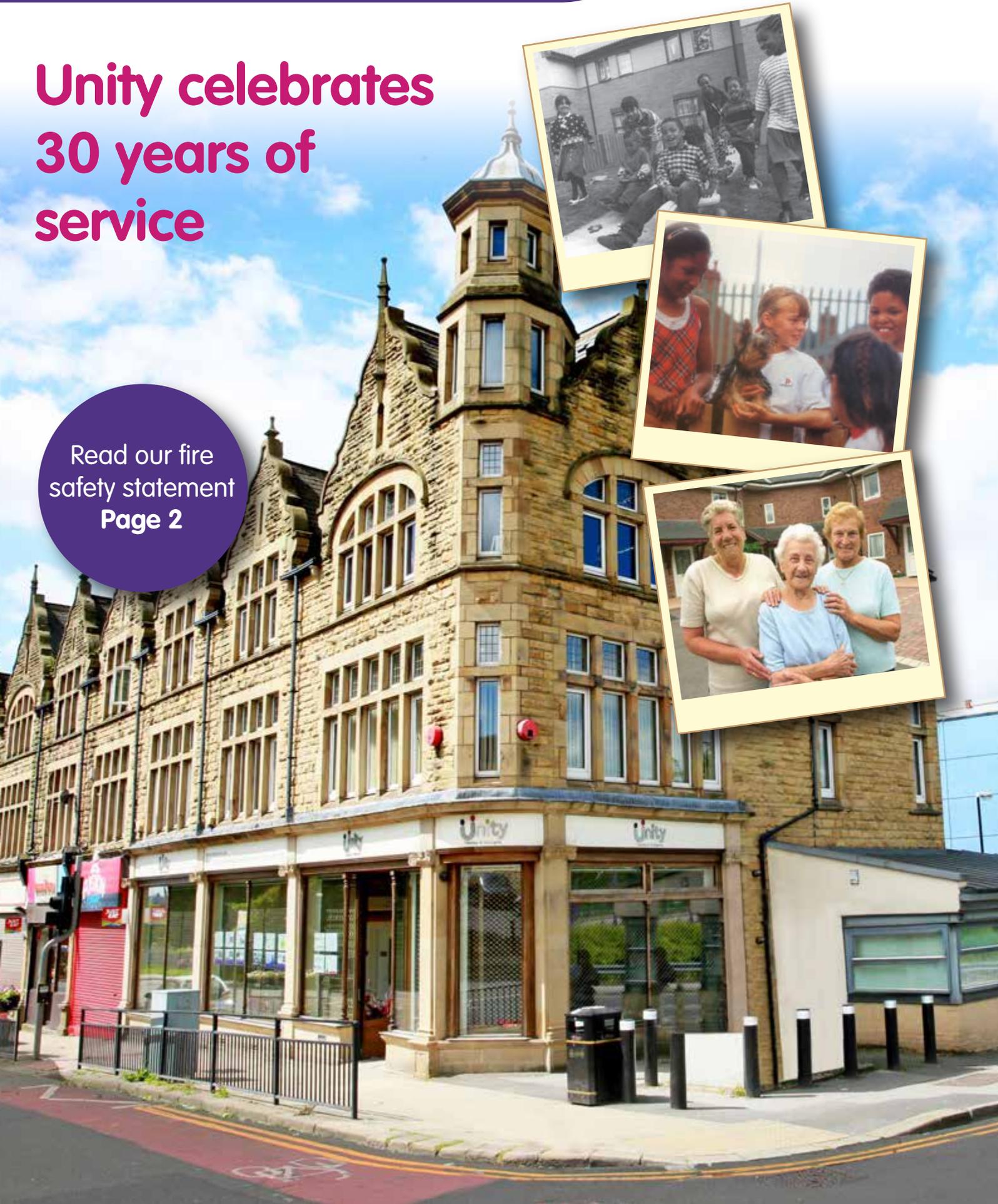


Homes & Enterprise

Supporting BME Communities  
and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

## Unity celebrates 30 years of service

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## Our Fire Safety Statement

Dear residents,

Following the terrible tragedy in North Kensington, I thought it would be useful to remind tenants of some key issues in regards to fire safety.

