

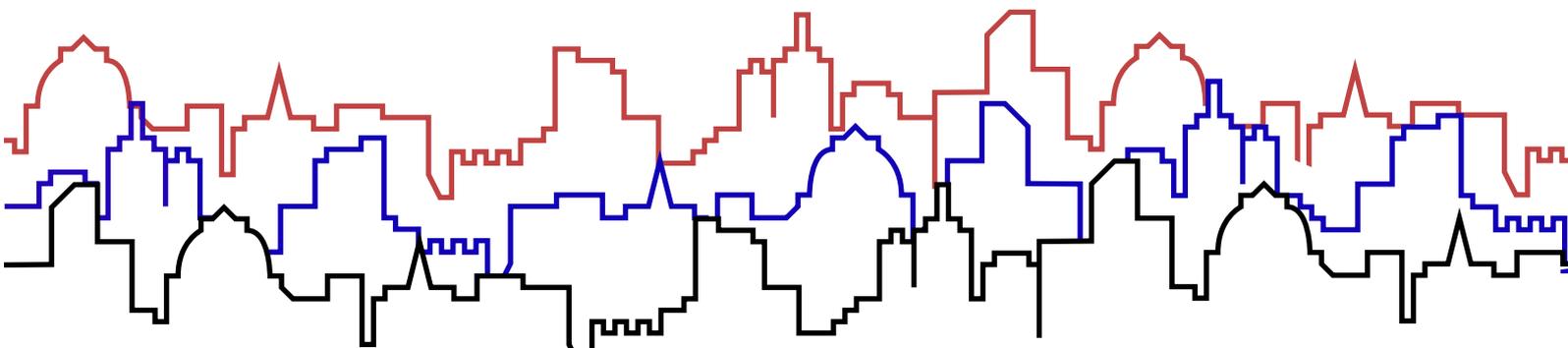
Resident Involvement Strategy 2020-2022



"Unity is an organisation committed to building strong sustainable neighbourhoods through the provision of high quality housing, social and employment opportunities"

Contents

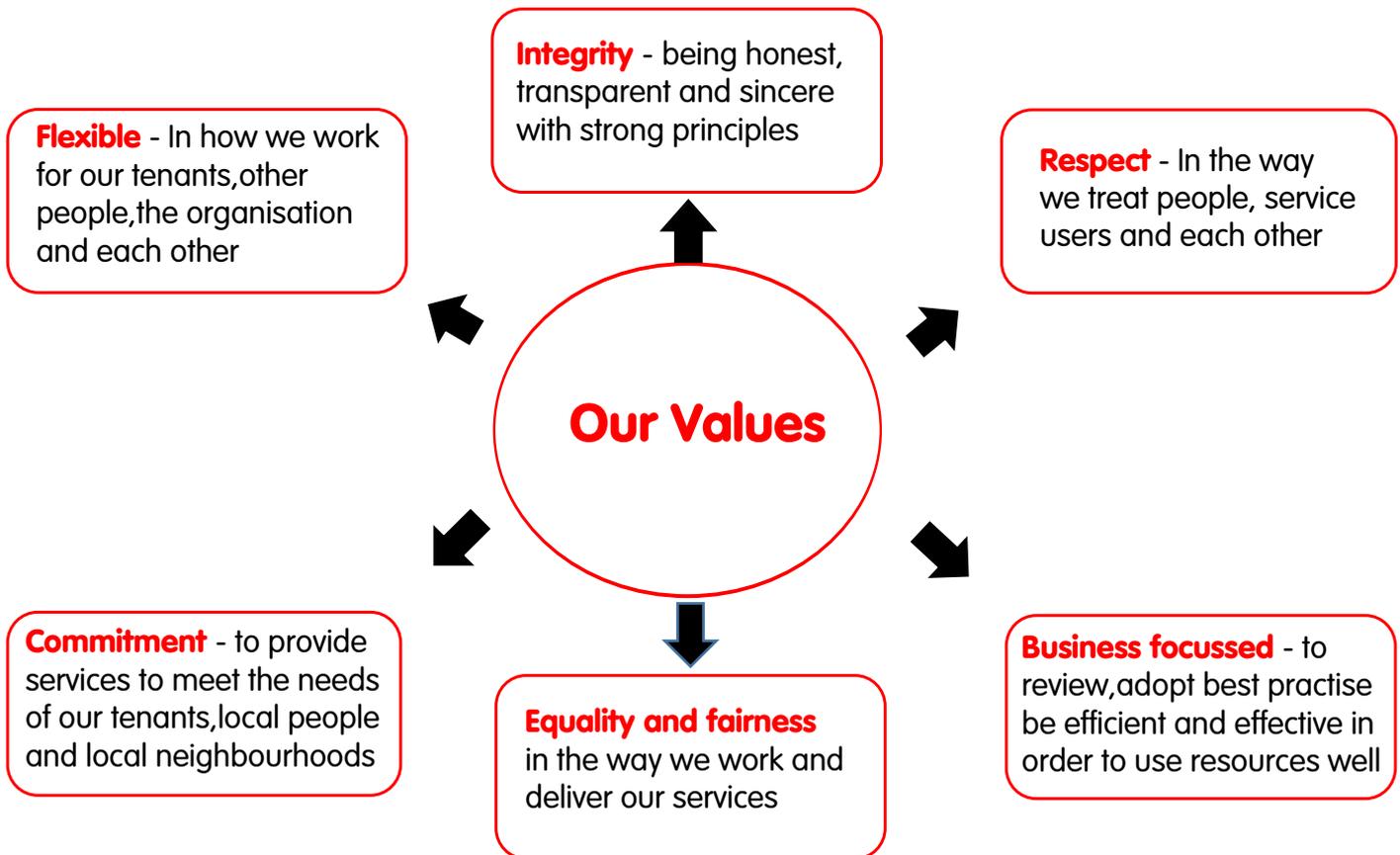
- 3 Mission, Objectives & Values**
- 4 Background & Rationale**
- 5 About Unity**
- 6 Unity Housing Stock**
- 7 Unity Housing Stock profile**
- 8 Tenant Profile**
- 9 Tenant Involvement Structure**
- 10 Current Involvement Methods**
- 11 Current Involvement Methods**
- 12 Involvement in the Community**
- 13 Involvement in the Community**
- 14 Removing Barriers to Tenant Involvement**
- 15 Tenant Involvement our aims**
- 16 Acheiving our aims through the action plan**
- 17 Acheiving our aims through the action plan**



3. Mission, Objectives and Values

Our Mission

Provide housing choice, improve life opportunities and address inequalities.



Our Objectives

Provide and continue to develop good quality mixed tenure housing which reflects needs and aspirations.

Provide high quality affordable housing services.

Provide and facilitate business support services and encourage local enterprise.

Involve and work with our tenants and the communities we serve to inform and improve services.

Work with partners to encourage and support the regeneration of our target neighbourhoods.

