# Unity News Spring 2015



Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

# **Unity in Bloom** Gardening Competition Turn to page 8 for more info Keep the kids out of trouble this Easter! Turn to page 14 for more info

#### Welcome to Brown Lane East!

Tenants who will be moving into the new housing on and around Brown Lane East were welcomed to Holbeck at an event at Holbeck Working Men's Club in January.

Unity's latest development will provide homes for 42 families in total. Tenants moving into the rented properties were invited to attend a 'meet and greet' session so as they had the opportunity to get to know one another. It was also a chance for them to find out about some of the special features that their new homes have to offer.

Regeneration Director, Wayne Noteman, pointed out some of the features and benefits of the new houses and flats including extra large windows, high noise and warmth insulation. and larger room sizes than many private sector homes. Tenants who remain in their new homes until their later years will find that all of the properties can also be adapted, to some extent, to meet the needs of older people.

Tenants will also benefit from the fact that properties are up to 40% more energy efficient than typical properties of their type, meaning that their fuel bills could be significantly lower. (story continues overleaf).

Tenants moving into the new development will already have a connection to the local area. Perhaps they have family living in the area, their children attend a local school or they work in Holbeck.

Also at the event were local Councillors Adam Ogilvie, and Angela Gabriel. Adam welcomed tenants to Holbeck by saying

'We have been working with Unity and others to get this new housing and we are delighted that regeneration has started. This is a strong community you are moving into. Welcome to Holbeck'

Community members Dennis Kitchen and Ian Pickup introduced a number of local organisations including the club itself, Holbeck Gala and the Holbeck Neighbourhood Plan.

Holbeck in Bloom have planted a mass of bulbs on the side of Holbeck Moor facing the new housing which they hope will spur tenants to work on their gardens.

Those who attended the event were excited to be moving into their warm and spacious new homes: 'It's a new year and a new home' one of them said



opportunities!

#### Tenants attend course at Trafford Hall

Recently two tenants attended a residential training course entitled 'The Wider World; Pride Not Prejudice' at Trafford Hall, near Chester.

The course was aimed at challenging negative stereotypes about people living in social housing and promoting positive change in the communities. Both tenants said that they had enjoyed the course and found it interesting. They were keen to share their experience with other tenants upon their return.

Unity will be happy to consider paying for tenants to attend training courses like this (as well as their travel) if it is deemed relevant to their role as a Tenant Panel Member. This could really enhance your CV and improve your employment prospects and is just one of the benefits of joining the Panel.

It's been a good one. Really critical information.



# Contents



and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

## **Tenant Panel**



Find out what Unity's Tenant Panel has been up to in the past few months and how they have helped us to improve the services we offer.

### **Estate Walkabouts**

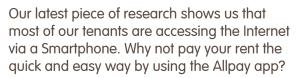


Find out when your Housing Officer will be in your area so that you can arrange to see them. Contact us beforehand if you'd like them to call in on you.

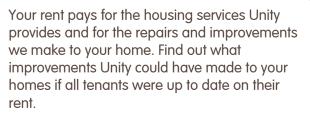
# **Universal Credit**

In the last newsletter, we told you that Universal Credit was coming to Leeds in February. We now know that it will be coming later in the year. Find out if you're affected and what you can do to prepare for the changes to your benefits.

# Introducing the Allpay App



#### **Rent Arrears**



#### Offer on Gas-Servicing for **Shared Owners**



Unity would like to include shared-owners in the gas-servicing contract. This could save you money and more importantly could save your life.

#### Page



# **Unity in Bloom**



Page

It is that time of year again! If you have an outdoor space in your property, why not enter our gardening competition? This article features top tips for creating a beautiful garden without breaking the bank and getting rid of pesky weeds!

### **Communications Survey**

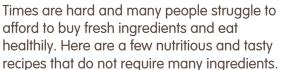
Many residents recently took part in a communications survey and expressed your preferences as to how you wish Unity to engage with you. Find out the latest innovations in our communication channels.

