Unity News Spring 2017



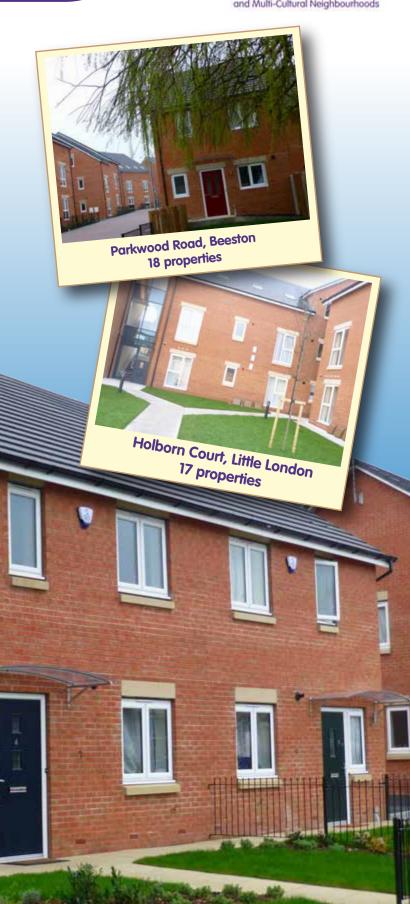
Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

Building the dream!

Tenants at our latest developments have now all moved into their new homes.

Our properties at Parkwood Road, Holborn
Court and Rocheford Court have now all been finalised, with over 43 new affordable homes built. These properties are part of our Affordable Homes Programme, as we are aiming to build 120 new properties in Leeds by 2018. We would like to take this opportunity to welcome all of our new tenants to Unity, and we hope you enjoy your new homes!

Rocheford
Court,
Hunslet
11 properties



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See what family activities are taking place in Leeds over Easter, including children's activities on the estates.

The cost of fly-tipping

Fly tipping is a criminal offence which can result in a fine of up to £5000 and a year imprisonment.

It costs Unity up to £10,000 per year to dispose of fly tipped waste on our estates and land. Although we are aware it will not always be Unity tenants who leave waste, we cannot continue to spend such a large amount of money clearing waste.

If individuals can be identified then we will be recharging the costs to the tenants who are responsible. If the waste is on a scheme that is covered by communal gardening, the fee will be added to the service charge.

If you see anyone fly tipping, please report it to us.

Green DoctorFree service to save you money

Groundwork's Green Doctor service is a practical solution, helping people to take control and to reduce their environmental impact at the same time. The service provides home visits and 1-2-1 advice which can help you use less energy, keep warm and save money!

The Green Doctor home visits usually takes about an hour and provide support as well as installing small energy efficiency measures:

- Switching suppliers
- Applying for the Warm Homes Discount
- Grants for insulation and central heating
- Energy bills and fuel debt
- Behavioural changes to reduce costs
- Managing heating control

Green Doctors can also install simple energy-saving measures including:

Energy-efficient light bulbs

Draught excluders

Reflective radiator panels

Pipe lagging

Hot water tank jackets
Water saving devices



If you would like a visit from the Green Doctor, please contact our Customer Services team for a referral

Are your contents insured?

In our 2015 census, tenants were asked if the have contents insurance for their belongings. Over 60% of the tenants who responded did not have contents insurance.

Unity DOES NOT insure your furniture, belongings or decorations against theft, fire, vandalism and burst pipes and other household risks.

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.

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 at back) 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** 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.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.

Take care of your pets A reminder of Unity's pet policy



We understand that pets can be a positive attribute to any family home. Unity Housing Association may give you permission to keep pets in your home, but you will have to request permission in writing. However, permission will only be given based on certain conditions (you must agree to) and the type of home you live in (i.e. house, bungalow or flat).

Responsible pet ownership

The types of animals you may be allowed to keep in your home with Unity's permission, provided it is suitable, may include:

Dogs

✓ Caged birds (such as budgies and parrots)

Rabbits

Reptiles (like lizards)

We **do not** allow:

- Any type of animal which is illegal
- Any breed or cross-breed of dangerous dog, including pitbull terriers
- Any dog which has ever attacked a person in public
- Any wild or exotic animals
- Poisonous or dangerous reptiles and spiders
- X Livestock and poultry
- Racing pigeons without permission of the Royal Racing Pigeon Society.

Don't be foul

Please make sure any animal which is kept, or brought to your home, doesn't foul on our land or property. If it does you must clean it up immediately, this includes any private gardens forming part of the property

If you don't follow these rules you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement. This means we may withdraw our permission to keep your pet.

