



**MAKE
A
STAND**

Our homes, our people,
our problem.

Unity pledges to 'Make a Stand' against domestic violence

Unity has signed up to the "Make A Stand" pledge. This has been developed between partners the Chartered Institute of Housing, Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance.

Here at Unity we are committed to supporting people who are suffering domestic abuse – one of the biggest issues in today's society. You can come into the office and make a report. You can use our website to make a report, you can go to the Police or you can use one of the helplines:-

- **West Yorkshire Police** via **101**
- **Domestic Violence Unit** on **(0113) 3859590**
- **Leeds Women's Aid** on **(0113) 2460401**

A **Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline**, run in partnership between **Women's Aid and Refuge**, is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf: **0800 2000 247**

Unity's Scutiny Panel investigates...
Read about their review of anti-social behaviour on page 6

The Helpline can give support, help and information over the telephone, wherever the caller might be

in the country. The Helpline is staffed 24 hours a day by fully trained female helpline support workers and volunteers. All calls are completely confidential. Translation facilities for callers whose first language is not English, and a service for callers who are deaf or hard of hearing are available.

ManKind Initiative is a confidential helpline for all men across the UK suffering from domestic violence or domestic abuse by their current or former wife or partner – including same-sex partner. **01823 334244**

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

3. Meet our new members of staff

You may have noticed some new faces at Unity recently, here's your chance to meet them

3. Have you returned your Census?

Help us to improve our services by returning your Census form

4. Universal Credit is here

Universal Credit is finally being introduced 10th October, are you ready?

6. Unity's Scrutiny Panel investigates

Read about the Panel's review of Unity's anti-social behaviour procedures.

7. Join/start a neighbourhood watch

Help make your community safer!

8. New patch information

Find out who are your new Housing and Income Management Officers.

10. Don't ignore your tenancy agreement

Unity will respond if you don't comply

10. Take control of condensation

It's your responsibility to prevent it

11. Moving into another Unity property

What you need to know if you're looking for a move

Office closure on Thursday 11th October

Our main office (113-117 Chapeltown Road) will be CLOSED on **Thursday 11th October** due to staff training. The office will reopen Friday 12th October at 9am.

If you have an out of office emergency repair please ring **0113 200 7700** and select from the options provided to be diverted.

Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Unity has appointed a new painting and decorating contractor

Introducing: Bell Group

Unity has recently announced that the Bell Group will be our new painting and decorating contractor.



Whilst the Bell Group are considered a market leader, the Group remains a family owned and operated company.

The Group's main objective is to provide the optimum quality of workmanship in all aspects of the services that they offer; as an organisation, they pride themselves on more than just the finished product. They seek out business opportunities to build employee and community skills and are considered one of the largest employers of apprentices within the construction industry.

The Bell Group will be taking over the painting and decorating contract from Bagnalls. Unity would like to thank Bagnalls for their tremendous work over the years, however we are excited for a new journey with the Bell Group.

Be aware of bogus callers!

The aim of a bogus caller is to try and talk their way into your home. If someone attends your property, follow this simple advice to avoid being tricked:

STOP: is anyone expected? Is the back door locked?

CHAIN: Put the chain on before answering.

CHECK: Ask for ID. Contact Unity if you are unsure: **0113 200 7700.**

Meet our new members of staff!

As Unity grows and we build more properties, our staffing team needs to grow with it. You may have noticed some new faces over the past few months so here is a little introduction to our new staff members.



Monique
Business Admin
Apprentice

Previously, Monique was at college studying Level 3 Business with Contract Law for 2 years and is now doing Level 3 Business Admin Apprenticeship. Monique has joined the regeneration team and will be working on a wide variety of services within the department.



Sue
Customer Services
Advisor

Some of you may recognise Sue from her previous time at Unity in 2010. She returned March of this year, filling in the end of the week with Customer Services.



Stuart
Housing Officer

Stuart has worked in the housing sector for over 10 years in a number of different capacities. Stuart joins Unity after working in a Housing Officer role for Connect Housing.