### **Finance to Grow Your Business**



Unityis Network business Advisor offers free advice for those in LS7 wishing to grow their business. This may include helping you to find funding. Find out if you are eligible and how to apply.

### **Cook's Corner**



#### **Fun-Filled Easter Holiday Activities**

Keep the kids out of trouble during the school holidays and enjoy an affordable family say out. Find out what's going on in Leeds this Easter and how to get there.

### **Useful Contacts**

How to get in touch with us if you need to report a repair and a list of useful contacts from Leeds City Council.







# **Tenant Panel**



#### December

In December the Tenant Panel met Financial Inclusion Officer, Clive, who was able to explain to them the ways in which Unity would be supporting tenants adjust to Univeral Credit. Tenants had the opportunity about to ask him how it would affect them personally.

#### What have they been up to? What were the outcomes?

Following his meeting with the Tenant Panel, Clive had the idea of running a 'Universal Credit Roadshow' in which he would visit tenants concerned about Universal Credit for an informal and friendly chat about what they could do to prepare.

#### January

In January the Tenant Panel examined Unity's performance in all areas, including arrears, voids, maintenance, complaints and anti-social behaviour in an exercise called a 'Scrutiny Review'.

The Tenant Panel were also invited to attend a 'Social Media Focus Group' in which they discussed what they thought about the newsletter and the other ways in which Unity communicates with residents. The Tenant Panel came up with some great recommendations about how we record and monitor cases of anti-social behaviour and better support victims.

The Tenant Panel suggested that future editions of the newsletter always included a 'contents page' so you residents can easily find the information they are looking for and a section for shared-owners. They also gave us guidance for engaging with tenants on Facebook and Twitter.

### Coming up...

The Tenant Panel will be the first tenants to find out what Unity plans to do in terms of community events and will help us to decide which estates will benefit the most from outreach exercises.

Some of the Tenant Panel will be visiting our empty properties with a view to approving our policies and procedures for bringing them back up to lettable standards and improving the advice we give to tenants ending their tenancies. The Tenant Panel is not just about attending meetings. We've got plenty more hand-on activities for you to get involved in as the weather gets warmer. Why not join our fun and friendly group! Call 0113 200 7751.





# **Estate Walkabouts**

Our Housing Officers check all our homes every three months. They'll be happy to call in at your home so that you can show them any problems in your area. Please call us to arrange a visit from your Housing Officer.

# Did you know?

If you're experiencing any neighbourhood problems you can pop into our Housing Surgery every Wednesday 10am - 12pm at Unity's office.

#### Rashpal



9th April	Little London: Devon Close, Leicester Close
14th April	Woodhouse & North Leeds: Cliff Terrace, Unity Close, Blackmoor Road , Fir Tree Approach
24th April	Meanwood: Stainbecks, Stonegates
1st May	Burmantofts and others: Haslewoods, Rigton Green, Leopold Street, Ashton Court
5th May	Chapeltown: Jackie Smart Court, Louis Street, Cowper Street, Dodgson Avenue, Frankland Place
14th May	Chapeltown: Harehills Avenue, Newton Grove, Pear Tree House, Windrush Court
2nd June	Chapeltown & Harehills: Spencer Place, Markham Avenue, Gathorne Terrace, Pasture Road,
4th June	Beeston: Harlech Park Court, Lodge Lane, Tempest Road/Place, Rigton Road, Beverleys, The Grange