Your Tenancy Agreement

In your tenancy agreement it states that:

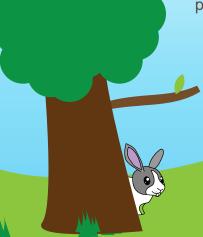
You must get our permission, in writing, to keep any animal, bird, insect or reptile in your home.'

If you get our permission, you have to agree to:

- Take responsibility for the animal's health and welfare
- Take responsibility for any damage caused to your home by your pet
- Controlling the pet within your neighbourhood and local community
- Not leave your pet alone in your home when you are away for a long time (i.e. holidays)

Don't be a nuisance

You must make sure no animal which is kept, or brought into your home causes a nuisance or annoys or frightens any person or other animal in the area.





Welfare Reform Update Make sure you stay informed



Under Occupation

Housing Benefit

Due to the 1% rent reduction, all tenants in rented properties will see their rent be reduced by 1%. If you are on Housing Benefit, it is crucial that you contact Leeds City Council and inform them so that they can change the amount of money that you receive. Failure to do this will result in a large amount of back pay owed to the council which you will then have to pay.

Declare a change in your circumstances

Housing Benefit claims can be cancelled due to no response to requests for information, so do not delay in sending back your change in circumstances. If cancelled, and you want a claim re-started and backdated, you must have a "good reason" for the delay, such as time in hospital, otherwise there will be no backdate.

Housing Benefit for leaseholders

If you live in a shared ownership property and are on a low income, you may be eligible for Housing Benefit to help pay rent. Contact a member of the Income Management Team for more details.

Benefit Cap

Since 30th January 2017, the Benefit Cap has applied to more households. For those affected Leeds Benefit Service sent a letter offering a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) if you tick a box and return the letter. Please ensure you have done this. They will pay the DHP until April 2017 but a full application form will be needed after April 2017 (online application). Our Income Management Officers can help with this.

Did you know?

Our Employment Services team run a free digital inclusion course that can get you confident on computers. This includes help finding and completing welfare forms.

In 2016 the Supreme Court decided that adults affected by the under occupation rules, who cannot medically share a bedroom, should now be awarded a bedroom each. The Government has not yet updated the Housing Benefit rules to help tenants in this situation. If you are in these circumstances you should apply for DHP from Leeds Benefit Service to help you pay the under

occupation reduction on your Housing Benefit.

DHP

Leeds Benefit Service are introducina online DHP forms. A link can be found on their website: www.leeds.gov.uk. The form is best completed in one sitting, an email address is needed if it is saved with the intention to return and complete.

Who do I contact if I need help?



Clive Greenwood

Income Management Team Leader

1 0113 200 7753

clive.greenwood@unityha.co.uk



Sam Mnyama

Income Management Officer

1 0113 200 7737

sam.mnyama@unityha.co.uk



Matthew Hull

Income Management Officer

113 200 7733

matthew.hull@unityha.co.uk



Russell Sergeant

Income Management Officer

1 0113 200 7752

russell.sergeant@unityha.co.uk

Estate VisitsWhen are you due a visit



Kamila's visits

Date	Time	Estates
April		
Tues 4th	14.00 - 16.30	Hyde Park & Armley
Thurs 13th	11.00 - 12.30	Crossgates & Harehills
Wed 19th	11.00 - 13.00	Chapeltown
Thurs 27th	11.00 - 12.30	Harehills
May		
Wed 3rd	13.30 - 15.00	North Leeds
Fri 12th	13.00 - 14.30	Harehills
Wed 17th	14.00 - 16.00	Beeston/Hunslet
Fri 26th	10.30 - 12.30	Hyde Park & Armley
June		
Thurs 1st	14.00 - 16.00	Crossgates & Harehills
Thurs 8th	14.00 - 15.30	Chapeltown
Fri 16th	14.30 - 16.00	Harehills
Thurs 22nd	14.00 - 16.30	Beeston/Hunslet
Fri 30th	11.00 - 13.00	Hyde Park & Armley



Unity's housing officers Kamila and Rashpal visit each of our estates on a three monthly basis, to make sure that everything is in good order.

If you'd like to request a visit from your Housing Officer when they're next in your area, please call **0113 200 7700**.

Please note that these dates are subject to change without any prior notice.

