

Are you ready for Universal Credit?

The full roll out will come to Leeds in October 2018!

We have been talking about Universal Credit since 2013 and it has now been introduced to some single people in Leeds. The full roll out is expected to come to Leeds in October 2018, so it's important that you're prepared!

A quick reminder of Universal Credit:

- Gives you the money once a month, into your bank account;
- It includes the money for rent called housing costs, which is also paid to you;
- It is much stricter than old benefits;
- Pays you while you work, up to a limit;
- It is applied for and managed online.

Which benefits does it replace?

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit

How can Unity help?

Tenants' conduct mystery shopping exercise! See the results on page 7

All you have to do is call us and ask to speak to your **Income Management Officer**:

Sam: 0113 200 7737

Matt: 0113 200 7733

Russell: 0113 200 7752

Clive: 0113 200 7753

What can I do to prepare?

Get a **BASIC BANK ACCOUNT** if you don't already have one, as you can't be paid Universal Credit without one.

If you have any outstanding **DEBTS**, **GET HELP NOW** and **REDUCE OR CLEAR ANY RENT ARREARS**

SAVE FOR EMERGENCIES. Universal Credit is first paid five weeks after you apply, and you don't want to have no money at that time.

Get an **EMAIL ADDRESS** and familiarise yourself with using the **INTERNET**. Contact Unity's Employment Team on 0113 200 7738 if you could benefit from some free training.

Can you **BUDGET MONTHLY**? Your benefits will come all at once, each month, and you don't want to run out of money halfway through the month or get into debt.

Pay your rent and bills by **STANDING ORDER** or **DIRECT DEBIT** as long as you can avoid going overdrawn. This will help if you ensure that your bills get paid.

3. Problem with pests?

Advice on how to deal with pests in your property

4. Home safety

How to make sure your home is safe to live in

4. Fire safety

Tips to prevent fires and what to do if the worst should happen

5. Gas safety

How to remain responsible with your gas safety

6. Electrical safety

Your responsibilities to ensure your electrics are safe

6. Legionella

Important information and advice to keep your water safe

7. Customer services mystery shop

Tenants involved in service improvement

9. Privacy and Data Protection

information about how Unity protects your data

10. Local students and MP joins Unity at new development - Lenhurst Avenue

11. How did Unity do last year?

Take a look at our 2017/18 performance

Are you expecting a repair?

If you are expecting a visit from GTD to do some repairs in your home, make sure you answer their phonecall confirming the appointment. There have been a few cases where GTD have tried to get in contact with tenants regarding appointments and their calls have not been answered and tenants have missed the repairs. Please save GTD's number so that you answer their calls.

GTD Property and Painting Maintenance



0113 263 7932



07545 900012

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.

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.

For more info, contact:



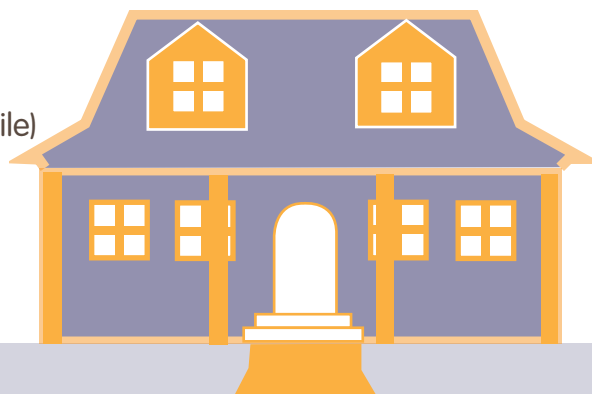
0845 337 2643 or



01628 586 189

(if calling from a mobile)

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



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 will be attending **Holbeck Gala** on **7th July from 12pm - 4pm** and we will be at the **Beeston Festival** on **14th July from 12pm - 5pm**.

Come and speak to us at either event, we would love to hear from you!



Do you have a tree in your garden?