- Ensure that you are aware of fire procedures, including knowledge of all fire escapes
- That you have an escape plan, whether you are in a flat or a house
- We would advise residents, where possible, to get out and stay out. Dial 999 and ask for the fire brigade.
- Residents are advised to check there are no combustible materials (such as paint) either in the property or communal areas
- Communal areas must be kept clear at all times
- Residents should regularly check their smoke alarms to ensure they are in working order

Should you have any concerns about fire safety, please contact us:



0113 200 7700



uha@unityha.co.uk

Parveen Sidhu, Deputy CEO/ Operations Director

## Unite with Unity

Join Unity's Scrutiny Panel and shape the services that we provide

**Do you want to challenge and influence how Unity's housing services are influenced?**

Unity always tries to provide the best possible service to our tenants. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel is a group of tenants that meet to review and discuss the services which Unity provides.

### How many meetings will I have to attend?

The panel will be expected to attend four meetings per year on a quarterly basis

### When will the meetings take place?

The meetings will be held on Wednesday evenings at 5.30pm at Unity's main office. We will pay for your expenses so that you will not be out of pocket. The first meeting will be on **Wednesday 23rd August** at 5.30pm.



if you would like to join the Scrutiny Panel, or would like some more information, please contact **Resident Involvement Officer Nathan**



0113 200 7751



nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk

## Contents Insurance

It is a good idea to take out home contents insurance to cover your possessions against fire, theft and other risks, such as accidental damage. If something happens to destroy or damage your possessions, it can cost a lot of money to replace them items, some of which may be essential.

### What is contents insurance?

What would you do if you lost everything in your home? Buying everything again would cost a fortune so contents insurance is vital if you're going to cover yourself for unexpected events like a burglary or a fire.

### What does contents insurance cover?

All your personal belongings – in other words anything not physically attached to the building – will usually be covered for loss or damage.

This generally includes:

- Clothing
- Furniture
- Jewellery
- Electrical goods

Different policies offer different levels of cover but generally you'll be covered against theft, fire and flood.

'Accidental damage cover' is usually optional so don't assume it's included in your policy. 'Personal possessions cover' is also an optional extra.

This will cover items you take outside your home, including:

- Laptops
- Cameras
- Jewellery
- Mobile phones

### Am I covered by Unity?

As stated in your tenancy agreement, your contents are not insured by Unity. We will keep the property fully insured against loss or damage by fire and other risks covered by a normal buildings

insurance policy. If there is any structural damage to the property, we may use the insurance money to repair the damage.

But that does not include you're personal belongings. It says in your tenancy agreement:

'You should arrange suitable householders' comprehensive insurance cover to protect your belongings and to cover accidental damage to the property.'

### How can Unity help?

Unity Housing Association can help our tenants and residents obtain home contents insurance easily and at a price that is affordable with a special scheme called 'My Home'.

'My Home' offers you an affordable insurance policy where premiums can be paid fortnightly, or monthly by cash or card as well as by direct debit. Other benefits include:

- Pay as you go: fortnightly or monthly by cash, monthly direct debit or annually.
- No standard cover excess
- No minimum home security requirements
- Optional extensions available for additional premium



 **0845 337 2643** or

 **01628 586 189** (if calling from a mobile)

If you come into the office, our customer services team can help you.



# Unity in the Community

## See what Unity staff have been up to

### Easter activities on our estates

We often receive feedback from tenants requesting for more activities to be done on the estates with young people during the school holidays. During the Easter break we visited some of our estates and did activities with the children. All children on the estate and surrounding areas were invited to get involved in some arts and crafts activities, followed by an Easter Egg hunt. We are aiming to visit more estates during the summer.

If you think you have some ideas about how we can engage with tenants, or would like us to do activities in your area, contact **Nathan** on **0113 200 7751** or email [nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk](mailto:nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk)

Some of our tenants having fun getting creative!



### Summer festivals

One way that we try to assist the communities we serve is by attending and supporting local festivals so that we can give advice on welfare, employment and housing. This year we have already attended **Holbeck Gala** on **1st July** and we will be at the **Beeston Festival** on **15th July**. The festivals act as a perfect opportunity for communities to come together and learn about the opportunities available to them.