# Kamila



12th March & 30th April	Harehills: Copgrove Road, Ryan Place, Upland Gardens, Fearnville Road, Montagu Avenue, Lawrence Gardens, Dorset Road, Ruthven View, Luxor Road, Cowper Grove	
19th March & 7th May	North Leeds: Scott Hall Green/Grove/Square, Fieldhouse Drive, Pennythorne Drive	
26th March &14th May	Harehills: Ponderosa Close, Hill Top Mount, Ellers, Alcester Terrace, Bayswaters, Bexleys, Elfords	
2nd April & 21 st May: Beeston: Parkwood Crescent		
9th April & 29th May	Hyde Park & Armley: Rosebank Crescent, Hessle Road, Royal Parks, Tagore House, Mitford Road, Model Avenue, School Mews, Wesley Road, Fielding Gate/Mews, Mistress Lane, Highfield Gardens, Reyden Mews	
23rd April & 12th June	Chapeltown: Sholebrokes, Mandela Court, Umoja House, Olrika Court, Chapeltown Road, Mexboroughs, Reginalds	
16th April & 4th june	Crossgates & Harehills: Thorn Drive, Briarsdale Mews/Garth, Kitchener Place/Street, Kimberley Place, Poole Crescent/Road, Maryfield Crescent, Thornfield Way	



# **Universal Credit**



#### When is Universal Credit coming?

In the last newsletter we told you that Universal Credit would be in Leeds by February. It has not arrived yet, but it is coming later this year.

The first people to be affected by Universal Credit will be new claimants for Jobseeker's Allowance.

If you are in and out of work and this means that you are sometimes claiming Jobseeker's Allowance, please contact us so that we can help you prepare for the changes. Our Financial Inclusion Officer Clive will invite you to our office for a friendly chat. He also offers home visits if that would suit you better.

Remember that Universal Credit will eventually replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit

# Call n We Cliv

#### Money worries?

Call me to arrange a friendly chat. We'll help you find a solution!

Clive, Financial Inclusion Officer

# allpay ••

# Introducing the Allpay App

### Allpay

You can use your **Allpay** card to pay at the Post Office or any 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** 



You can also pay by text from your mobile. You'll need to register on the Allpay website. Visit **www.allpayments.net/textpay** to do this.

# Pay your rent the quick and easy way

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.



# **Rent Arrears**



#### **Rent Arrears**

'Rent Arrears' is our way of saying you're behind or late with your rent payments and your account is not up to date. Unity Housing Association will always attempt to help you maintain your rent payments. However it's still your responsibility to make sure your rent is paid in full and on time. It doesn't matter if you are getting full, part or no help from Housing Benefit.

# Why it's important to pay your rent on time

Your rent pays for the housing services Unity provide and for the repairs and improvements we make to your home. If you don't pay your rent, then Unity will have less money to provide these services. **Regularly not paying** your rent will put you at risk of losing your home.

# £339,933

the amount of money owed to Unity by tenants currently living in our properties

# **£247,774**

the amount of money owed to Unity by former tenants (including people who have abandoned their homes)

# Struggling to keep up with your rent payments?

£587,707

Clive: 0113 200 7753
Sam: 0113 200 7737
Matt: 0113 200 7733

the total amount of money Unity is owed (as at 30th September 2014). This could pay for

They won't judge you - they are here to help.





at a cost of £3,000



like the ones at Brown Lane East which cost an average of £137,000 each to build



# Great offer for shared-owners



Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

#### Value for Money on gas servicing

# Ask to be included in this year's gas servicing programme

Unity offers shared-owners the opportunity to include their property in the annual servicing contract for a fee. It is important to have your gas appliances serviced to make sure that they comply with current safety standards. We strongly recommend that you consider this offer - as the amount we charge represents very good value for money and it could save your life. Please call **0113 200 7700** and ask to be included in this year's gas servicing programme.

This service is **cost-based**, meaning that Unity does not make a profit from it; the **actual** cost is passed on to you. You may find that annual gas servicing is a condition of your lease.



If you prefer to organise your own gas safe engineer to carry out gas servicing on your home, **you must make sure the contractor you appoint is qualified** and that copies of the safety certificates are passed on to Unity. These are kept on file and renewed each year.



#### **Blooming marvellous!**

#### Green fingered residents get ready!

Unity is pleased to introduce the 'Unity is Bloom' competiton for the three tenants who have taken the most pride in their garden or outdoor space. More details of the categories and the prizes will be published at a later date.

If you are thinking about entering the competition, now is the time to start thinking about planting!

