

Unity News

Spring 2021



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Unity Clear Rent Account Prize Draw At the end of each month in January, February and March we have entered all residents with a clear rent account balance into a prize draw to win love to shop vouchers, with £200 in vouchers going to the 1st person picked out and other prizes of £100 and 2x £50 being won each month. The winners for the draw were picked at random and have been contacted by their income management officer.

Unity Clear Rent Account Prize Draw
Clear your arrears to enter !



January Winners

1st Prize of £200 in vouchers was won by Mr G & Mrs S of School Mews

2nd Prize of £100 in vouchers was won by Mrs F of Frankland Place

3rd Prize of £50 in vouchers was won by Ms A of Stonegate Crescent

3rd Prize of £50 in vouchers was won by Mr B & Mrs F of Burlington Road

2. Vaccine and BME Communities

As the government roll out of the Covid-19 vaccination takes place we would encourage all our residents to take the vaccine. You may have heard in the news that there has been a reduced take up of the coronavirus vaccine in Black Minority Ethnic groups in the UK. As Unity is a leading housing provider to BME communities we want to ensure that our BME residents have access to resources so that that they are fully aware of the importance of taking the vaccine. Leeds City Council has listed information from health professionals on the coronavirus vaccine for the public and in particular promoting its use for the BME community please see the website

leeds.gov.uk/coronavirus

Places to find out more

The Voice newspaper put readers' questions to a Black vaccine expert,

Dr Tolullah Oni:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2oE3IGOMXc4&ab_channel

Written/audio advice in 60 languages from

Doctors of the World:

www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/coronavirus-information

Video advice for the Bangladeshi community from Bangla Housing Association: youtu.be/JbYm8JHXJKA

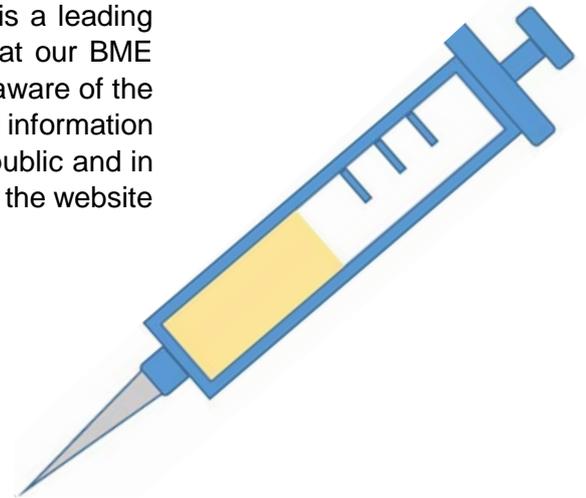
Short videos in Sylheti, Gujarati, Tamil,

Punjabi, Urdu explain Covid-19 vaccines: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55171293

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis explains it is a

'religious imperative' to take the vaccine:

www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3608923625853177



We understand why people may be cautious in taking the vaccine but Covid-19 is a vicious illness, which can kill young people as well as older people. It leaves others with Long Covid symptoms, lasting weeks and months. We are particularly concerned because our Black and Asian communities have a much higher risk of dying from the disease. Getting vaccinated will protect you and the people you care for from dying or becoming seriously ill from Covid-19.



See our website unityha.co.uk for support

We have listed some support services on our website that you may find useful during the coronavirus pandemic including information on

Covid-19 Testing Centres

Vaccine Information

Foodbanks

Support Groups

Benefits and Universal Credit

3. Unity Employment Services



Unity Employment Services is a free service delivered by Unity Enterprise which aims to support our residents, and members of the community in which we work by providing employment, volunteering and training opportunities.

The Coronavirus pandemic has caused increased unemployment for people throughout the Country and research has demonstrated that working mums, young people and people from BME communities have been disproportionately disadvantaged due to the pandemic. The unemployment rate in the UK is expected to peak in the summer of 2021.

Unity Employment Services aims to give people the confidence to get into employment by ensuring that each person who uses the service develops an individual plan tailored to meet their specific needs.