Be a progressive and expanding business with a sound resource base

4. Background and Rationale

Introduction

This 2020 - 2022 Resident Involvement Strategy sets out how Unity intends to engage with and involve its residents and the people from their communities.

Since the previous resident involvement strategy was written we have seen the impact of the government's welfare reforms. Universal credit has been introduced and this has presented a host of new challenges to tenants and our organisation. The investigation into the Grenfell Fire Tragedy in June 2017 put into focus the relationship landlords have with their tenants. One of the findings of the investigation was the need for tenants be given a strong voice with which to hold their landlord to account for the services they provide and also have a stronger platform to scrutinise service delivery.

In August 2018 the government introduced the Green Paper: A New Deal for Social Housing. One of the principles of the paper set out a number of ways to ensure resident's voices are heard these included a call for landlords to make performance information accessible and clear to residents and a regulatory review. The National Housing Federation has introduced an action plan known as Together with tenants which aims to introduce a new code of governance, a tenants charter, resident oversight and Scrutiny and a closer tenant link to regulation.

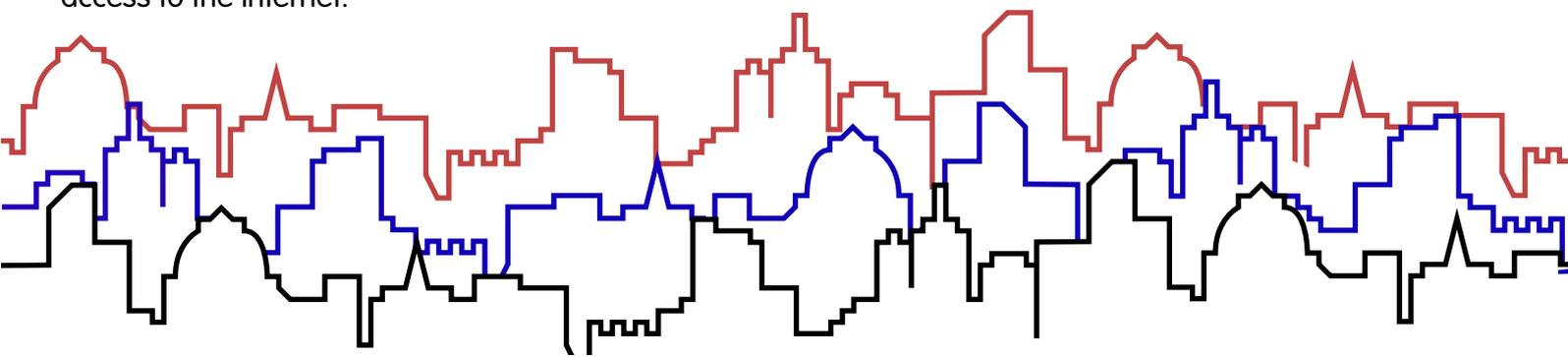
At Unity we have a strong track record of tenant participation employing a range of means for tenants to provide us with feedback across the spectrum of issues on the housing agenda. We encourage involvement from our tenants to provide feedback on our services by traditional methods such as surveys and meetings, but understand that resident involvement needs to adapt to the way residents engage with information, digital change is happening, in 2019 93% of all UK households have access to the internet.



We will provide more choice on how our tenants engage with us, through online platforms, more estate specific services with the aim to become a more inclusive and accessible organisation reaching a larger tenant base as our stock portfolio grows.

Unity aims to celebrate our BME status and the unique demographic of our tenant profile by inviting tenants from a wide variety of backgrounds (ages, ethnicities and cultures) to influence service delivery. We will endeavour to ensure that no particular sector's views are under-represented.

We hope that by employing these measures and by exploiting every opportunity available to seek tenant feedback we will continue to improve service delivery, help tenants to maintain their tenancies and promote harmonious and prosperous neighbourhoods and communities.



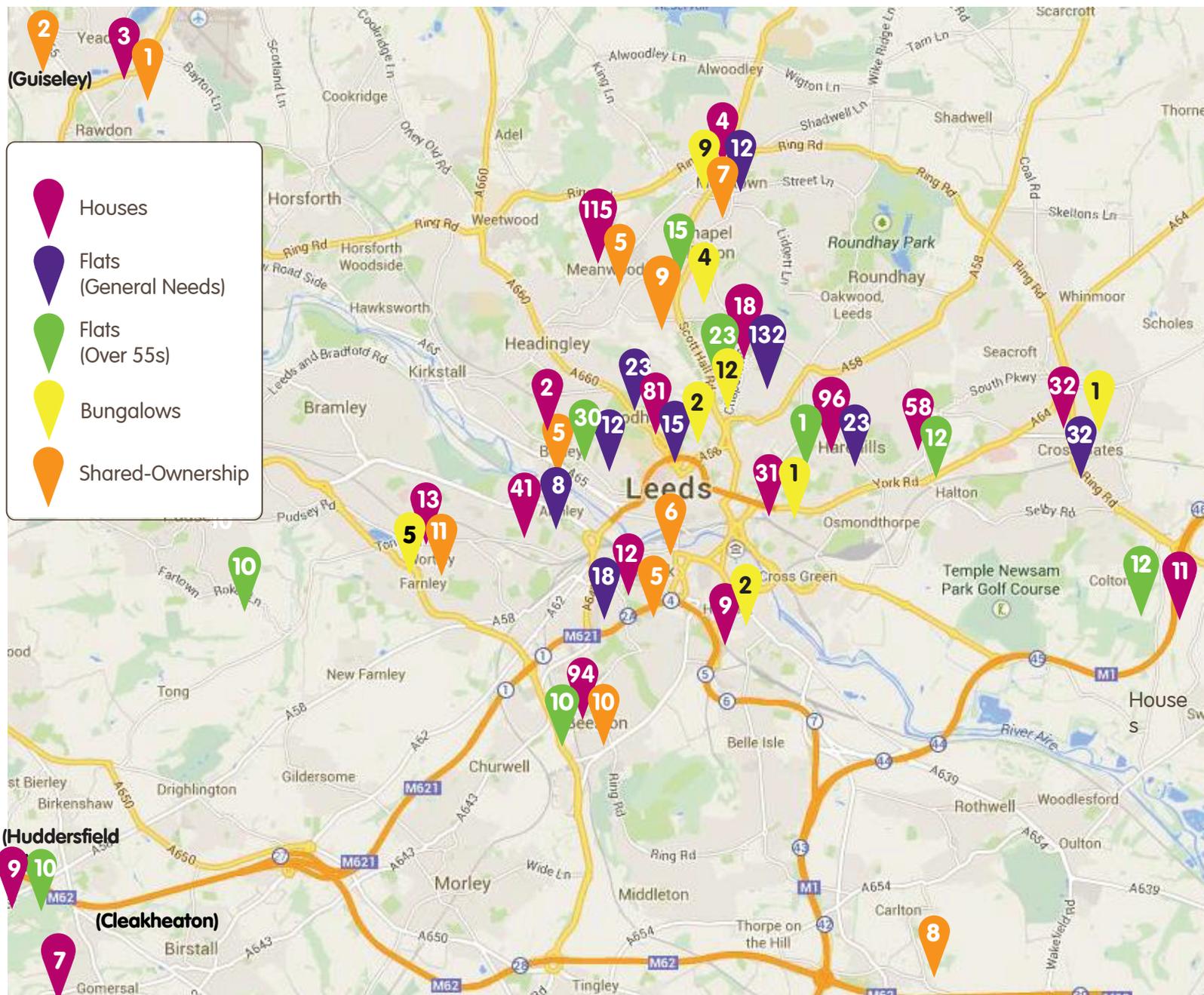
5. A Map of Unity Homes

About Unity

Unity is a Leeds-based, black and minority ethnic housing association. As at January 2020, we manage 1310 properties, which include 1240 rented and 70 shared ownership homes.