### Unity celebrates 30th Anniversary



# Customer Services Update

## A few important messages from the staff

### IMPORTANT MESSAGE - Behaviour towards staff

We understand that people sometimes feel unhappy or frustrated about the service they have received or the way they have been treated. We encourage anyone who is not happy to make a complaint, as this helps us in the future to improve our services. Please ask us for a copy of our complaints procedure if you need one.

We will not, under any circumstances, tolerate threats (either verbal or implied), violence or abuse directed at members of staff, contractors,

visitors, other tenants or any other person acting on Unity's behalf. If this happens, we may call the police or take legal action. This may result in eviction or prevent someone from entering any offices, properties or schemes owned by Unity.

This is a serious breach of your tenancy. As a tenant, you are responsible for the conduct of your visitors.

### Who is responsible for repairs?

When you move into one of our properties, it isn't just Unity's property - it's your home. There are some things that we expect you to do yourself, and we expect that you will want to change some things to make it your own.

The **'Tenant's Handbook'** tells you what you and Unity Housing must do to keep your home in a good condition. We also have a 'Repairs Responsibility' leaflet that will provide a summary of these responsibilities. All of our leaflets can be found at [unityha.co.uk/publications/leaflets](http://unityha.co.uk/publications/leaflets) if you have any questions we will be happy to help just give us a call on **0113 200 7700**.

As a tenant, you are responsible for the following:

- Repairs to your own fixtures and fittings (curtain rails, cookers, etc)
- Replacing light bulbs and fluorescent tubes
- Internal decorations
- Anything that belongs to you
- Dealing with pest problems
- Keeping your home clean
- Keeping sinks and drains unblocked
- Replacing broken toilet seats
- Any repairs to the property that have been caused by wilful damage, negligence or misuse either by you, your family or your

visitors. Unity will expect you to cover the costs of these repairs.

### Looking after your garden

As detailed in the tenancy agreement, it is tenant's responsibility to look after their gardens and make sure that they are well maintained. If you don't look after your garden then we can take action. Housing Officers and members of the Tenant Panel regularly attend estates to make sure that they are kept at a suitable standard, as well as dealing with any issues.

It's important you keep your garden tidy, cutting grass or hedges and removing litter. Any trees in your garden are your responsibility, so that would mean pruning or clipping. If you would like to be a part of the estate walkabouts and influence estate welfare, call **Nathan** on **0113 200 7751**.

#### Affordable gardening services:

 Adam from Urban Earth

on **0113 293 7061** or **07950680995**

or email [adamtaras@hotmail.com](mailto:adamtaras@hotmail.com)

for Harehills, Burmantofts  
and surrounding areas:

 Mick

on **07940019255**

Approved by  
Unity staff and  
residents

# Be respectful to your community

## Don't let anti-social behaviour ruin your summer

With warmer weather and longer days there are more people out and about, gathering together outside and in their homes. We appreciate that the summer months allow for more sociable activities however we would also like to remind tenants to be respectful of your neighbours. Each year there is a rise in anti-social behaviour during summer and this is unacceptable. It is important to be considerate of others when you enjoy spending time with your friends and family.

### Good Neighbour Agreement

As part of our fight against anti-social behaviour we ensure all new tenants sign our 'Good Neighbour Agreement,' which is an agreement between us (Unity Housing Association) and you (the tenant) that outlines what we believe to be acceptable behaviour. The goal of the good neighbour agreement is to promote community based on mutual respect on any of our schemes or estates.



#### Noise and Nuisance

Respect the peace and quiet of your neighbours at all times. Understand that this does mean keeping noise and music to a minimum.



#### Cleanliness

Keep your garden, driveway and pavement outside your property clean, tidy and litter free.

Dispose of your rubbish by placing it in your designated bin and bagged up securely. All large items can be collected through the bulk refuse department from the council.

Don't allow your children or any visitors to your home to deliberately litter.



#### Parking

Only park in your designated area, or directly outside your own home whenever possible. Always drive with due care and attention.