Unity Employment service is not just for the residents of Unity If you or any of your family or friends want to use this service please contact Kelly Jennings on 0113 2007738

**Currently all our
courses are online**

**What can Employment Services do for
you?**

Help using a computer

Help writing your CV

Preparation for interviews

Job search online

Help finding vacancies

Careers guidance

One to One Support

4. Unity Employment Services

English to Speakers of Other Languages

Practise speaking English, improve your communication and help build your confidence. Unity Housing has partnered with Leeds YMCA and PATH Yorkshire to provide **free** English classes for speakers of other languages, to tenants and their relatives.



Volunteering Opportunities

Our Employment Team is here to help you access volunteering opportunities in your community. Volunteering is a hugely valuable and rewarding experience for both volunteers and the communities they support. It is an excellent opportunity to learn new skills and boost your employment prospects, by enabling you to obtain valuable work experience and good references to enhance your CV and help you gain the employment you have always desired.

A Case Study: The Unity Employment Services Team work with a range of providers to help meet the individual needs of our clients into employment and or training opportunities.

Ryan served as an active soldier and had a wide range of practical experience including landscaping. Due to unforeseen circumstances he found himself homeless and was struggling to find employment. He got in touch with one of our partners who helped him find suitable accommodation.

Around the same time, we were promoting labouring opportunities with our partners on our new development sites in Kirklees. Working with Kirklees Works Better Ryan was put forward as one of the candidates for the vacancies. He was successful and was offered the position by our contractor.

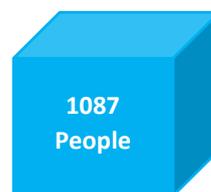
As part of his placement Ryan completed his Tele handler Forklift training course with the contractor which will help him with his future career in the construction industry. He has gone on to buy a car and is now working full time. Ryan said that as a team we have changed his life 'I feel like I landed on my feet, I managed to secure a home and a job in a short space of time. With the right partnerships and support my life has been changed for the better. I can't thank you all enough.' Position secured Feb2021. Our clients name changed to protect their identity

Performance Figures

Since its formation
Unity Employment
Services has got:



Into Work



Into Training



Into Volunteering

5. Service Charges

As a tenant or resident of a Unity Home you may have service charges to pay for which can vary depending on the services provided where you live. These can include the following:

- Landscaping communal (shared) area
- Cleaning communal hallways in flats
- Warden call alarms for the elderly or disabled
- Fire alarms, emergency lighting, door intercoms
- Shared lighting for hallways or car parks
- Shared water rates
- Maintenance and servicing of lifts
- Stair lifts



Service charges are cost-based. This means that you only pay for what you get. If we manage to save money on your services (e.g. we get a cheaper contractor) your service charge will cost less the following year. However, if we have to spend more than we expect (e.g. our landscapers had to do extra visits) your charge will go up.

If you pay a service charge, we will tell you when you move in. It changes every year at the same time as your rent (the first Monday in April). We will write to give you a month's notice of the change telling you exactly which services you get and what they cost.

Fire Alarms Emergency Lights

By law, we have to have these in developments that have flats or shared hallways. We pay a contractor to inspect, test and service them for us, to keep our tenants safe.

Landscaping

You pay a charge for landscaping if Unity owns land where you live and you share it with other residents. This can include lawns, shrubs, laundry areas or communal car parks.

Emergency Call Systems

Some of our homes have an emergency call system. We only have this service in homes that have been specifically developed for elderly or disabled people.

Cleaning Service

If you live in a flat and share a hallway with other tenants, you pay a charge for cleaning the hallways. The cleaners attend on a regular basis.

Door Entry Systems

If you live in a flat and have a door intercom, you pay a service charge to cover the cost of repairing the system and replacing it when it gets old. There is also a small admin charge.

Shared Electricity

If you share a hallway or car park with wall lights, you will share the cost of the electricity. Your service charge covers the actual cost of the electricity, plus a small administration charge.

You may have other service charges that are not covered in this list. If you have any enquiries about the service charges for your home please contact our customer service team on 0113 2007700

6. Measuring Customer Satisfaction

We would like to know what you think of Unity Services.

From April 2021 we have enlisted an independent company Callerz to carry out a customer satisfaction survey. Each month they will phone Unity residents to ask how we are performing.