Unity does not have large estates, or multi-rise flats. The majority of our properties are family homes on small housing estates. Around one fifth of Unity properties are miscellaneous rehabs, largely Victorian houses. The bulk of our stock is in the areas of Chapeltown, Harehills, Meanwood and Beeston, although we have properties in most areas of Leeds and have a small number of properties in Huddersfield and Cleakheaton.

As you can see on the map below, the majority of our stock is in Leeds



6. Unity Housing Stock

Breakdown of unity properties as at (Feb 2020)

	Refurb house	Newbuild House	Refurb Flat	Newbuild Flat	Over 55's Flat	Over 55's Bungalow	Shared Ownership	Total
Armley	3	38		8				49
Beeston	16	78			10		10	114
Burley	2			30	12		5	49
Burmantofts	1	30				1		32
Chapelton	111	78	86	46	23	12		356
Chapel Allerton					15	4	9	28
Cleakheaton		7						7
Crossgates		32		32		1		65
Gipton	3	55			12			70
Guiseley							2	2
Harehills	36	60	23				1	120
Holbeck	1	11		18			5	34
Huddersfield		9			10			19
Hunslet		9				2		11
Kippax		11			12			23
Leeds Central							6	6
Little London	2	79	5	18				104
Meanwood	2	113					5	120
Moortown		4		12		9	7	32
Pudsey					10			10
West Ardsley							8	8
Woodhouse				15		2		17
Wortley	1	12				5	11	30
Yeadon		3					1	4
Total	178	629	114	179	104	36	70	1310

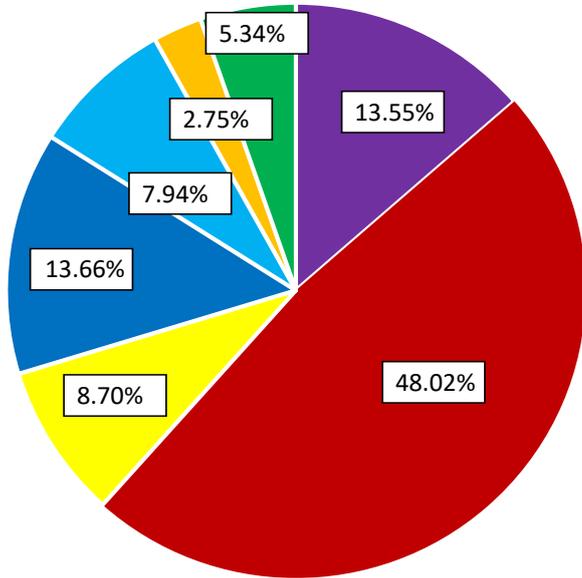
Changes in our stock profile

We have increased our housing stock by 113 homes or 8.7% since the previous tenant involvement strategy was produced in 2016, the housing category that has seen the largest increase in percentage terms is in the number of refurbished flats that we own with an increase of 27.2% this was due to our acquisition of properties

in harehills. There has also been a 22% rise in accommodation for over 55's with 23 new properties being added to our housing stock. Overall Unity's properties are situated in the Leeds Postcode area with the properties in Huddersfield and Cleakheaton making up only 2% of our stock.

7. Unity Housing Stock Profile

Stock Profile (as at Jan 2020)



- Newbuild house
- Over 55's Bungalow
- Newbuild Flat
- Over 55's flat
- Shared ownership
- Refurbished house
- Refurbished flat

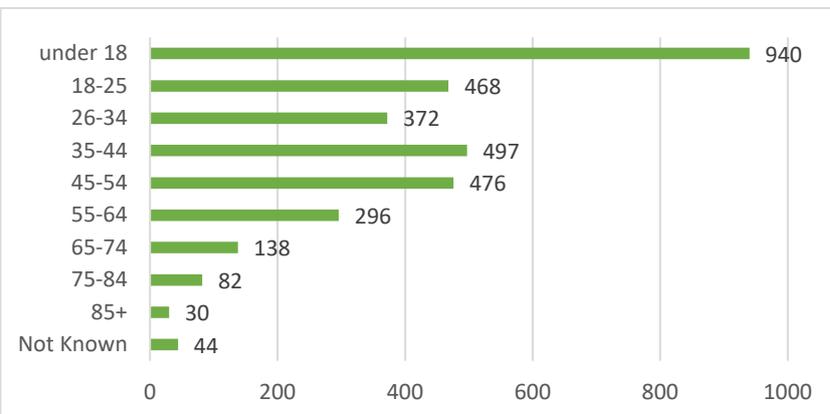
It is very important that our tenant involvement strategy is inclusive for all age groups. We will cater for different age groups by holding a variety of events that are designed to cover each age category, having undertaken consultation on what our tenants want through the results of satisfaction surveys.

We will ensure that involvement is not excluded to any age group, hosting meetings outside of office hours and providing opportunities for tenants to share their views without having to attend meetings

We will employ a Social Media Strategy to facilitate engagement with tenants who are online ensuring that our tenants have a digital platform to enter competitions and complete surveys online and by using text messaging. Tenants who have a SmartPhone have been able to complete feedback forms by accessing the link enclosed within the email/text message. We have found that this quick and convenient method of engagement is favoured by our younger tenants.

Tenant Age Profile

Ages of people living in Unity's households



We have 3345 people living in Unity households, (as at January 2020), the number of under 18s is the largest category and this is a reflection of our housing stock as over 60% of our homes are family houses. Since the previous involvement strategy was produced we have also seen the 55-64 age category increase.