# Top tips for saving money in the garden

Make the most of your outdoor space without breaking the bank:



Start your plants from seed as these cost a fraction of the price

Set up a seed exchange with friends, family and neighbours

Divide plants by taking cuttings

Bulk buy compost and fertiliser with friends, family or neighbours

Make your own compost with vegetable peelings and fallen leaves

Use yoghurt pots as flower pots and plastic bottles to protect saplings

Use a water butt, particularly if you have a water meter

£1 shops often have a great range of gardening equipment so look here first

### Weeds - ignore them at your peril!

Weeds growing on or near paving and walls can lead to cracks as their roots prise them apart. Ignore weeds and you could end up paying to replace a whole wall.

#### Small weeds

Pull them out with your fingers or with pliers if they're a bit bigger. If they keep coming back, use weedkiller. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions

#### Larger weeds

Use weedkiller on targer or stubborn weeds, Spray on still, sunny days on all the leaves of the plant. Don't cut the leaves back until they are dead. This could take up to 14 days.

### Affordable gardening services:

### Adam from Urban Earth

on 0113 293 7061 or 07950680995

or email adamtaras@hotmail.com

for Harehills, Burmantofts and surrounding areas:

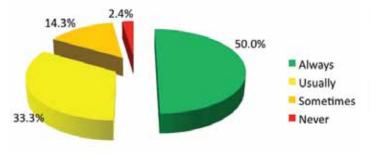
**Mick** on 07940019255

Approved by Unity staff and residents

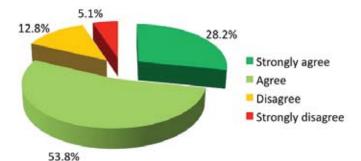




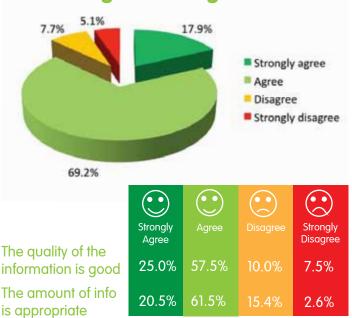
#### Do you read the quarterly newsletter?



### I find the information useful/helpful...



#### I find the information entertaining/interesting...

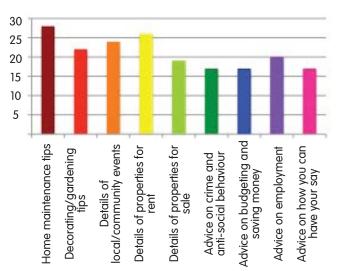


#### comments about the newsletter?



A good read - keeps me informed

### What advice would you like Unity to offer on Facebook/Twitter?



### **Conclusions**

It seems most of our tenants like the newsletter in its current format, but as always we welcome your suggestions. Contact lewis.holloway@unityha.co.uk if you have any.

The content of the newsletter is influenced by our Tenant Panel. If you'd like to get your message out to other tenants, joining the Tenant Panel is a great place to start.

#### Keeping updated by email

Over 100 tenants have given us permission to use their email to keep them up to date with news and events. We'd like to keep even more tenants informed of opportunities by email as tenants receive much more up-to-date information and it's save us printing and posting costs.

Next time you visit our office, ask a member of staff for a consent form so that we can use your email address to send you news and events updates.

### Unity steps into 21st Century!



# facebook.com/Unity.Housing



### @UnityHomes



#### Find us on Facebook

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

# 🧥 SurveyMonkey

To save you time, and to save the organisation money, you will soon be able to complete surveys using **Survey Monkey**. You will receive a link to a survey, in an email and/or text message each time a contractor visits your home to carry out a repair.

You will still be entered into the **£50 prize draw**, and you can still return the survey after the contractor has left your home. The only difference is you will be helping to save the organisation money.

Each time you complete a survey by Survey Monkey you could save Unity up to £1 which could be used to keep our homes up to date and improve services elsewhere.

Congratulations to Mr & Mrs S, Beeston who were the winners of the £50 repairs survey prize draw!