#### Children

Ensure that your children's behaviour will not be a nuisance to other residents, or allow them to play outside on the estate very late at night.

Be responsible for your children's behaviour and any other child who visits your home.

Encourage your children to play in an area that will not cause a nuisance to your neighbours.



#### Good Neighbour

Try to get to know your neighbours and try to support them whenever they need your help.

If disputes arise between you then you need to talk to your neighbour about the problem first, if possible.

Ensure that your children are made aware of the commitment you are giving in promoting a better environment for everyone to live in.

## What can I do?

If your issue is not a serious ASB complaint (i.e. criminal activity, violent attack, drugs, etc), but is something you feel is a minor complaint (i.e. neighbours dog fouling in your garden or noisy neighbours) you could try talking to the person about the problem. If you decide to do this, we advise you to:

- Try talk to them when you're not angry or upset
- Be polite and friendly but firm
- Explain what the nuisance is and how it is affecting you
- Keep it short and keep to the facts
- Listen to their response

## How to report 'ASB'

- Call into our office
- Phone us on 0113 200 7700
- Email us at [uha@unityha.co.uk](mailto:uha@unityha.co.uk)
- Write to us at: Unity Housing Association, 113-117 Chapeltown Road, Leeds, LS7 3HY

If you think you might be in danger, don't call us first - call the police on 101 or dial 999 for an emergency.

## Ball games - what is the current legislation? Play fair, and don't fall foul of the law!

As the nice weather is coming, Housing Officers would like to inform residents about the new legislation regarding ball games on our estates.

### Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014

As well as taking action against you for a breach of tenancy, Unity as a social landlord has been given powers to apply for injunctions to prevent individuals from causing a nuisance and annoyance. This power includes action against any young person over the age of 10 years old.

We do not want to have to seek an injunction order against a young person, which is why we are asking all parents to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children.

We would ask that you to take seriously the '**No Ball Games**' signs and ensure that your children are not playing on the estate in such a way that results in a nuisance or annoyance to others.

To check when your estate is due a visit from your Housing Officer, please check [unityha.co.uk](http://unityha.co.uk).

We don't want to stop your children having fun over the holidays ...

So please take all ball games into a park or green area.



# recycle for Leeds

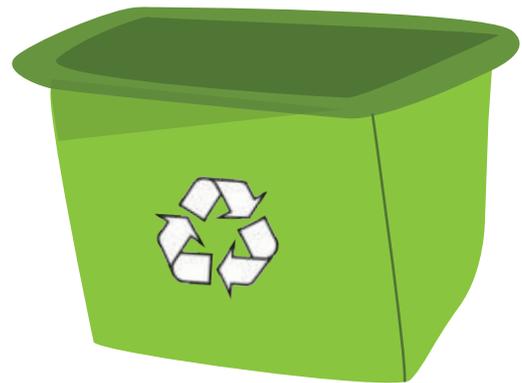
## A 'what goes where' guide

Keep on top of your waste during the summer months by recycling properly. Here is a basic guide to help you if you're unsure which items belong in each bin. If you have any further queries visit [www.recyclenow.com](http://www.recyclenow.com).

## Green Bin

### What can I recycle?

- ✓ **Paper** - junk mail, office paper, newspapers, magazines, telephone directories, paperback books
- ✓ **Cardboard** - brown card, glossy printed card, egg boxes, inner tubes from toilet and kitchen rolls
- ✓ **Metal Cans** - drink cans, food cans, pet food cans - all must be rinsed
- ✓ **Aluminium aerosols (should be empty)** - deodorant, cleaning products, hair products
- ✓ **Foil** - food containers, take away trays, soft foil (should be clean and crunched up)
- ✓ **Plastics** - types 1 (PET/PETE), 2 (HDPE/PE-HD) and 4 (LDPE/PE-LD) these numbers can be found in a triangle on many plastic items. See the image on this page. Examples of items include plastic bags, plastic food containers and see-through plastic milk containers with lids removed.



### Recycling Opt-in Scheme

In some areas of Leeds, there are issues of people using green bins for general waste when they should only be used for recycling. Putting general waste in the green bin can contaminate a load of recycling which is costly to sort and dispose of and spoils the hard work of other committed recyclers.