Rashpal's visits

Date	Time	Estates .	
April			
Wed 19th	13.30 - 15.30	Devon Close, Leicester Close, Holborn Court	
Tues 25th	10.30 - 12.30	Cliff Terrace, Unity Close, Deighton View, Blackmoor Road, Fir Tree Approach	
Thurs 27th	10.30 - 12.30	Stainbeck Road/Ave, Bentley Gardens, Stonegates	
May			
Thurs 4th	10.30 - 12.30	Haslewood Drive/View, Rigton Green, Leopold Street, Ashton Court	
Thurs 11th	10.30 - 12.30	Jackie Smart Court, Louis Street, Cowper Street, Dodgson Ave, Frankland Place	
Fri 19th	10.30 - 12.30	Harehills Ave, Newton Grove, Pear Tree House	
June			
Thurs 1st	10.00 - 12.30	Spencer Place, Markham Ave, Gathorne Terrace, Pasture Road	
Fri 9th	10.00 - 12.30	Harlech Park Court, Lodge Lane, Beverley's, Harding Villas, Brown Lane East	
111 7111	10.00 12.00	Trailed Traile Cool, Loage Latte, Beverley 3, Trailaing Villas, Brown Latte Last	

Simple ways to take better care of your garden



Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

Gardening is a great hobby to take up; it gets you outside, burning calories, and produces rewarding results. With the better weather approaching, there is no better time to start preparing your garden so that you can enjoy the summer outside.

Basic gardening tips for beginners

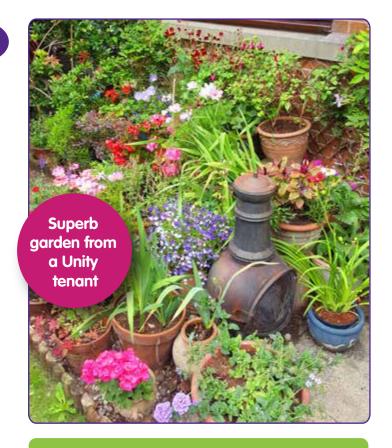
- Choose the right plants for your soil
 Before you buy any plants, check your soil
 type. If you're not sure, take a look at what
 plants are growing in your neighbour's
 garden.
- Give plants enough space

 Don't be tempted by the displays at the garden centre and buy too many plants.
- Be gentle with new plants

 If you remove new plants from their pots by pulling their stems, you're likely to break or bruise them.
- Plan ahead with your design
 Before you do any digging, have a think about the big picture of your garden
- 5 Soak your roots
 Thoroughly soak the roots of a new plant before you put it in the soil.
- Label, label, label
 For first-time gardeners, it can be easy to forget what you've planted and where, take an extra minute to write a plant label.
- Water mindfully Make sure the soil is watered properly, so soil isn't left too dry
- Be brutal with weeds

 Weed regularly and make sure you remove all their roots.
- Give shrubs some breathing room
 Resist the temptation to plant your shrubs
 near a fence or wall.
- Have fun with it!

 Allow yourself to experiment and try new things and enjoy your garden.



"I'd like to do more in my garden, but it is too expensive"

You don't need to have expensive equipment to enjoy gardening. Shops such as **Poundland**, **Aldi and Asda** provide good quality essentials at a pretty low price. Go to these retailers when looking for cheap pots, compost and seeds. Alternatively, maintaining your garden costs nothing. Removing weeds and general waste can help keep your garden looking nice.

If you're proud of your garden, send pictures into

nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk so that we can share them.



Customer services update A few things to remember...



Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

When will my repair be done?

Emergency

Defects which pose danger to health, safety and properties Complete within: 24 hours

Urgent

Defects which seriously affect your comfort and convenience Complete within: 3 days

Routine

Minor inconveniences Complete within: 21 days

Appointment times

Appointments are offered for all urgent and routine repairs. All emergency repairs require same-day access.

Morning Appointments: **between 8am - 1pm**

Afternoon Appointments: between 12pm - 5pm

We offer a 'first call' appointment for tenants who have to take time off work or college (usually 8am-9am).

Lightbulbs

Unity will not pay for replacement lightbulbs

Our customer services team regularly speak to tenants who claim that they cannot buy the lightbulbs which are fitted in their home from the shop. Unity will not send out a contractor to change the lighbulbs in your property; unless there are accessibility issues for the tenant. All of the liahtbulbs that are fitted are available from the vast majority of electric shops.

For example:

Wilko's: £4.00 **B & Q:** £5.00 Homebase: £4.99



A 2 pin lightbulb that may be found in your bathroom

As the weather gets warmer, we have more enquiries about how to deal with pest problems. Unity does not take responsibility for treating any type of infestation, and unfortunately, due to budget cuts, neither does Leeds City Council.

Problems with pests?