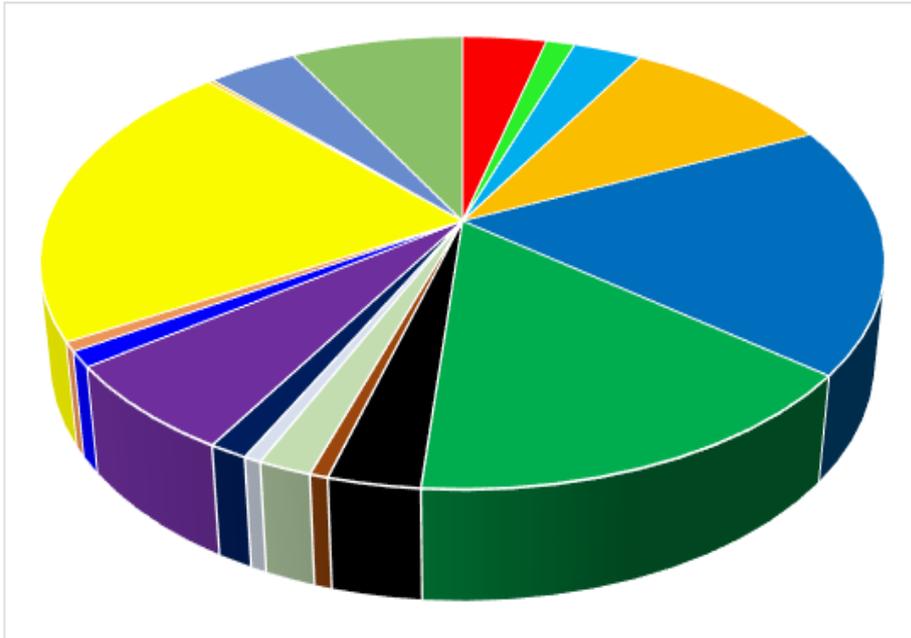
Although digital technology offers us a way of reaching more of our tenants we will ensure that this does not take away our presence in the community. Our housing staff will continue to seek feedback from our tenants door to door, as there will always be people who prefer this method of communicating with us.

We will encourage the take up of tenant involvement for different age groups by working with local community organisations who can provide our tenants with specific age ranged activities, these range from childrens activities in the summer holidays to gardening groups for our older residents.

The age of our tenants should not be a barrier to tenant involvement and we will continue to assist our tenants to attend events for example providing child care for young parents, or holding a focus group at an over 55's scheme instead of holding it at our offices.

8. Tenant Profile

Ethnicity



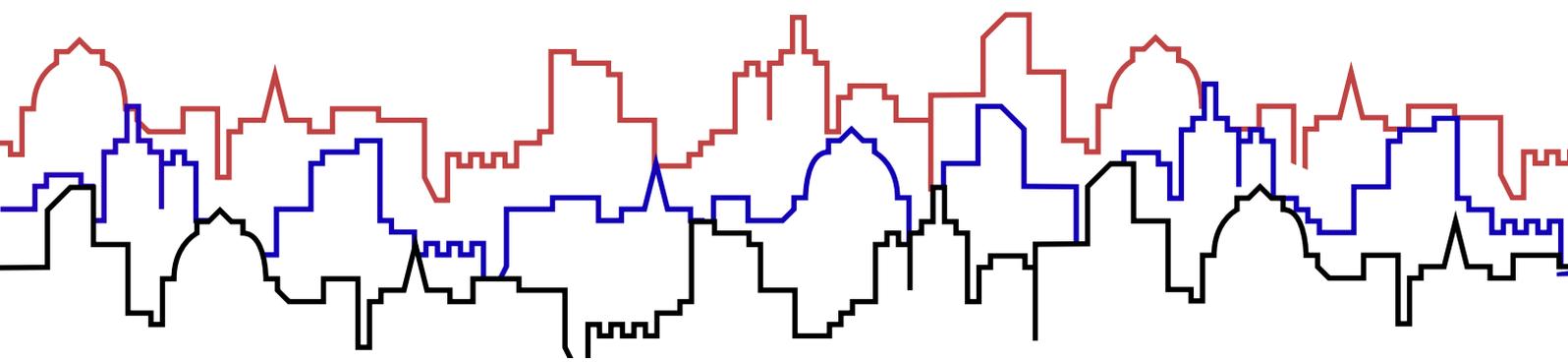
Breakdown of Ethnicity by percentage

- 3.8% Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi)
- 1.3% Asian or Asian British (Indian)
- 3.1% Asian or Asian British (Other)
- 9.5% Asian or Asian British (Pakistani)
- 17.8% Black or Black British African
- 15.5% Black or Black British Caribbean
- 3.0% Black or Black British Other
- 0.6% Chinese
- 1.7% Mixed Other
- 0.6% Mixed White and Asian
- 1.2% Mixed White and Black African
- 6.4% Mixed White and Black Caribbean
- 1.1% Other
- 0.6% Refused
- 21.1% White British
- 0.2% White Irish
- 4.1% White Other
- 7.9% Blank