Information about the changes to patches can be found on pages 8 and 9.



Andrew
Housing Administrator

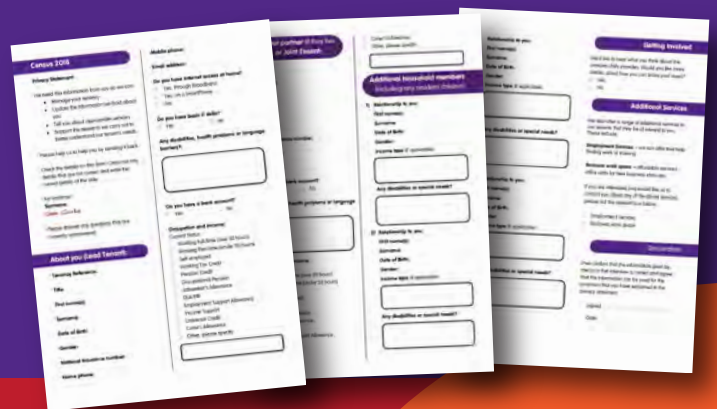
Andrew has 11 years of experience working at the Department of Housing, with roles in customer services and lettings, before moving to a role within the METRO. Andrew will provide administrative support to the busy housing team.

Help us to improve our services by returning your Census form

Unity carries out a Census of all our tenants about once every four years so that we know who is living in our properties.

We need this information from you so we can manage your tenancy, update the information we hold about you, tell you about appropriate services and the support the research we carry out to better understand our tenant's needs. We will be telephoning and visiting tenants who have not yet returned their Census. If you need another copy then please let us know.

Thank you to all tenants who have already completed the form. This is a great help to us.



Universal Credit help

Universal Credit is real. It will happen from 10th October, if you need to make a claim for help with money and rent it's likely to be UC, it is confusing, it is challenging, it is different, it is online and it will be paid to you. If you remember nothing else about it remember **we can help!**

Congratulations to Ms S, Beeston who is the winner of the £50 repairs satisfaction survey prize draw!

Universal Credit is here

Contact us if you are making the change

Universal Credit is finally being introduced to Leeds in full online on the 10th October 2018.

Universal Credit replaces:



Are you 18 - 65 years old? If so,

From 10th October 2018, if you apply for a benefit or have to change your benefit you may have to apply for Universal Credit for financial help.

A quick reminder of Universal Credit:

- ✓ Gives **you all** your money **once a month**, into your **bank account**;
- ✓ Most of your **old benefits will end**, it replaces Housing Benefit;
- ✓ It pays you while you work;
- ✓ Pays you in "**arrears**" up to five weeks late;
- ✓ It is applied for and managed **online**.

To apply for Universal Credit you **must have**:

- ✓ A mobile phone number
- ✓ An email address
- ✓ A bank account
- ✓ Proof of ID
- ✓ A statement of rent and service charge.

Should you claim Universal Credit?

You may have no choice (if you don't already have a benefit), but if you are claiming for any other reason you should get advice first, to avoid being paid less than you already get.

Tell Unity when you are going to apply for Universal Credit

Our Income Management Officers may be available to help you apply online for Universal Credit. They also offer help completing online forms for **Discretionary Housing Payments** and signposting to debt advice.



Unity's Income Management Team

How to claim? (from 10th October)

Visit www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit and complete the online form.

Universal Credit only starts on the day you submit the completed application.

If you have no internet at home nor a mobile phone with internet, use a computer at the job centre or library.

If you have trouble using a computer ask your job centre, library or Unity for help.

You will need your personal details, financial details and those of the other people in your home, including children.

Remember even if you received housing benefit, or your landlord received it for you, you must tell them you pay rent.

If you have a partner at home they will also have to make a claim and add it to yours.

You will then wait five weeks for your first payment. If you will struggle to pay bills, you can apply for an advance loan online, but be careful do not borrow more than you need.