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# Home Maintenance



#### Is your home gas-safety compliant?

By law, Unity is required to visit each of our properties every year to ensure that they are gas-safety compliant. Our target is to inspect 100% of homes. Legal action will be taken against those who refuse us access to do this essential check. Remember - it doesn't cost you anything and it could save your life.

#### **Meter Cupboards**

Unity would like to remind tenants that their meter cupboards are to be **kept clear at all times** - they are not to be used as storage. If we find items in them they will be removed and tenants could be charged for the **disposal costs**. Meter cupboards must also be **kept locked at all times**.



# Finance To Grow Your Business



#### Business loans to boost your business from £500 - £150000

- Do you need finance to give your business that push it needs to grow?
- Are you are a new business owner who would benefit from a cash injection into your business so that you are not struggling with limited resources or finance?
- Have the traditional banks refused you the finance that you really need to make your business a huge success?

The Business Enterprise Fund provides loans from £500 to £150,000 to individuals for business use in West and North Yorkshire. BEF support both start-ups and existing businesses.



If you are in your first 12 months of trading you may qualify for a Start-Up Loan. If you are an existing business you can apply for a BEF business loan, please see the information below.

#### Who can apply?

Business Enterprise Fund lends business loans to start-up and existing companies.

You can speak to Hakeem, Network Business Advisor at Unity Enterprise about BEF or Credit Union Start-Up Loans or the BEF team for more information about how the Business Enterprise Fund can help your business.

#### Contact Hakeem: 07714 134532

Contact Business Enterprise Fund: 0845 2003919

#### **Cook's Corner**

We realise it's difficult to make healthy and wholesome meals on a tight budget. Here are a few simple recipes that don't require a lot of expensive ingredients that the whole family can enjoy.

set aside to cool.

#### Minted Pea & Potato Cake (serves 6)

Peel the potatoes and boil them until they are beginning to soften, but still firm. Drain and

Cook the peas in boiling water for 5 minutes,

then drain and crush with a potato masher.

Beat the eggs. Grate the potatoes into a

ingredients, including the mint.

large mixing bowl and add the rest of the

Warm the oil in a large frying pan. Spoon the

mixture onto the pan and spread out evenly. Cook for 5 minutes or until the underside is

brown and crispy. Slide out of the pan and

get the potato cake back into the pan and

onto a plate. Invert the pan over the plate to

cook on the other side for a further 5 minutes.

Only 33p per portion! (Morrisons)

**Baked Eggs in** Peppers (serves 4)

> Cut the peppers in half from top to bottom. Scrape out the pith and the seeds but leave on the stems. Blanch the peppers in boiling water for 3 minutes then drain.

> Arrange the peppers on a baking dish and place a tablespoon of chopped black olives inside each.

Carefully crack an egg into each of the peppers. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

Suitable for vegetarians! Eat on the same day.

Great source of protein and vitamins!

Ingredients:

2 large peppers, any colour 4 tbsp chopped black 4 eggs olives

Ingredients: 400g/14oz cooked rice 1 apple, 1 red onion 1 pepper, 55g/2oz raisins, 60ml/2fl oz olive oil, 75ml/2.5fl oz white wine vinegar, 2tbsp curry powder



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Peel and finely chop an onion. Deseed and

**Curried Rice Salad (serves 4)** 

dice the pepper. Chop the apple.

Whisk the olive oil, the white wine vinegar and curry powder together to make the dressing.

Toss all the ingredients together and serve.

#### **Your Suggestions**

If you have any inexpensive, nutritious and delicious recipes you'd like to appear in the next newsletter, please send them to lewis.holloway@ unityha.co.uk



2 eggs

Ingredients:

3 tbsp fresh mint

1 tbsp vegetable oil

500g/ 1b 2oz potatoes

250g/ 9oz frozen peas



# Easter holiday fun-filled activities To keep the kids out of trouble!



### **Meerkat March**

#### Where?

#### When?

Princes Avenue, Roundhay Park, LS8 1DF 14th March,

10.00am - 3.00pm

#### What is it?

Celebrate the new arrivals by making meerkat masks and looking at meerkat-like animals we have in Britain! Meeting place: Workshop marquee, outside Tropical Word. Event free, but usual admission applies.