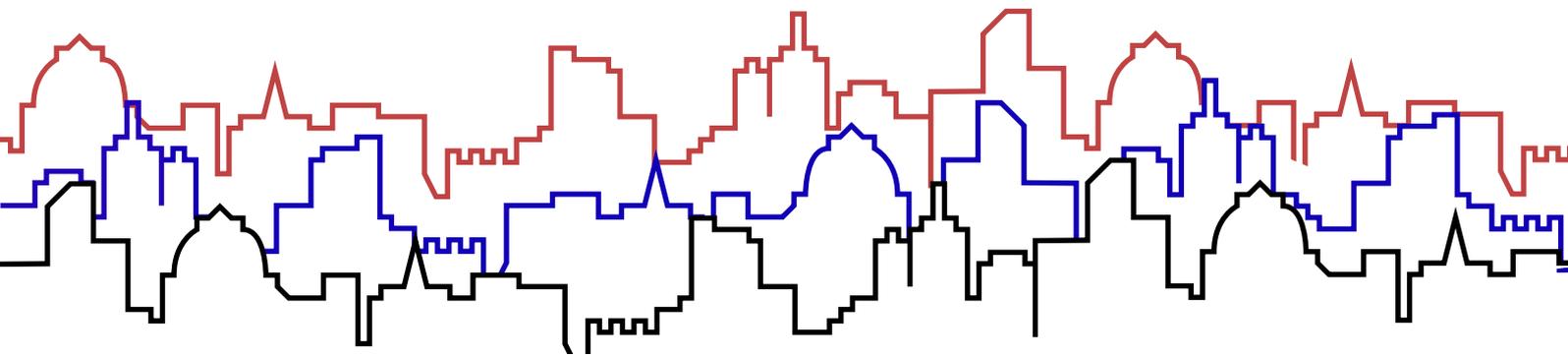
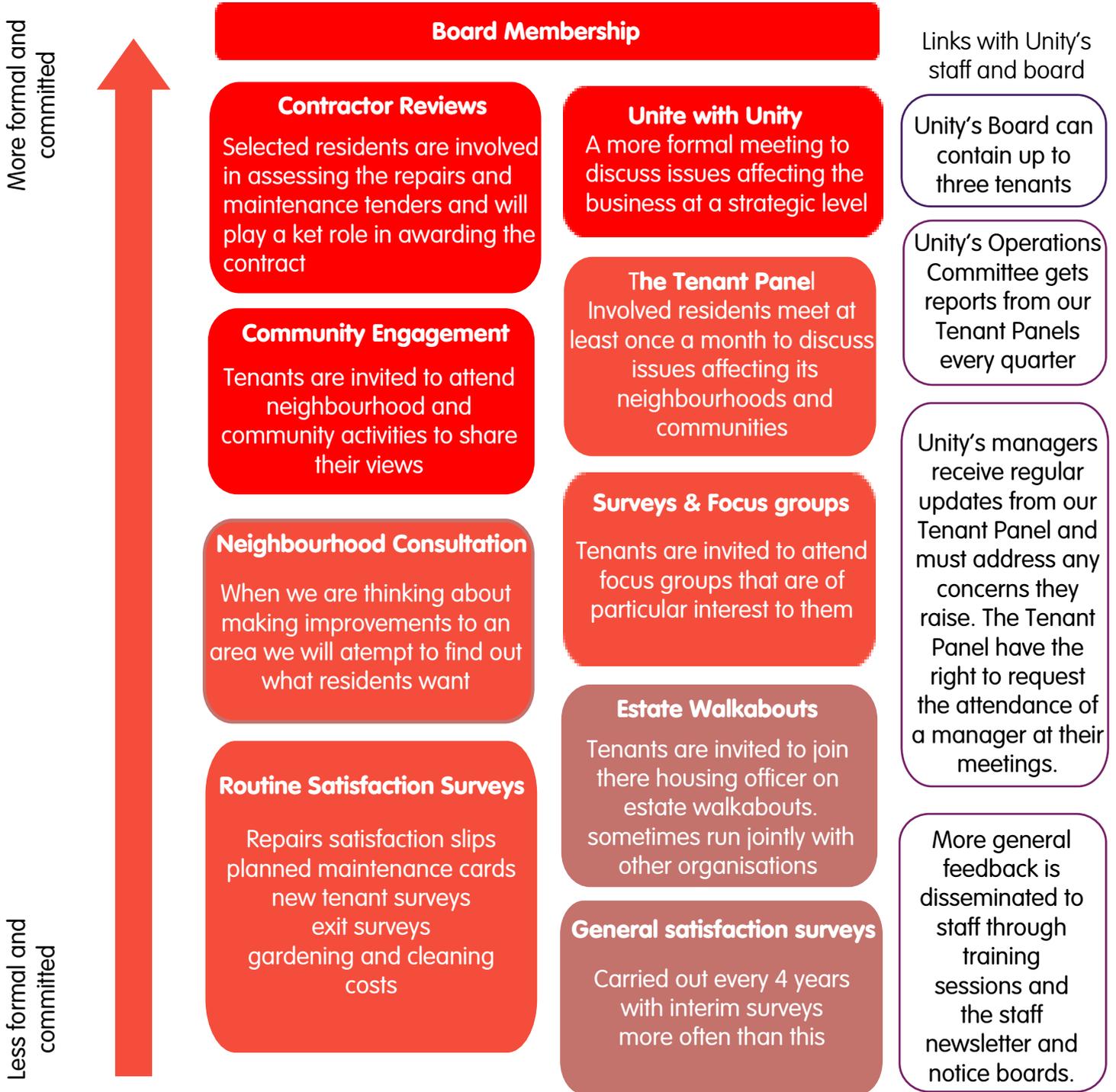
A target of over 50% of all our housing lets are made to people from a BME Origin and the results of this can be seen in the chart above with no one cultural group dominating our tenant profile

Unity's status as a Black Minority Ethnic organisation provides us with a unique opportunity to gain customer insight from a range of cultural perspectives. Our tenant panel reflects the diverse nature of our tenant profile with representation from people of different ethnic groups coming together to engage with Unity.

We must make sure that no ethnicity feels excluded by the way we engage with tenants and that we listen to the opinions of each group and ensure language barriers or cultural differences do not stop tenants from taking part in consultation exercises. We will evaluate the effectiveness of any tenant involvement by looking at satisfaction with our services and ensuring that is the same for all ethnic groups. We will continue to promote our accessibility information so that tenants who do not feel confident at reading, writing or speaking English can be involved in other ways.



9. Tenant Involvement Structure



10. Current Involvement methods

Unity has a well established system of tenant involvement, this follows our commitment value with the aims 'to provide services to meet the needs of our tenants, local people and local neighbourhoods'. we do this by offering our tenants a voice in how are services are delivered, listed below is the methods we currently use.

The Sign Up

Every person who signs a tenancy agreement for a Unity home is introduced to our resident involvement opportunities as part of the sign up process, they are given a leaflet by their housing officer and asked if they would want to become an involved resident.

Meet your Neighbour Events

When we take handover of a new housing scheme we invite everybody who is moving into the homes to attend a welcome event, this way people can get to know their neighbours but also help to form sustainable communities through friendships.



Satisfaction Surveys

Completing a satisfaction survey is perhaps one of the simplest ways in which we ask tenants for their feedback each time they access a service. We have carried out our surveys door to door and have also posted these out to tenants. The results of the surveys including the percentage numbers of completions is monitored at our operations meetings every 3 months.



The Newsletter

Every 3 months a newsletter is sent to all Unity residents, the content of the each issue provides information on what Unity is doing, for example what new properties are being built. It is interactive with tenants being asked to write in with their comments and suggestions, ways to be an involved tenant are also advertised.

Current Surveys used

- Repairs satisfaction survey
- Planned Maintenance satisfaction
- Gas Maintenance satisfaction
- Post complaint satisfaction
- New tenant visit survey
- End of tenancy survey
- Tenant satisfaction survey

11. Current Involvement methods

The Tenant Panel

Unity's tenant panel has been established since 2010 and is made up of 15 – 20 residents of our homes who attend a meeting every 2 months. The only requirement to being able to attend a tenant panel meeting is that you are living in a Unity property. The panel are consulted on areas such as maintenance, welfare reform, lettings, anti- social behaviour and landscaping. The existing panel members are experienced and have been part of the panel for a number of years. The panel members live in the areas of Chapeltown, Chapel Allerton, Harehills, Meanwood and Moortown, which make up 51% of our housing stock. As Unity grows and we add to our property portfolio its our aim to ensure that we facilitate the views of tenants throughout our stock by seeking new tenant panel members to bring new ideas and perspectives to tenant involvement.

Unite with Unity

Unite with Unity, established was to created as a more formal forum for the scrutiny of Unity's performance, it is made up of a group of 4-6 tenants who have experience of analysing Unity's services having been on the Tenant panel. The aim is to make the scrutiny of Unity's key performance indicators accessible. Every quarter after our performance reports are produced a presentation is given to the group on what the performance data means and we ask them what we need to improve on. The group may wish to analyse a housing function further such as rent collection, their recommendations from these meetings are recorded in minutes and are discussed in housing operations meetings.