If you are in arrears already, you or Unity can apply for the housing costs to be paid to Unity. Ask your work coach about this at any time.

Whether Universal Credit is paid to you or your landlord it is **your responsibility to ensure your rent is paid in advance**.

Whilst your claim is being decided and during the life of your claim you will have to log into your online "journal". This is your Universal Credit claim website. You must look at this and do what you are told to do to receive your money.

For more detailed information visit:
www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/

What should you do now to prepare?

- ✓ Learn to use the internet on either a computer, a tablet or a smartphone;
- ✓ Create an email address for yourself and get used to using it;
- ✓ Open a basic bank account (not post office) if you don't already have one;
- ✓ Get used to paying bills by Standing Order or Direct Debit, so you can pay your rent in this way;
- ✓ Or download the ALLPAY app to your smartphone, you can use it to pay your rent, or register on the website www.allpayments.net to pay your rent that way instead;
- ✓ Save a little bit of money from your current earnings or benefit each payday, so that when you are paid late you have some savings to use for essentials.
- ✓ Trying budgeting monthly, imagining how much money you will get per month and spending from that budget each week. If you overspend and run out of money, get advice from www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk for an online budget planner and other money saving tips.

- ✓ Get debt advice now to help with any debts that will only get worse under Universal Credit.

When your claim is active

Log in to your journal regularly and do what it says;

Use your journal to see the money you will receive and when;

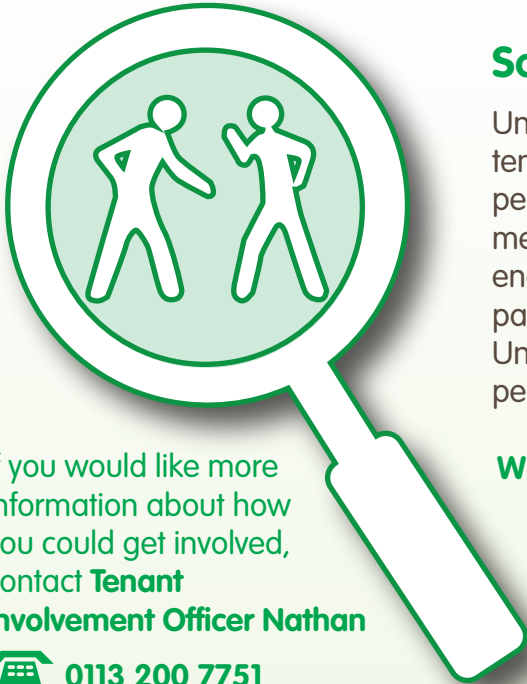
Record any changes, things you can't do, problems or questions for your work coach on your journal;

How can we help?


Unity's Employment Services can help you learn to use the internet, learn English, look for work and apply for jobs, making it easier to claim.

Unity's Income Management Team will help you manage your rent and arrears payments.

Unity's Scrutiny Panel investigates Tenants review anti-social behaviour



If you would like more information about how you could get involved, contact **Tenant Involvement Officer Nathan**

 **0113 200 7751**

 **nathan.dale@unityha.co.uk**

Nuisance Neighbour Evicted!

A tenant who made his neighbours lives a misery by playing loud music has been evicted.

Not long after Mr A moved in we started to get complaints about loud music. We tried to work with the tenant to get him to be more considerate to his neighbours, but the loud music continued. We extended Mr A's starter tenancy in the hope that things would improve. When the situation didn't improve Unity decided to take legal action. At court the judge granted Unity a possession order and Mr A was ordered to pay £1,300 towards legal costs.

We'd like to say a big thank you to those tenants who came forward and told us about the problem.

Scrutiny Panel investigates... Unity's ASB service

Unity's Scrutiny Panel was re-established in August 2017 to allow tenants to have more strategic involvement in assessing Unity's performance and procedures. The panel was made up of six members of the Tenant Panel who were selected due to their engagement and enthusiasm for service improvement at Unity. The panel were then given the opportunity to select a particular area of Unity's services that they wanted to conduct a review of, based on the performance statistics.