If you live in **Headingley** or **Harehills** area you may have to opt in for recycling. If you live in an opt-in area and want to receive recycling collections, please email [refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk).

### Do you need a new bin?

Due to a reduction in central government funding, the council can no longer afford to provide new or replacement bins so there is a contribution charge of £15.40 towards the cost of the new bin for black and brown bins. Green bins are still provided free of charge.

This does relate to supplying new or replacing bins at a property, so a tenant would have to pay.

### Communal areas

If you put food waste in your communal green bin the whole skip becomes contaminated and will end up in landfill which is not fair on your neighbours who have taken the time to sort their waste correctly!

### Wash and squash

All drinks cans, plastic bottles and food cans should be washed out before placing in green bins/bags to avoid contamination. Squashing them will give you extra space in your bin.

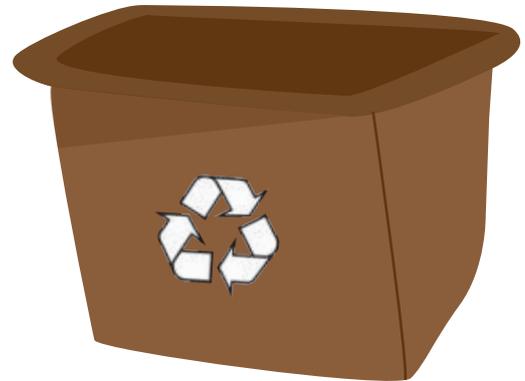
# Garden Waste Bin

If you have a brown (garden waste) bin, the service runs from March to November with collections taking place every fortnight. If you do not have a brown bin it is likely that the service does not run in your area. You will be unable to request a brown bin and will need to take your waste to one of the recycling sites. If you are unable to take your garden waste to a recycling site then you can request a garden waste collection. There may be a cost so it is worth checking with the council.

## What can I recycle?

- Flowers and plants
- Grass cuttings
- Hedge clippings
- Leaves
- Twigs and small branches (not more than 3 cm thick)
- Windfall fruit
- Weeds

**Please put these into your bin loose and do not use any plastic bags.**



## Additional brown bins

You cannot have an additional brown bin and you should only have one if you are on a brown bin route. To find out if you are on a brown bin route use the 'check your bin day' on the Leeds City Council website. If no date appears for brown bin collection then you are not on a brown bin route.

## Missed bin collection

If your bin was not collected and it has been two days since the expected collection date, you can report a missed bin collection.

# Glass Recycling

Unfortunately, the amount of money needed to change collection vehicles and routes, provide bins or boxes, and other associated costs is not available. In the meantime, all your glass – from wine and beer bottles to baby food and sauce jars – can still be recycled at one of over 700 glass recycling sites across the city. Just give your jars a quick rinse first, and you can even leave the caps

or lids on, as these will get recycled too. If you're having trouble finding your closest bottle bank, visit <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/residents/> for more information

Glass is 100% recyclable.  
Glass in your household bin is not.



Visit your nearest bottle bank, it's closer than you think



**Actual  
Unity bin  
areas!**

## Keep your bins area tidy

If you need to get rid of bulky waste – don't dump it in your communal bin area and expect someone else to deal with it!

Messy bin areas not only look horrendous, but they can lead to unpleasant smells and pest problems.

Leeds City Council provides up to four bulky waste collections, each of up to three items a year, and it's **FREE**. Give them a call on **0113 222 4406**.

# Housing Benefit

## Keep us informed - we can help!

### Make sure you tell us of any changes to your circumstances as they could impact on your benefit

If you have a change in circumstances, for example you have found work and therefore receive a higher or lower income, it is important that you declare it to housing benefit straight away. If your circumstances change and the amount you receive in housing benefit should drop but you don't declare it, you could end up paying up to **£24 a week** in repayments!

Examples of changes in circumstances that may affect your housing benefit claim include:

- a new job
- regular changes to self employed or zero hour contract earnings
- an increase in your wages
- your partner moves in with you
- a family member leaves home
- a family member starts work/claims benefit

If something changes to your circumstances and

you're unsure if it is going to affect your housing benefit, get in touch with our **Income Management Team** who can help.