The questions they will ask you

1. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by Unity Housing.
2. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Unity provides a home that is safe and secure.
3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall quality of your home.
4. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that Unity Housing is easy to deal with taking into account any complaints or concerns raised.
5. Have you had any repairs carried out in the last 12 months? if 'yes': Thinking about the last time you had repairs carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the repairs service?
6. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your rent provides value for money?
7. Do you pay services charges? If 'yes': How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your service charge provides value for money?



Callerz are employed by Unity to carry out the satisfaction survey. We will only disclose your data to them to carry out the survey.

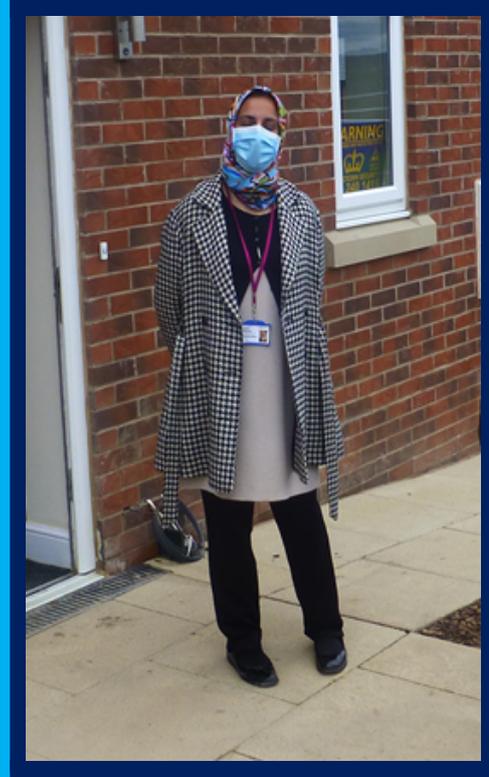
Callerz are able to conduct the survey in different languages if requested. Calls will be made Monday to Friday 9am -8pm and Sat 10am -4pm

The findings of the calls made will be collated at the end of each month so that we can measure customer satisfaction, the results of these will be published in the newsletter and in our website. For any enquiries please contact our customer services team on 0113 2007700

7. Lettings in the Lockdown

The lockdown period has meant that our office has been closed, but as a housing provider we have still managed to let our properties as Unity Housing Officer Kamila Maqsood explains.

“I work as a housing officer for Unity and it is part of my role to carry out viewings with new applicants. The number one priority for me when viewing properties is to make sure our applicants feel safe when they look round a Unity home. Before any viewings take place our properties have been fully cleaned. All viewings are conducted adhering to social distancing guidelines, masks are worn at all times and hand sanitiser is available. We do not ask applicants to come to our office as all paperwork that needs signing for is completed on site. Having a decent home is very important and I am proud to have been able to continue to let properties for Unity during the coronavirus lockdown”.



For our available properties in Leeds see www.leadshomes.org.uk
For our available properties in Kirklees see www.choosenmove.org.uk

8. How to Leave your Unity Home

Moving home is a stressful time; thinking about packing up your things, taking final meter readings and arranging removal services. However it is important that when you leave your Unity property it is in a clean and tidy condition. When we receive keys for a vacated property if there has been damage or we have to remove rubbish from the property this can result in re charges being recovered from the outgoing tenant, it also means that we will take longer to let the property for the next tenant. If we spend more of our budget in clearing vacated properties we may have less money to fund home improvements.

Before you move out

- ✓ Make sure you rent account balance is clear
- ✓ Ensure all bills are paid and you have taken meter readings
- ✓ Re-Direct your post to your new address
- ✓ Arrange for the disposal of all rubbish in the property and garden
- ✓ Ensure there is no damage to fixtures and fittings

Removal of Unwanted Items

Large items in your home such as furniture that you do need should not be left in your property when you leave. Leeds city council has a chargeable collection service see Leeds.gov.uk, this is also provided by Kirklees council see Kirklees.gov.uk.

Charitable Collections

Local charitable organisations will often pick up your unwanted items free of charge and can arrange for house clearance.