Why was anti-social behaviour selected?

Anti-social behaviour was discussed amongst the panel and they were in agreement that it is an important aspect of housing management because tenants want to feel safe in their homes.

Methodology

During the entirety of this review the panel committed to six meetings over a number of weeks to analyse the service, which included interviewing key members of staff who are involved in anti-social behaviour.

Findings and recommendations

The panel organised their findings into four different categories: communications and publicity, training, performance management and service delivery. Main recommendations made were:

- More regular workshops for staff on Unity's procedures provided by all areas of the organisation
- Conduct monthly progress meetings with the Housing Manager, reviewing a variety of open & closed cases, looking at the feedback
- Log all cases, included those solved on site, to show how many reports are made in the quarter
- A follow up call/home visit after a case has closed and better efforts to get feedback from service users
- Ensure that ASB reported out on an estate or in the office is logged correctly and a case opened
- Better publicise the 'good news stories' of ASB cases, such as enforcement, in the tenant newsletter and on the website.

The full report has been passed onto Unity's Housing Manager who has created an action plan for the recommendations. The Panel would like to extend their thanks to all of the Unity staff that dedicated their time and honesty to this review.

Join/start a Neighbourhood Watch

Help make your community safer



What is Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbourhood Watch...

- does not have to take up much time.
- is a proactive partnership to create a safer place to live.
- is free to set up and communication can be done online

Is Neighbourhood Watch for me?

Do you want to...

- make a difference in the community you live in?
- take simple steps to help prevent crime?
- bring neighbours together and generate community spirit?

What does Neighbourhood Watch involve?

You will be asked to...

- keep up to date with local concerns by talking to neighbours.
- take crime prevention measures to protect your property.
- tackle local issues by working with partner agencies.
- look out for each other, particularly elderly neighbours and those who are on holiday

Additional Information

If you would like more information on joining/starting a scheme, please contact your local Neighbourhood Watch Officer or Neighbourhood Policing Team.

If you do not know who your local officer is then contact your local police, either via email or phonecall, and ask for your local Neighbourhood Watch Officer:

 wyp.nhw@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk

 101

More information can also be found by visiting the West Yorkshire Police website:
www.westyorkshire.police.uk/nhw.

Unity celebrated our 31st year of service

Unity paid tribute to the bravery of black and minority ethnic Commonwealth soldiers in the First World War at our Annual General Meeting. Unity themed the AGM to coincide with the centenary year of Armistice Day.

It was addressed by Colonel Karl Harris, Chair of the British Army's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network, which aims to help inform, support and inspire men and women from ethnic minorities. Colonel Harris recently completed a year-long deployment to Iraq as the United Kingdom's Special Defence Adviser to the Ministry of Peshmerga, supporting the Kurdistan Regional Government's Peshmerga Reform Programme.

He was followed by Lucy Moore, Projects Curator: First World War for Leeds Museums and Galleries. The meeting began with a performance from leading Bradford south Asian arts organisation Kala Sangam, which specialises in Bharatanatyam dance and Carnatic music.



New patch information

Find out who is your new HO and IMO

There has been a change to which officer is responsible to each patch!

We have a new Housing Officer, Stuart Rippin, who has joined the team which means that every Unity property has a new Housing Officer and Income Management Officer.

You may remember that a leaflet was sent out to your property informing you of the changes. Please find the patch with your street name on and the contact details for your new officers.

Your new officers are now underway with estate visits and health checks to get to know their patches.

Please feel free to contact your new officers with any questions. For rent questions you may also email rents@unityha.co.uk, and for housing or tenancy questions you may also email housing@unityha.co.uk.