Any trees in your garden are your responsibility, so that would mean pruning or clipping. The best way to deal with a tree is maintaining it to prevent it from growing excessively. If you are unable to maintain the trees in your garden, contact customer services or your housing officer who may be able to advise you of a suitable contractor.

However, if you feel that a tree is causing structural damage to your home or is becoming an issue and would like it removed, you must contact Unity first. You must not attempt to chop down or remove the tree without discussing it with Unity and receiving permission. Some trees are protected and cannot be removed.

Problems with pests?

Try **Discreet Pest Control** on **0113 281 8237**

- Rats
- Mice
- Cockroaches
- Moles
- Pigeons
- Wasps
- Ants
- Bedbugs
- Flies

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



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.

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.

Fire Safety

Fires in the home are a main cause of deaths which is why it is important to know what to do if a fire does break out in your home and what action you can take to prevent fires.

If you live in a flat, your building has been designed or converted with fire safety in mind. Walls and doors between flats will hold back fire and smoke for a time but it is very important to know what to do if a fire does break out in your flat and what action you can take to prevent fires.

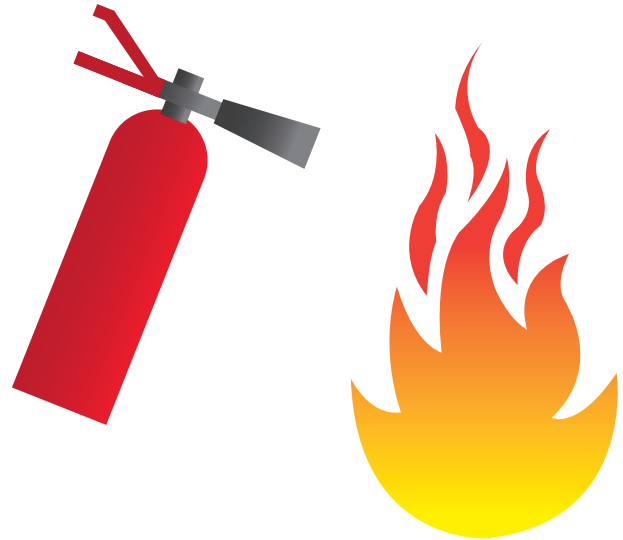
What to do if a fire breaks out in your home

- Alert any other person living in your home.
- Leave the room where the fire is and close the door. If any windows are open in the room close them before you leave if it is safe.
- Don't try to tackle the fire unless it is safe to do so.
- Leave your home and close the door behind you.
- Alert any neighbours to the fire but only if it is safe to do this.
- Get out of the building using the staircase.
- **Once you are out of the building call the fire brigade by dialling 999. Give them the address and tell them which floor the fire is on.**
- Wait near your home for the fire brigade to arrive and then tell them where the fire is in your home.

Smoke alarms

Smoke alarms are fitted in your home. We know that smoke alarms save lives. You should test the alarm each week to make sure it is working properly. Smoke alarms are wired into the electricity supply and fitted with back up batteries. They should never be disconnected. It is your responsibility to replace back up batteries in smoke alarms.

Tell us immediately if you think there is a problem with your smoke alarm and we will replace it



Don't block escape routes


Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows the quickest way to get out of your home. To ensure that everyone can leave your home don't block your hallway or other escape routes. If you live in a flat, do not block communal areas.

Fire Safety Tips

- Never leave children alone.
- Keep matches and lighters safe and out of reach of children.
- Don't smoke in bed. Always finish your cigarette before going to bed and make sure it is stubbed out fully.
- Never leave candles unattended. Make sure candles are put out.
- Check everything is safe before going to bed.
- Check and clean tumble dryers or other electrical appliances.

We would encourage all residents to arrange a free Home Fire Safety Check. This is a check that is carried out by the Fire Brigade. To arrange a check, contact the West Yorkshire and Rescue Services.