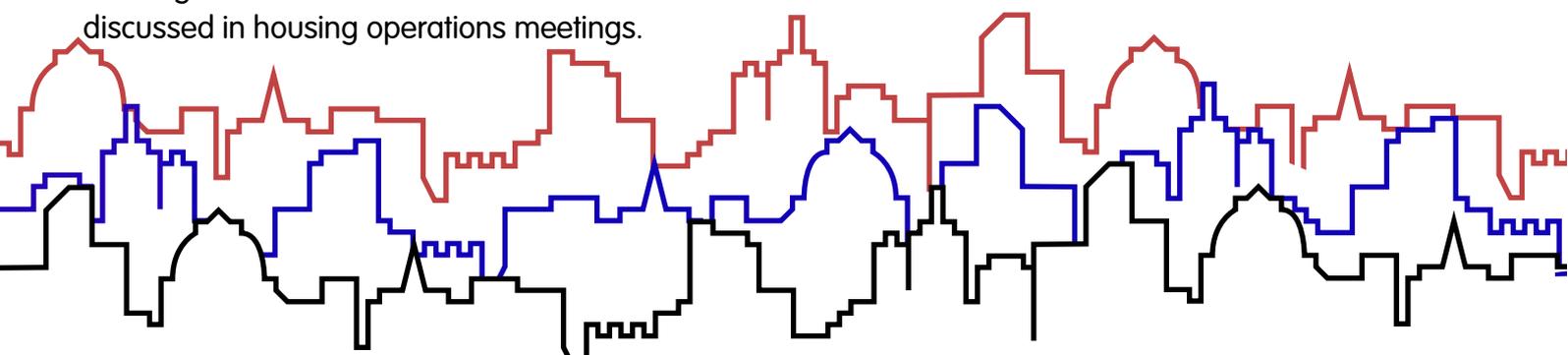


Ad-hoc Focus Groups

From time to time we may invite tenants with a particular interest to attend ad-hoc focus groups to gain their insight, this could contain a group of tenants who live in a particular area or have similar needs. In previous years we held a group meeting specifically for disabled tenants. The advantage of these groups is that participants do not need to commit to a programme of events.

Contractor Reviews

It is very important that we understand the satisfaction ratings our residents have of our contractors. As well as conducting surveys of their performance we undertake contractor reviews. Every year our contractors provide members of our tenant panel an update on their yearly performance and satisfaction levels. Members of our tenant panel review the services contractors have provided, and suggest improvements, this is very useful as our tenants have had first hand experience of areas such as repairs and the gardening service.



12. Involvement in the community

Community Activities

Tenant Involvement is not solely about encouraging tenants to share their views about Unity's housing services. It can also take place on a neighbourhood or community level.

By engaging with tenants on their own estates, we hope to promote harmonious neighbourhoods. Here are some examples of how we believe community activities will benefit our tenants:

Gardening Workshops

- ✓ Encourage residents to take care of their homes and gardens by providing free plants
- ✓ Encourage neighbours to interact with one another by hosting simple gardening workshops (aimed at children) so as to improve relationships between them
- ✓ Encourage tenants to grow their own fruit and vegetables at home so as to promote the importance of healthy living

Unity in Bloom Gardening Competition

- ✓ Encourage tenants to take pride in their gardens by providing an incentive for them to keep them well-maintained
- ✓ Include a 'fruit and vegetable' category to encourage residents to grow their own food at home
- ✓ The Tenant Panel serves as the judging Panel, encouraging them to take an active role in promoting prosperous communities.

Community Fun Days

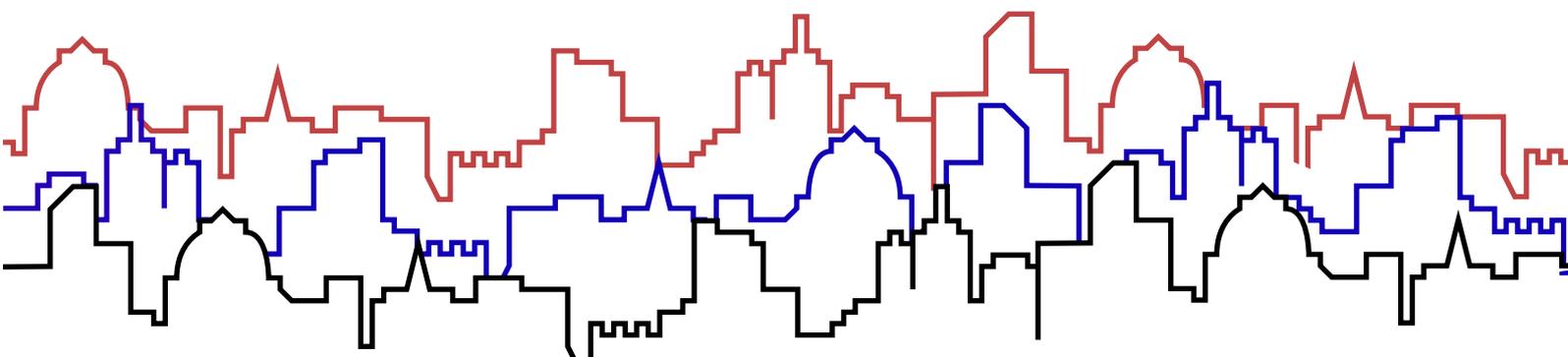
- ✓ To encourage neighbours to get to know one another and to alleviate tensions between households
- ✓ To promote Unity's presence in the neighbourhoods where we hold properties
- ✓ To promote social inclusion, and a free recreational facility for tenants who would not otherwise have access

Estate Walkabout with Police

- ✓ To garner information about where crime is occurring with a view to working with the police to resolve issues
- ✓ To provide residents with free information about to make their homes secure and prevent crime
- To promote the safety and wellbeing of residents

Community Action Days

- ✓ Encourage residents to take pride in their neighbourhoods and communities by hosting 'Action Days' to tackle problems such as weeds, overgrown foliage, flaking paint on fences and railings and moss on paving etc.
- ✓ Encourage resident to work in cohesion with one another to promote harmonious relationships between them.



13. Involvement in the community

The importance of staff getting to know the tenants and vice versa at such events should not be overlooked. There is a lot of value in understanding the diverse range of needs and preferences our tenants may have and often these are expressed in informal conversations.

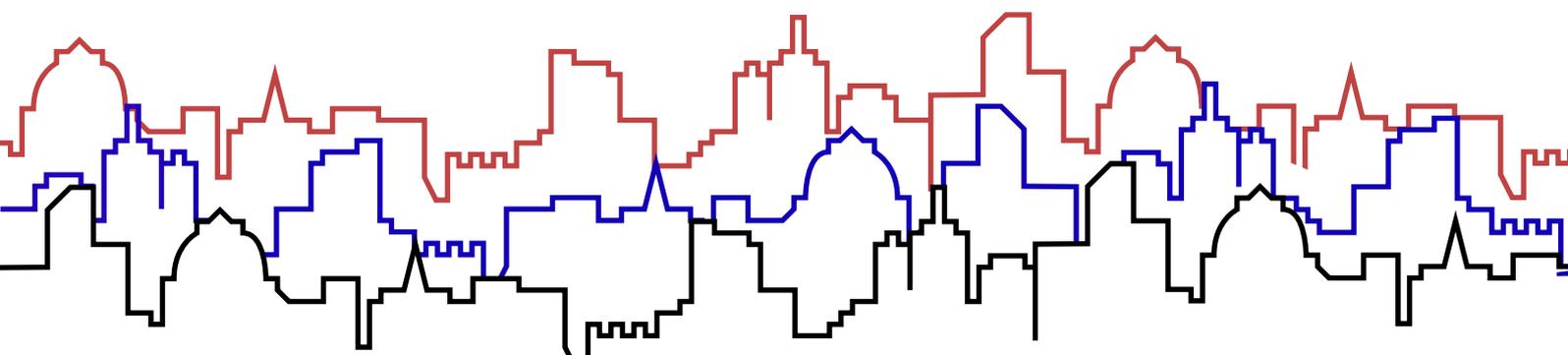
Community Consultation

Sometimes, further insight is needed to know whether running events or making improvements in a specific neighbourhood will represent Value for Money. We will endeavour to consult with tenants through simple door-knocking exercises to ask them their opinions whenever we are thinking

about making changes to something that will affect them directly.