#### **Thwaite Mills Spring Festival 2015**

#### Where?

#### When?

Thwaite Mils Watermill, Thwaite Lane, Stourton, LS10 1RP

5th April, 11.00am - 4.00pm

#### What is it?

Thwaite Mills is a fully-restored, working watermill which is nestled on an island between the River Aire and the Aire & Calder Navigation. The Spring Festival is a fun-filled day exploring our beautiful island, with boat rides, crafts stalls, and a bouncy castle.



Temple Newsam Adults £4.50 Children £2.50 Under 5s FREE

#### Easter Egg Extravaganza

#### Where?

#### When?

Temple Newsam Road Off Selby Road, LS15 OAE 3rd April - 19th Arpil 10.30am - 5.00pm

#### What is it?

Join in our Easter egg hunt! Search for clues around the house to be in with a chance of winning an eggcellent Easter egg prize! A great time to visit the newborn animals on the farm too!



#### **Bunny Hunt**

#### When?

31st March - 17th April 10.00am - 5.00pm

#### What is it?

Take part in a trail round the museum and help the Easter Bunny solve a problem.

#### Where?

Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills Canal Road, Armley, LS12 2QF



#### **Easter Animal Crafts**

#### When?

#### Where?

31st March - 2nd April 14.00 - 15.00 Abbey House Museum Abbey Walk, Kirkstall, LS5 3EH

#### What is it?

Join us for fun, family crafts inspired by Easter animals including chicks, lambs and bunnies.



#### Time Travellers Treasure Hunt

#### When?

31st March - 2nd April 14.00 - 15.00

#### Where? Leeds City Museum

Millenium Square Leeds, LS2 8BH

#### What is it?

For families with older children aged 13+. Tick tock goes the Harrison Clock. Step through the clock, navigate your way around the museum, treasure hunting and solving the challenges to enter a prize draw!



# King Henry the Egg

#### Where?

Temple Newsam Road Off Selby Road, LS15 0AE

What is it?

Create an 'egg' character inspired by our history and stories. For eggxample, 'King Henry the Egg', 'Elizabeth of Yolk', 'The Ghost of the Speckled Blue Lady'.

When?

#### Getting there

Under 5s FREE

3 April 2015 - 6 April 2015,

11:00am - 12:30pm and

2.00pm - 3.30pm

#### **Buses from City Centre**



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33/33A 🗆 🗖

508/757

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508/757

**Tropical World** Roundhay Park

**Thwaite Mills** Stourton First Day Family & Friends £8.20 - unlimited travel for up to 5 people

**Temple Newsam** off Selby Road

**Armley Mills** (more frequent service) Get off at Asda and cross footbridge over river and canal

**Armley Mills** Canal Road

Abbey House Kirkstall

### **Contacting Unity**

#### **Leeds City Council Services**

**T**: 0113 200 7700 **E:** uha@unityha.co.uk W: www.unityha.co.uk

#### 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**

#### 0845 634 2766

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

#### Emergency Gas Repairs (01757 244510)

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.uk

For information at your fingertips, visit our website at www.unityha.co.uk for leaflets, latest news and community information.

For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact Lewis Holloway on 0113 200 7751 or email lewis.holloway@unityha.co.uk



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Adult Social Care
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113 222 4401

**Anti-Social Behaviour** 

0113 222 4402

onestop@leeds.gov.uk

**Children Social Care** 

**(113 222 4403** 

Council tax and housing benefit

- 0113 222 4404
- lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk

**Complaints and compliments** 

0113 222 4405

**Environmental services** 

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

0113 222 4406



refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk

#### **Highways**

- 0113 222 4407
- 📯 highways@leeds.gov.uk
- **Registrars**
- 0113 222 4408

Planning

0113 222 4409

#### **Minicom**

113 222 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.



business for neighbourhoods