Book online: www.westyorkshirefire.gov.uk

 0800 587 4536

Gas Safety

As a landlord we have a legal responsibility to ensure that all gas appliances, fittings and flues within Unity's homes are safe and properly looked after - this includes central heating boilers and gas fires.

To do this we must conduct annual gas servicing checks on all of our properties.



Your responsibilities

You must allow Unity access to your home to complete your annual gas safety check. This work is essential for your own safety and cannot be completed without access to your home.

If you do not allow access then you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement which can lead to us taking legal action, and could result in you losing your home. If your property does not have a gas service check you may also have your gas capped off.

You must never attempt to do any gas related work or repairs yourself. Doing so could be life threatening for you and your neighbours.

If you want to install your own gas appliances, such as a cooker, you need to use a Gas Safe registered engineer and you'll need to show us a Gas Safety Certificate. For any other gas appliances you'll need to get our permission first.



Gas Safety Tips

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

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

Every year there are around 40 deaths from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK. If you smell gas, or suspect there is a gas leak, you should:

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

Electrical Safety

Unity places a high priority on the safety of our tenants. Unity Housing Association undertakes regular tests on electronic installations in your home to ensure that the property is safe to live in.

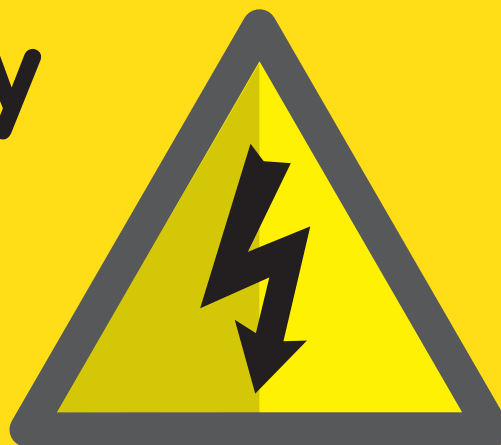
All of our properties are periodically tested. You will receive a letter from Unity informing you of the testing, followed by a letter from the contractor to arrange an appointment date.

Your responsibilities

You must allow Unity access to your home to complete your electrical safety test.

The test will take approximately half a day to complete. The contractor will require someone over the age of 18 to be in the property to allow access. The contractors will require unrestricted access to all areas of your home to test electrical circuits such as meters, sockets, switches and lights.

Failure to provide access may result in further action being taken against your tenancy and we may have to disconnect the electric supply to your home.



Electrical safety tips

- Buy electrical appliances and chargers from a reputable source and always check for a safety mark
- Check your sockets for burn marks regularly. These will be checked on your safety test, but if you have concerns at any time then contact us.
- Don't overload sockets or extension leads. They will have a power limit so be careful and try to keep to one plug per socket.
- Switch off appliances at the switch when not in use - unless they are designed to be left on (e.g. fridge freezer)

Legionella

What is 'legionnaire's disease'?

Legionnaires' disease is a lung infection you can catch by inhaling droplets of water that is contaminated by the legionella bacteria. It's uncommon but can be serious so it is important to be aware.

Where can it be found?

It is common in natural water sources such as ponds and lakes. It may contaminate and grow in water systems such as hot and cold water systems.

What can you do to reduce the risk?

The best way to avoid legionella is by maintaining good water hygiene in your home, such as:

- Run your taps and flush the toilet cistern if you have been out of the property for a number of days
- Clean your shower head regularly to prevent a build up of bacteria
- Keep water temperatures above 40 degrees at all times
- Make sure you use water collected in water butts or drain regularly



Customer Services Mystery Shop

Tenants involved in service improvement

Following discussions at Tenant Group meetings, members wanted to conduct a mystery shopping exercise looking specifically at the customer experience when ringing the front desk. It was a good opportunity to conduct the exercise as the team had become settled, as there had been a number of changes in personnel on the front desk.

What is Mystery Shopping?