Try Axial Pest Control on 07957 911030

- Rats
- Moles
- Ants

- Mice
- Pigeons
- Bedbugs
- Cockroaches
 Wasps
- Flies

Unity cannot endorse any other contractors or third parties. Always get a quote before any work is carried out

If you find mice, rats, fleas, cockroaches or any other pests in your home, you need to contact a local pest-control company to treat them. You will have to make these arrangements yourself and pay for the service you receive.

Getting InvolvedHave your say on Unity's services



Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

Estate Inspections

We've invited our Tenant Panel to carry out joint inspections of our estates to make sure that everything is in good order. They can help us to spot things that Unity needs to fix, but will also be keeping an eye out for where tenants themselves could be doing more to improve the appearance of the estate.

It is a condition of you tenancy agreement that you keep your garden:

'tidy and free from weeds, litter, rubbish and animal waste. This includes cutting your lawns and trimming your hedges and shrubs.'

Get involved

We will let you know when the Tenant Panel are coming to your area. As a resident, you'd be very welcome to join us on an inspection of your estate or an estate other than your own. Please contact **Nathan** on **0113 200 7751** if you'd like to get involved.



Join our Tenant Panel

Our Tenant Panel is a fun, friendly group of Unity residents that meets up bi-monthly to discuss issues affecting the business, our homes and our tenants.

As well as attending meetings, the Tenant Panel get involved with practical on-site inspections, mystery shopping exercises and interviewing and assessing our contractors to help us monitor their performance.

Benefits:

- Activities in the daytime and in the evenings, to fit in with your lifestyle
- Develop your skills and interests
- **Enhance** your CV
- Free training, where required
- Influence the services you receive

All expenses covered covered plus **£5 shopping voucher** for every activity you attend/take part in and **FREE** pizza at meetings!





Highlights of 2015/16

- The Tenant Panel served as the judges for the Unity in Bloom gardening competition
- The Panel visited our new developments and gave their thoughts on how future properties could be improved
- Our Tenant Panel was involved in scutinising Unity's arrears process. Including input on how Unity should communicate i.e. arrears letters.



The Prince's Trust Enterprise Programme

The focus of the Enterprise programme is on you becoming the best business owner you can be.

The programme is designed to assist people who are:

- ✓ Interested in running their own business
- Have a business idea they want help to explore

Eligibility Criteria:

- ✓ Aged 18 to 30
- Unemployed (or working part time on an employed basis under 16 hours a week)
- Not enrolled on a degree course or in education which exceeds 14 hours per week

How it works

The Enterprise Programme has four key steps:

1. Information Session

An opportunity to find out about the programme, meet others who are also thinking about self-employment and ask any questions you have.

2. Explore Enterprise Course

A FREE 4 day course to help you work out whether running your own business is right for you. We explore personal skills, marketing and selling, business finance and business planning.

3. One-to-one support

To help you think about what you want to do next, whether it's planning and launching your business or achieving another goal, like getting a job.

4. Launching your business – Mentor and financial support

If you launch your business with the Prince's Trust, you can be matched with business mentor who will help you with your business. You can also apply for a low-interest loan of up to £7,500 to get your business off the ground. Please note participation on the programme is not a guarantee to receive financial support.

Free Computer Training

Unity is now an accredited UK Online Centre! This means that we can provide better training and resources to tenants who are learning how to use computers.



If you struggle using computers and would like some free training and support, we can help you!

Our Employment Services team currently run a free five-week digital inclusion course which guides you through the basics of using a computer and can build your confidence using the internet. We have recently been registered as a UK Online Centre, which means the course has changed slightly and we have better resources to help get you online! Unity can also provide you with log in information so that you can access resources from anywhere, but you need to get in touch with us first.

The modules that you can access are:

- Using your computer or device
- Online basics
- Internet skills
- Online safety
- Finding a job online
 Improving your health online
- Managing your money online
- Public services

If you would like more information, or you are interested in being registered, contact Noma: 0113 200 7746 or Kelly: 0113 200 7738.



Get Online in Leeds Where to find free internet access



Supporting BME Communities and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

If you don't have a computer or smart device at home but still require access to the internet, there are plenty of places in Leeds that provide free internet services.

One stop centres

One stop centres offer a mixture of housing services, library services and job searching help and advice. Their customer service officers can help with enquiries about council tax bills and benefits, housing

tenancy issues, benefits for people on a low income, help for older people, disabled people, children and families, and more.

Where can I go in Leeds to access computer/internet facilities?