Patch 1

Housing Officer

Rashpal Sahota

 0113 200 7705

 rashpal.sahota@unityha.co.uk



Income Management Officer

Russell Sergeant

 0113 200 7752

 russell.sergeant@unityha.co.uk

Properties covered

Alcester Terrace	Elford Place West	Mandela Court	Pennythorne Drive	Savile Road
Arthington Terrace	Ellers Grove	Maryfield Crescent	Ponderosa Close	School Mews
Bayswater Grove	Ellers Road	Mexborough Avenue	Poole Crescent	Scotthall Green
Bayswater Mount	Fearnville Road	Mexborough Drive	Poole Road	Scotthall Grove
Bayswater Place	Fieldhouse Drive	Mexborough Grove	Reginald Mount	Scotthall Square
Bayswater Row	Hardrow Road	Mexborough Place	Reginald Place	Sefton Terrace
Bayswater Terrace	Highfield Crescent	Mexborough Street	Reginald Row	Stratford Court
Bexley Grove	Highfield Gardens	Mistress Lane	Reginald Street	Sutherland Road
Bexley Place	Highthorne Street	Mitford Road	Reginald Terrace	Tagore House
Briarsdale Mews	Hill Top Mount	Model Avenue	Reginald View	Trinity Court
Chapeltown Road	Juniper Place	Montagu Avenue	Reyden Mews	Umoja House
Colenso Mount	Kimberley Place	Nowell Place	Royal Park Grove	Upland Gardens
Copgrove Road	Kitchener Place	Oldfield Lane	Royal Park View	Wesley Road
Cowper Grove	Kitchener Street	Olrika Court	Ruthven View	Willow Tree Close
Dorset Road	Lawrence Gardens	Parkwood Crescent	Ryan Place	
Elford Grove	Luxor Road	Parkwood Road	Savile Place	

Patch 2

Housing Officer

Stuart Rippin

 0113 200 7747

 stuart.rippin@unityha.co.uk



Income Management Officer

Matthew Hull

 0113 200 7733

 matthew.hull@unityha.co.uk

Properties covered

Back Sholebroke Ave	Devon Close	Haslewood View	Rington Road	Sholebroke View
Belvedere Avenue	Fielding Gate	Hessle Road	Rosebank Crescent	Stonegate Grove
Beverley Avenue	Fielding Gate Mews	Hird Street	Rossington Place	Stratford Avenue
Beverley Square	Gathorne Terrace	Joy Row	Runswick Street	Stratford Street
Briarsdale Garth	The Grange	Lodge Lane	Sholebroke Avenue	Stratford Terrace
Brown Lane East	Harlech Park Court	Markham Avenue	Sholebroke Court	Sussex Avenue
Burlington Road	Harlech Road	Midland Drive	Sholebroke Mount	Tempest Place
Chapel Fold	Harlech Terrace	Pasture Road	Sholebroke Place	Tempest Road
Chapelton Road	Harding Villas	Pepper Lane	Sholebroke Street	Thorn Drive
Dawson Road	Haslewood Drive	Recreation Grove	Sholebroke Terrace	Thornfield Way

Patch 3

Housing Officer

Kamila Maqsood

 0113 200 7723

 kamila.maqsood@unityha.co.uk



Income Management Officer

Sam Mnyama

 0113 200 7737

 sam.mnyama@unityha.co.uk

Properties covered

Ashton Court	Dodgson Avenue	Hares Mount	Louis Street	Servia Drive
Bellbrook Place	Fir Tree Approach	Hartley Avenue	Marian Terrace	Shay Street
Bentley Gardens	Frankland Place	Hillcrest Avenue	Meanwood Road	Spencer Place
Bentley Lane	Glenthorpe Crescent	Hilcrest View	Newton Grove	Stainbeck Avenue
Blackmoor Road	Gordon Terrace	Holborn Court	Newton Park View	Stainbeck Road
Blenheim View	Grange Avenue	Hovingham Avenue	Oatland Green	Stonegate Crescent
Carlton Grove	Grange View	Hovingham Mount	Pear Tree House	Stonegate Drive
Cliff Terrace	Hamilton Avenue	Jackie Smart Court	Rigton Green	Stonegate Edge
Cowper Street	Harehills Avenue	Leicester Close	Roundhay Avenue	Unity Close
Deighton View	Harehills Road	Leopold Street	Roundhay Mount	Vicars Terrace