Mystery Shopping is a tool used by organisations and businesses to find out more information about a particular product or service. Shoppers perform tasks, without being known to the organisation, such as asking questions or testing a service. They then provide reports and feedback to the organisation.

Method

Each shopper called the office and had to complete a form to analyse the call which would later be collated. There was a choice of six scenarios that each mystery shopper could use when calling the office, with each scenario being designated to a tenant. Scenarios were selected to test a wide range of issues that customer services face on a daily basis.

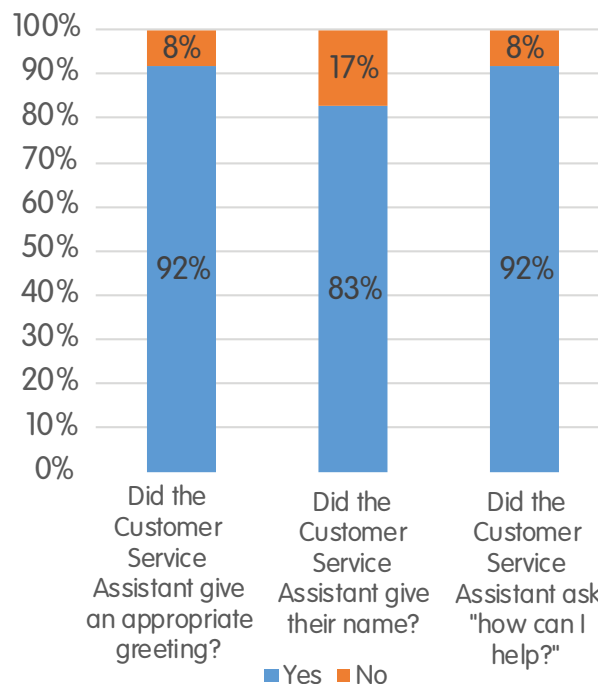
The Shoppers conducted their research over an 8 week period. Overall 14 mystery shops were conducted by 10 members of the Tenants' Group, between February – April 2018.

Results

(Two Mystery Shoppers were unable to get through on the phone so they have been removed from further tables)

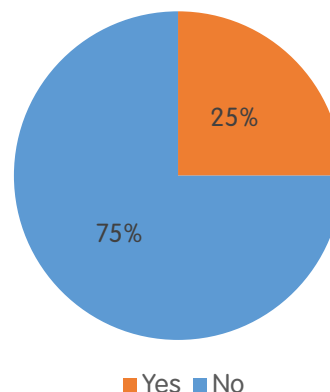
Q: How were you greeted by the member of staff?

Answer choices	Yes	No
Did the CSA give an appropriate greeting?	11 (92%)	1 (8%)
Did the CSA give their name?	10 (83%)	2 (17%)
Did the CSA ask how can I help?	11 (92%)	1 (8%)



Q: Were you put on hold at any time?

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	3 (25%)
No	9 (75%)