### Are you going on holiday for over 4 weeks?

If you are planning to go away for over 4 weeks, you need to declare that to Housing Benefit. If you are going away from your home for up to 4 weeks, your benefit will continue as normal. If you are leaving for a period longer than 4 weeks, you will not receive any housing benefit for that entire period.

### Who to contact if you need help or advice regarding your benefits

**Clive** ☎ 0113 200 7753

**Sam** ☎ 0113 200 7737

**Matthew** ☎ 0113 200 7733

**Russell** ☎ 0113 200 7752

## Housing Advice Surgery

### Do you or someone you know need some free housing advice?

How do I apply for affordable housing in Leeds?

Am I eligible for a Unity home?

How do I find out my priority status?

Unity Housing is pleased to offer free housing advice to tenants, their families and the general public. If you have any queries about any of the following our Housing Team may be able to help you:

- Applying for a home
- The bidding process
- Mutual exchanges
- Obtaining priority
- Homelessness
- Hate crime

**Pop into our office between 2pm and 4pm on the first Wednesday of every month if you'd like to speak someone.**

## Connect with us on social media

Unity is keen to engage with residents via Facebook and Twitter so that we can keep you up to date with news and events. It's FREE for you and FREE for us too so everyone is a winner! Find Unity on Facebook for:

- Home maintenance tips
- Decorating/gardening tips
- Details of local/community events
- Details of properties for rent
- Details of properties for sale
- Advice on crime and anti-social behaviour
- Advice on budgeting and saving money
- Advice on employment
- Advice on how you can have your say

Our social media pages allow us to share important information quickly and effectively, and the service is free. It also allows us to respond to any queries quickly and can be passed onto the relevant member of staff so that they can help. If you have any comments or improvements regarding our social media pages then please let **Nathan** know: [nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk](mailto:nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk)



Search 'Unity Homes and Enterprise'



Search '@UnityHomes'

If you do not have a social media account or don't feel comfortable using computers, our Employment Services team run a free digital inclusion course that can help get you online, including social media. For more information, call **Noma** on **0113 200 7746**

## How to pay your rent

### Direct Debit

Unity recommends direct debit as the best way for you to pay your rent. The benefits of Direct Debit are that we do all the calculations and paperwork for you and the money comes out of your bank account regularly, even if the amount of rent you pay changes.



If you already have a bank account then give us a call, **0113 200 7700**, and we can set a direct debit up for you.

### Standing Order

If you have a bank account you can pay by standing order. Pick up a form at our office (address overleaf) or give us a call on **0113 200 7700** and we will send you a form. Payments will be made automatically from your bank account but if there is an increase in your rent you will need to tell your bank about the changes.

### Online Payments

If you have access to the Internet, go to [www.unityha.co.uk](http://www.unityha.co.uk) and click the link 'Pay Your Rent', which is at the top of every page, to pay your rent online.

### Allpay

Use your Allpay card to pay cash at your local Post Office or PayPoint outlet. If you would like an Allpay card, please contact us. We will send you one within 5 working days. You can also use your card to pay online at [www.allpay.net](http://www.allpay.net). Use <https://www.paypoint.com/en-gb/consumers/st-ore-locator> to find your nearest PayPoint.



### By Phone or Text

If you have a debit or credit card you can pay over the phone - call 0113 200 7700. You can also pay by text from your mobile. You'll need to register on the Allpay website. Visit <https://www.allpayments.net/textpay> to do this or we can help you to do this at our office

### Allpay iPhone/Android App

If you are signed up with Allpay, you can download the app for free from the **Apple App Store** and **Google Play**, so that you can pay your rent from your Smartphone.



### Pay at the Office

Pay with cash, cheque, debit or credit card at our office.

**If you need help with ways to pay rent, please contact Customer Services on 0113 200 7700 or email [customerservices@unityha.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@unityha.co.uk).**

## 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 Nathan Dale on

**0113 200 7751** or email

[nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk](mailto:nathan.dale@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.