Emmaus 0113 2484288 emmaus.org.uk/Leeds

St Gemmas Hospice 0113 2557552 st-gemma.co.uk

St Vincents 0113 2450800 svp.org.uk

Handing In your Keys

Please can you make sure you that when you hand in your keys that they include any keys for meter cupboards, window keys, store doors and garages.



These are pictures of a recently vacated unity home, the former tenant of 10 years received £25 in vouchers as a thank you for its fantastic condition.

9. Maintenance to your Home

Making Improvements to your home

After 12 months of being a tenant of Unity and if you are on an assured non-shorthold tenancy you are entitled to make improvements to your home. Before you start work on any improvements you would first need to get permission from Unity, below is a list of jobs which you would need permission for:

- Replace internal doors, tiles or light fittings
- Installation of satellite dishes or CCTV
- Fitting external fencing to garden
- Building a shed or outhouse
- Replacing bathroom fixtures and fittings
- Replacing kitchen fixtures or fittings
- Laminate floor or built in wardrobes
- Laying paving, decking or a parking area
- Fitting a conservatory or greenhouse
- Building a garden pond
- Replacing any unity fittings (eg taps)
- Doing any structural work

In a New Build Home

If you have moved into a new development with Unity then for the first 12 months of your tenancy your home will be under a defects period this means that the contractor who built your home will be responsible for repairs in that period. After the 12 month period has expired Unity will be responsible for any repairs.

I am a Shared Owner

If you are shared owner with Unity then you are responsible for the repairs and maintenance of your home.

If you want to do something that is not on the list, please get in touch with us and ask permission before you begin any works on your home. To get permission, please write to us, giving as much information as possible about what you want to do. If you're not confident at writing, speak to our staff, who will write down a statement for you. We will let you know within 10 working days.



What repairs Unity are responsible for

As a landlord Unity provides a repairs and maintenance service to cover wear and tear to your home, work we will do includes:

- Drains, gutters and external pipes
- The roof (including chimneys)
- Outside walls, outside doors, window sills and frames, window catches (including external painting and decoration)
- Internal walls, floors and ceilings (excluding laminate flooring, carpets, etc), doors and door frames, door hinges and skirting boards (but not including internal painting and decorating).
- Pathways, steps or other means of access
- Plasterwork (excluding damage caused by redecoration works)
- Integral garages and stores
- Boundary walls and fences
- Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes
- Water heaters, fitted fires that have been (installed and provided by Unity)
- Central heating
- Electrical equipment and circuits that have been installed by Unity (but excluding satellite dishes, Digital TV cables, telephone cables, etc).

Contacting Unity

Telephone: 0113 200 7700

Email: uha@unityha.co.uk

Website: 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 call our office number on **0113 200 7700** you will receive a number of options. Press 1 for **heating repairs**, press 2 for general **repairs**. This will connect you to our contractors GTD Maintenance call centre.

Emergency Gas Repairs 0113 200 7700

E.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unity's office is closed the next day.

National Grid (gas leaks) 0800 111 999

Repairs by email Repairs@unity.co.uk

For more information, visit our website at www.unity.co.uk for leaflets, latest news and community information.

For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact **Chris Whittaker** on **0113 2007751** or email chris.whittaker@unityha.co.uk

Leeds City Council Services

Adult Social Care	0113 2224401
Anti-Social Behaviour	0113 222 4402 onestop@leeds.gov.uk
Child Social Care	0113 222 4403
Council Housing	0800 188 4000
Council Tax	0113 222 4404
Environmental Health	0113 222 4406 refugecollections@leeds.gov.uk
Housing Advice	0113 222 4412
Roads and Pavements	0113 222 4407 highways@leeds.gov.uk
Universal Credit	0800 328 5644

Kirklees Council Services

Adult Social Care	01484 414933 gatewaytocare@kirklees.gov.uk
Anti-Social Behaviour	01484 221000 safer@kirklees.gov.uk
Child Protection	01484 414950
Council Tax and Benefits	01484 414950 Council.benefits@kirklees.gov.uk
Customer Service Centre	01484 221000 Customer.enquiries@kirklees.gov.uk
Housing Advice	01484 221350 Housing.solutions@kirklees.gov.uk

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 this.