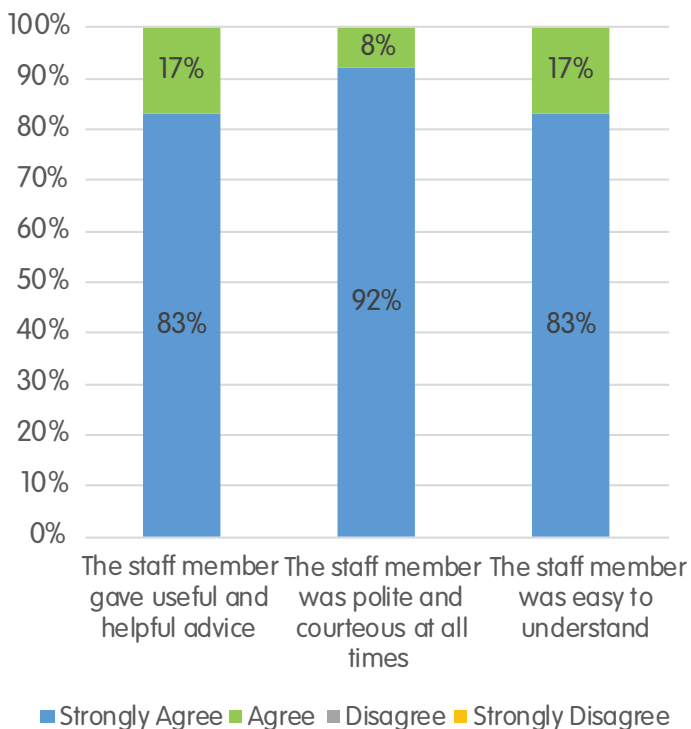


Q: If so, why?

- To find out more information
- None given
- To find out if there were any other options - buy some gel from B & Q

Q: To what extent do you agree with the following?

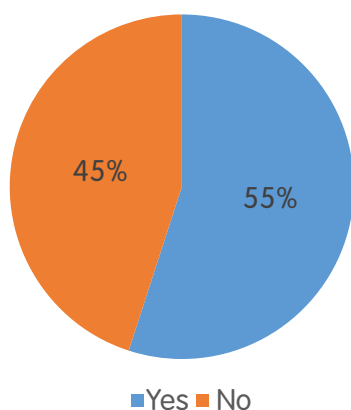
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The CSA gave useful and helpful advice	10 (83%)	2 (17%)	0	0
The CSA was polite and courteous at all times	11 (92%)	1 (8%)	0	0
The CSA was easy to understand	10 (83%)	2 (17%)	0	0



(One Mystery Shopper did not complete the final section of the form, so they have been removed from further tables)

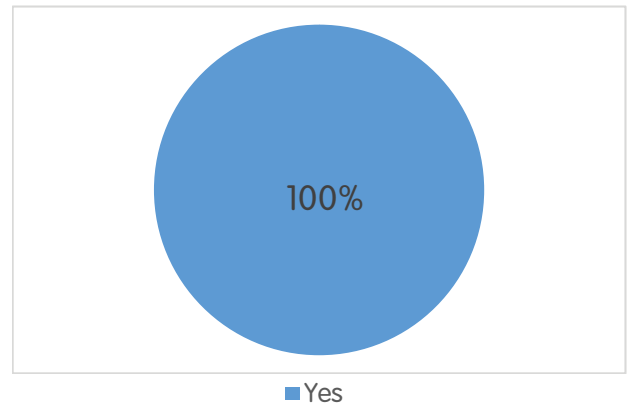
Q: Were you asked if there was anything else you could be helped with?

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	6 (55%)
No	5 (45%)



Q: After this experience, would you feel confident calling the office again?

Answer choices	Responses
Yes	11 (100%)
No	0 (0%)



Q: Do you have any other comments/improvements?

- As an older resident, perhaps the reply could be slowed down a bit
- All the advice was very clear and courteous
- Had to call back as had been cut off. Called back - all ok.
- Call not answered
- She was excellent and explained noise nuisance procedure very well. Length of time answering the phone could be staff shortage due to snowing
- Very helpful
- Called twice 20/3. Hung up twice after 6-8 rings. 10.15 am. Called three times 26/3, hung up twice. Phone constantly ringing. 11.28 am

Comments/improvements continued...

She was more than helpful, no improvements required. Very pleased.

Summary of the findings

Overall the responses to the mystery shops were positive, however there are a few suggestions as to how the service can be improved. The exercise highlighted that customer services are successful at providing the correct greeting when answering the phone, which includes giving their name and asking how they can help. During the calls only 3 of the 12 Shoppers were put on hold, 2 of which were given a clear reason for the wait. Following the exercise, shoppers were asked for their feedback regarding the staff member's behaviour. All shoppers agreed that staff had given useful and helpful advice, were courteous and polite and were easy to understand. Furthermore, all of the Mystery Shoppers who took part felt confident calling the office again.