Sponsorship of and attendance at Community Galas and Festivals

From time to time, Unity will sponsor or have a presence at Community Festivals and Galas. The main purpose of this to raise awareness of the broad range of services we provide and offer local people free advice on housing, welfare and employment. We will seek to make sure that tenants are aware if we are attending a Festivals or Gala in their area and promote opportunities to be 'involved' at such events.



14. Removing Barriers to Tenant Involvement

Barrier

The meetings are too far away

Young people don't want to get involved

I cannot afford to get to meetings

I don't know enough about housing

I want to meet other people where I live

I am at work how can I go to meetings

Solution

We will aim to have more meetings and events where tenants live

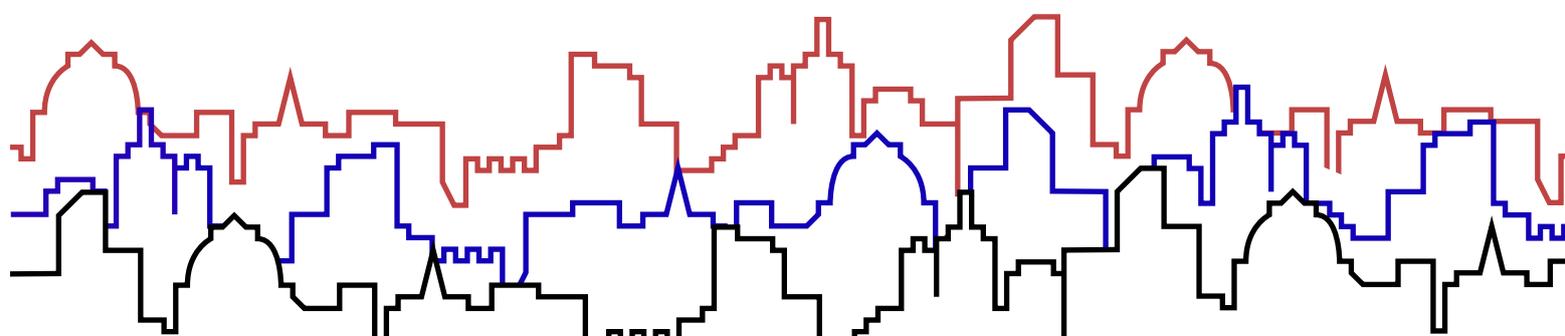
We will make tenant involvement relevant to young people by choosing activities that they are interested in.

We cover all expenses including travel costs and childcare.

We can organise training courses so you can understand what we do.

We can help set up resident groups in your area.

We have meetings in the evening and can organise events on Saturdays



15. Tenant Involvement our Aims

We have always aimed to have a varied menu of involvement that reflect Unity's special status as a BME organisation and that complements the size and dispersed nature of our housing. We endeavour to maintain and improve this approach in the following ways.

Keep our tenant involvement relevant.

Ensure that we are listening to what our tenants want by consulting them on the services we provide and giving them every opportunity to scrutinise, provide feedback and make recommendations.

Adapt our Tenant Panel.

Our Tenant Panel is very loyal and well-attended, but we need to attract new members to the panel to make sure that the people who attend represent more areas of our housing stock. We would also like to include more younger panel members and males to the tenant panel.

Employ an effective marketing campaign.

We will continue to promote the outlets our tenants have to become an involved tenant by advertising in our newsletter, on our website, through our social media accounts and at community events. We will inform our tenants of the functions of our board and encourage tenant board membership.

Meet our communities.

We will seek insight into what type of activities are best-suited to particular neighbourhoods, holding more meetings and specific surgeries in the community, we will not expect tenants to come to us. We need to have an active presence in the areas our tenants live.

Choice

We will offer more choice on how our tenants communicate with us. If we send out a survey we will give tenants the option of how they want to reply whether this be via post, email, text, social media or by using survey monkey. We will continue to provide opportunities for the Tenant Panel to meet in the evenings so that those who work office hours can attend. We will learn from what our tenants want from us in the tenant satisfaction survey.

Feedback.

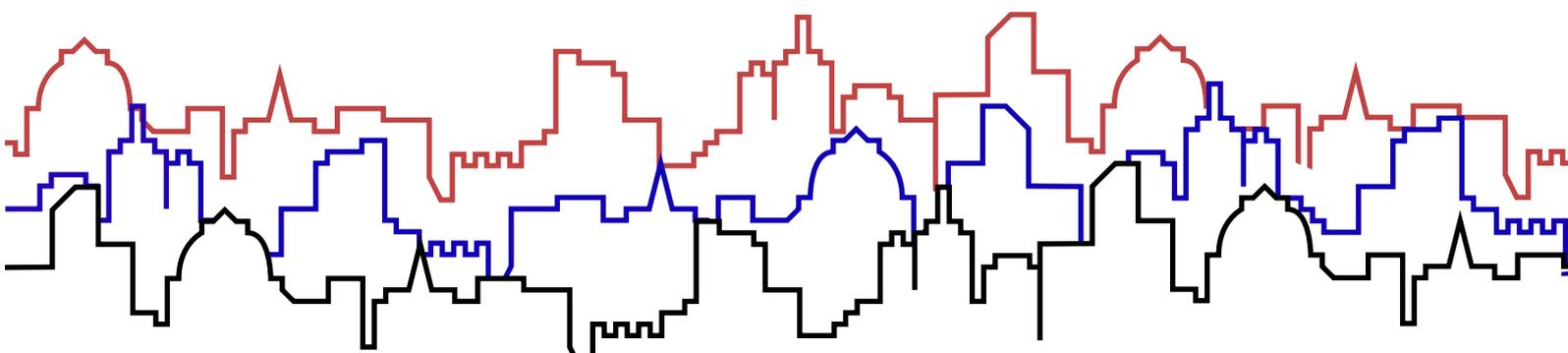
We will continue to monitor feedback on our repairs service, planned maintenance, cleaning and gardening visits with a view to monitoring contractor performance. We will ensure that we publish the results we collate and demonstrate how tenant recommendations have led to service improvements.