Your local library

All public libraries in Leeds have free computers with Internet access available for you to use. You may have to book them during busy periods. Many libraries will also offer training courses for people who are not confident on computers, so it is worth enquiring to your local library to see what is available

Community Hubs

Leeds City Council have co-located some of their services to form "Community Hubs". The hubs offer a mixture of library services, housing services, customer services and offer job searching help and advice. They're also a venue for pop up surgeries from organisations such as the national careers service, DWP, Money buddies, Credit Unit, CAB etc.

UK Online Centres

UK online centres is a network of organisations that provide computer and internet access for free or low cost prices. They can also provide help and support to people how are not comfortable on computers. Unity Housing Association is now a registered centre, as we provide computer training courses. If you would like to learn more or find the nearest Online Centre to you, go to:

https://www.onlinecentresnetwork.org/ournetwork/ find-centre#/map

Here are a few places that offer free computer facilities. Find more at http://www.leeds.gov.uk/leisure/Pages/Your-library.aspx

Harehills

Compton Road Library Harehills Lane Leeds, LS9 7BG

Armley

Armley Library 2 Stocks Hills

Beeston

Beeston Library Town Street, Beeston Leeds, LS11 8PN

Leeds, LS12 1UQ

Chapeltown

The Reginald Centre 263 Chapeltown Road Leeds, LS7 3EX

City Centre

Central Library Municipal Buildings Calverley Street Leeds, LS1 3AB

Headingley

Headingley Library North Lane Leeds, LS6 3HG

South Leeds

Dewsbury Road Library 190 Dewsbury Road Leeds, LS11 6PF

Moortown

Moor Allerton Centre King Lane Leeds, LS17 5NY

Easter holidays fun for all of the family



Medieval Easter

When? 9th - 23rd April Where? Armouries Drive, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS10 1LT

Keep the whole family entertained over the Easter holidays with a packed programme of medieval-themed events and fun activities at Royal Armouries, Leeds. Includes crafts, Knight School, storytelling, falconry displays, and live combat demonstrations. Museum admission is free, but some activities may carry a small charge.



Eggstrordinary Science Show

When? 6th April

Where? Thwaite Lane, LS10 1RP

Mills will be running fun science and experiment required. (Children under 5 years get in for free)



Whooo's in the Hooose?!

When? 14th - 17th April Where? Leeds Town Hall, The Headrow. Leeds LS1 3AD

This Easter, children of all ages and their families are invited to 'Whooo's in the Hooose?!' at The Film House. Leeds Town Hall for a surprising Springtime experience, inspired by the moving image, rhyme and works of Dr. Seuss. Ticket holders will be guided through our promenade performance; meeting a host of fun characters and helping them tell their stories. The experience will last for 70 minutes and ticket price includes all activities.



The First Hippo on the Moon

Course Markey Ma

When? 5th - 8th April Where? Playhouse Square,

the enormously rich Hercules Waldorf-Franklin III and ingenious Shelia compete to be the first hippo to make



Bonny Bonnets and Handsome Hats

When? 4th - 6th April **Where?** Temple Newsam Road, Off Selby Road, LS15 0AE

Create your own jolly Easter headgear inspired by the hats, caps or crowns on show in the House. Please note this activity will also run 10:30-12:30 and 1:30pm to 4.30pm. Free with admission to Temple Newsam House.



When? 15th April

Where? Moor Allerton Library, King Lane LS17 5NY

There will be lots of Easter activities for you to do to celebrate the season. Create paper bunnies, bumble bees and search for Easter eggs. You can also decorate your own Easter eggs and make a Easter card for your loved ones.

Holiday activities on the estates

We are hosting Easter fun days on certain estates during the holidays! Please come along and join in our Easter egg hunt. This will be followed by Easter arts and crafts – you could make a springtime greetings card, paint your own egg and create your own colourful characters!

Date	Time	Estate
Mon 3rd April	10am - 2pm	Kitchener Place
Wed 5th April	10am - 2pm	Fielding Gates
Thurs 6th April	10am - 2pm	Highfield Gardens
Fri 7th April	10am - 2pm	Stonegate Edge
Mon 10th April	10am - 2pm	Kimberley Place
Wed 12th April	10am - 2pm	Beverley Avenue
Thurs 13th April	10am - 2pm	Briarsdale Garth

Unity cannot take any responsibility for your children at this event. Children must be supervised by a parent or guardian.

FREE!

Contacting Unity

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

0800 970 2524

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

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 Nathan Dale on

0113 200 7751 or email

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

Children Social Care

0113 222 4403

Council tax and housing benefit



0113 222 4404

lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk

Complaints and compliments



113 222 4405

Environmental health

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



1 0113 222 4406



refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk

Roads and pavements



113 222 4407



highways@leeds.gov.uk

Registrars



1 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.