New Housing Officer set to join Unity's growing staff

Due to our expanding portfolio, we have recruited a third Housing Officer who starts on the 2nd July. This means that there will be a change to the Housing Officer that will manage your area. We will be sending out a letter/flyer that will show which Housing Officer is responsible for each area.



Privacy and Data Protection How Unity protects your data

We know that providing us with personal data is an act of trust and you rely on us to look after the information that you give us. We take our responsibilities seriously and work hard to ensure that we keep your personal data safe and secure.

We have a Privacy Statement that can be found in full on our website and in our Privacy and Data Protection leaflet.



The statement includes information such as:

- Collecting your information
- How and why we use your information
- Retaining your information
- Your privacy rights

Update your contact information

It is important that the information we hold about you is accurate and up to date. If any of your contact details have changed, it might mean the information we hold about you is incorrect.

Please let us know as soon as any of the details we hold about you change. Alternatively, you can fill out this form and return it to Unity and we will update your contact details

Your name.....

Address.....

 Tel.....

 Mobile.....

 Email.....

How we use this information

We use your contact information to stay in touch with you so that we can manage your tenancy and deliver services to you. We also use your contact details to tell you about events or other services that you may be interested in.

Local students and MP joins Unity at new development - Lenhurst Avenue

Leeds West MP Rachel Reeves joined senior representatives of Unity Homes and Enterprise, councillors and other project partners as construction work gathered pace at our new £2 million affordable homes development in Armley.

The scheme, which includes six houses and eight flats, is on the site of the former Ancestor public house at Armley Ridge Road which had been boarded up for several years before being placed on Leeds City Council's list of 'derelict and eyesore' buildings.

The site was purchased by Unity in September 2017 and construction work to build 14 affordable homes for rent commenced late last year.

Ali Akbor, Unity's chief executive, said: "We are very excited about the new development which increases Unity's presence in Armley. It will deliver an excellent mix of properties, ranging from one-bedroomed flats to three-bedroomed houses.

Rachel Reeves MP said:


"I was really pleased to see the great progress Unity Homes and Enterprise have made with their new project at the site of the derelict Ancestor pub at Armley Ridge Road. Local residents will benefit from this £2 million investment, which will help to regenerate the area by building new affordable homes."

12 students from the School of Built Environment and Engineering at Leeds Beckett University were also invited to take part in the site visit.



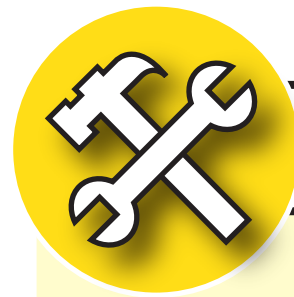
How did Unity do last year?

Take a look at our 2017/18 performance



Housing Services

KPI	2017/18 Actual
Rent arrears (%)	4.83
Income collection (%)	99.78
Average re-let time (days)	25



Maintenance


KPI	2017/18 Actual
Average gas safety checks completed (%)	100%
First time fix	90.6%
Appointments made and kept	93.8%

Repairs responded to within timescale:

Emergency (%)	93.9%
Urgent (%)	92.1%
Routine (%)	94.0%

Tenant satisfaction

Satisfaction with repairs	97.2%
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New Tenant & Exit Surveys

New tenant surveys	Good Satisfactory Poor		
	How would you rate the standard of your property when you moved in?	83.4%	15.5%
How would you rate the overall service you have received from Unity?	92.3%	7.7%	0%

Exit surveys	Good Satisfactory Poor		
	How would you describe the services that you have received at Unity?	71.8%	21.7%
Would you recommend Unity to your friends and relatives?	Yes 87%	No 13%	



Complaints & Compliments

Complaints	2017/18 Actual
Total number of complaints received	21
% responded to on time	100%
No. at stage one	19
No. at stage two	1
No. at stage three	1

Contacting Unity

T: 0113 200 7700

E: uha@unityha.co.uk

W: 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

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  01757 244 510

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

 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

Roads and pavements

 0113 222 4407

 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.