Don't ignore your tenancy agreement

Unity will respond if you don't comply

Complying with your conditions of tenancy is important. If you ignore your responsibilities Unity may take action against you. In the last couple of months, we have taken legal action against 3 tenants who ignored our warnings:

Case One: Failing to allow Unity access

A tenant who persistently refused or ignored our attempts to gain access to their home to carry out an essential electrical safety check was taken to court. We arranged several appointments with the contractor and sent a number of letters to the tenant including warnings about legal action. In the end we were left with no alternative and our solicitors were asked to apply to the courts for an injunction order. At the court hearing the tenant promised the judge that they would let us in.

Case Two: Subletting without our permission

A tenant who sub let his home with the intention of profiting financially from his Unity tenancy has been evicted. A court dismissed the tenants defence and ordered that he should move out of his home.

Remember that if you want to take in a lodger or sublet part of your home you need to contact your Housing Officer and get permission first.

Case Three: Not looking after your home and garden

A tenant who allowed their home to become filled with clutter was ordered by a court to clear it out. Several rooms in the house could not be used and the garden was overgrown and full of rubbish. The judge ordered the tenant to remove the clutter, clear the garden and look after it properly.

Legal action has a cost implication to Unity, which prevents us from investing money into improving our homes. In all the above cases we tried to persuade the tenants to comply with their conditions of tenancy. Taking tenants to court is not something we like doing but if all else fails we will use legal action to ensure tenants comply with their conditions of tenancy.

Take control of condensation

It's your responsibility to prevent it

One of the most common complaints Unity receives from people living in our properties is about 'damp', when in fact the problem is caused by condensation.

Condensation occurs when warm air collides with cold surfaces, or when there's too much humidity in your home. This is especially common in winter, when your central heating system comes on in the cooler hours of the mornings and evenings.

As a tenant, you are responsible for ensuring there is no condensation in your home. Unity **will not** deal with issues involving condensation.



Examples of condensation in Unity homes

If you're unsure about condensation, you can learn more from our leaflet: Water Damage & Condensation: unityha.co.uk/publications/leaflets. If you are unable to access the internet, we can provide you with a leaflet.

Moving into another Unity property

As the circumstances of existing Unity tenants change they may need to a move to accommodation which is more suited to their needs.

Unity does not prioritise current tenants when allocating homes. All tenants must register on the Leeds Homes Register and bid for properties that are advertised. We encourage you to inform your Housing Officer if you are looking to move, as they can advise you on the process.

By becoming a member of the Leeds Homes Register, tenants have more choice and a better chance of obtaining a move by having access to vacancies advertised by all participating landlords.

Unity and other social landlord advertise most empty homes in the Leeds Homes magazine. This is published weekly and copies are available in our office and online.

Specific priority may be given to tenants wishing to move to a home with fewer bedrooms where this would benefit their financial situation.

Are you eligible for a move?

For an existing Unity tenant to be eligible for a move to another Unity home they need to be:

- Registered on an existing choice based lettings scheme
- Have been a tenant for at least 12 months
- Have no rent arrears
- Have no outstanding repairs that they are responsible for
- Have no unresolved breaches of their tenancy



Unity shortlisted for three categories at 24 Housing Awards

Unity has been singled-out in the 'Community Achievement' and 'Customer Services Provider of the Year' categories at the 24 Housing Awards. Our CEO, Ali Akbor, has also been nominated for 'Chief Executive of the Year'.

Unity's Chief Executive, Ali Akbor, said,

"On behalf of all staff, I am absolutely thrilled that our work has been acknowledged in this way. The nomination for 'Community Achievement' is a direct result of the hard work put in by our Employment Services team which last year helped 366 people into training, employment and volunteering.

"The shortlisting for 'Customer Services Provider of the Year' is a true group effort with Unity employees at all levels playing their full part."

The results will be announced 18th October.



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.