Maintain strong scrutiny

Unity will review our key performance indicators every quarter. We will present our data to them through simple presentations to ensure it is understandable. We will listen to our scrutiny group to see what service areas are important to them, asking them for feedback and ensuring they are informed of the outcome of any recommendations they have made.

Encourage Independence

We will assist any tenants who want to engage with their community by helping them set up meetings, promotions and venue costs.



16. Achieving our aims through The Action Plan

Implementing the Strategy

In order to deliver the aims of the of the resident involvement strategy an action plan sets out to objectively look at each aim. The actions required to implement this strategy will be coordinated by the Tenant Involvement & Communications Officer who reports to the Operations Committee.

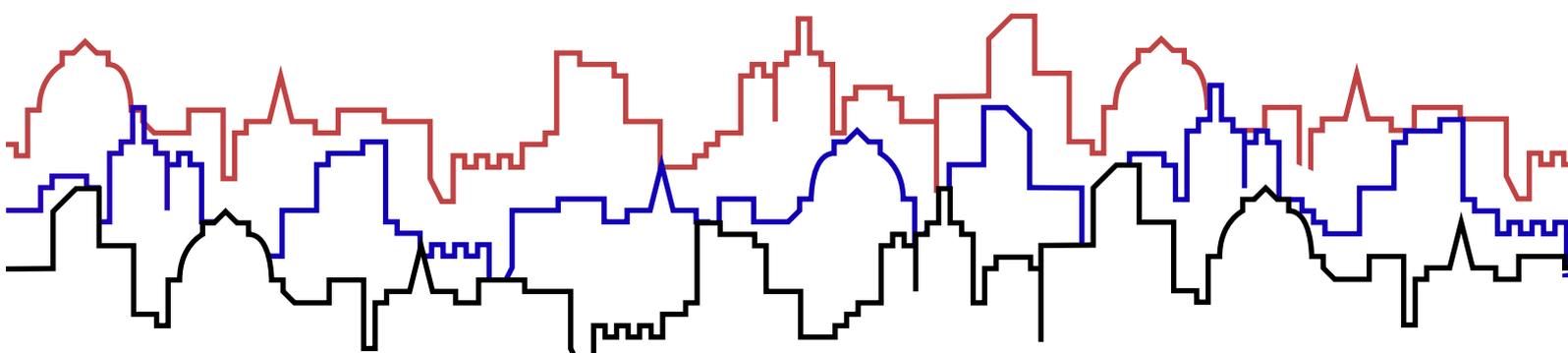
We will communicate the service improvements that arise from this strategy by making sure that they are well-publicised to tenants and staff. Its success will be demonstrated by the satisfaction of our tenants (particularly with regard to how well

Unity listens and responds to their views) and the extent to which they choose to become involved in initiatives where they live.

We will review our involvement activities on an annual basis to assess whether they have been effective in producing beneficial outcomes for our residents at a reasonable cost in terms of time and other resources.

This strategy will be reviewed in 2022.

The Action Plan



16. Achieving our aims through The Action Plan

Aim

How we will achieve this

Measure for success

Maintain strong scrutiny



Identify tenants who have sufficient skills and interest to join Unite with Unity

Ensure tenants develop improved confidence, knowledge and skills by participating in formal meetings and attending training



Tenants feel satisfied that their views have been taken into consideration and that positive changes have been made based on their suggestions

Tenants progress in terms of their level of involvement and are confident in picking out areas of our service for more detailed analysis

Employ an effective marketing Strategy



Publish the work of our Tenant Panel in the newsletter, on the website and through social media.

Engage with tenants at community events to help them to take an interest

Make our newsletter more interactive by gaining tenant feedback through surveys and competitions

Establish a stronger working relationship between tenants and the board



We see more feedback from tenants by office enquiries, emails, social media.

More tenants wish to be involved

High satisfaction levels when it comes to knowledge of resident involvement activities

Tenants have the confidence to attend board meetings and board members participate in tenant activities, tenants want to join the board

Adapt our Tenant Panel

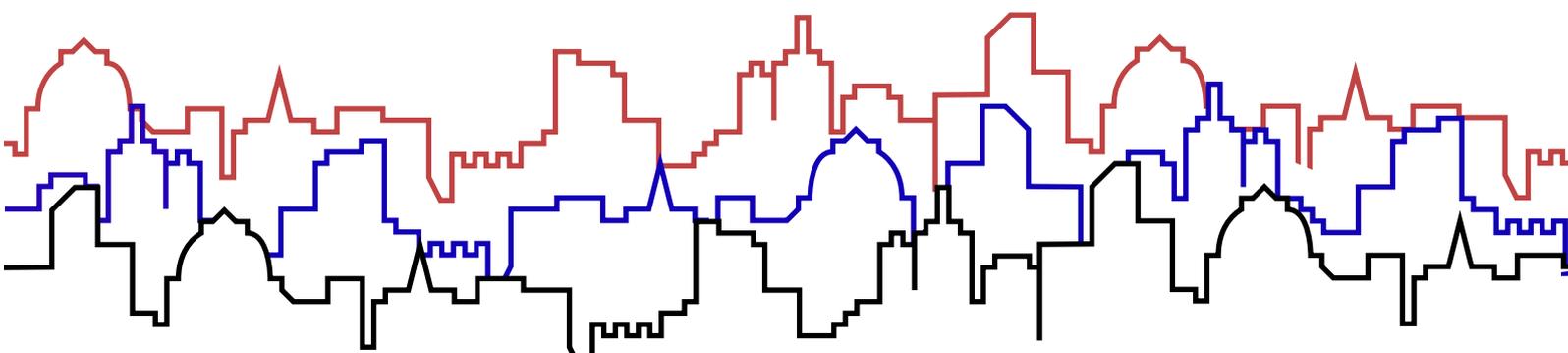
We promote the tenant panel in the housing areas we have no tenant involvement

We increase the number of involvement activities on site



New members join our tenant panel

Our panel is made up of people who offer a wider representation of our housing stock.



16. Achieving our aims through The Action Plan

Aim	How we are to achieve this	Measure for success
Choice	<p>Make it more convenient for tenants to offer their feedback on our services by giving them opportunities to express their views by email and text message; for instance</p> <p>Continue to offer involvement opportunities such as meetings at times that suit our tenants</p>	<p>Increase in the number of responses received</p> <p>Continued attendance at our meetings</p> <p>We see Skype used as an involvement method</p>
Meet our Communities	<p>Carry out a programme of events aimed at engaging with the residents where they live through on site meetings and surgeries</p> <p>Investigate local venues where involvement activities can take place</p> <p>Use info from surveys to see what people want in their area</p>	<p>Events are well attended stories are published in our newsletter and on our website.</p> <p>Areas where we previously had limited or no involvement see tenants become involved.</p>
Feedback	<p>For any satisfaction survey or feedback we request we make sure that we clearly publish the results and inform of our actions based on these</p>	<p>Our tenants will have confidence that their views are being taken into account and will be more likely to complete future feedback requests.</p>

