



Homes & Enterprise

Supporting BME Communities



Annual Report to Tenants 2010/11

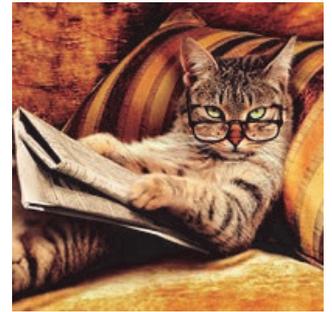
So what's this all about?

It's about the good & bad points things that Unity does, as rated by our tenants. Do we meet the standards that you should expect from us? How do we match up to other landlords? What do we have planned for the forthcoming year?

If you want more detail than we have given you here, we will be happy to provide you with documents that give you far more information.

- Managers reports to our Operations Committee, which is part of our Board. These reports give you a huge amount of detail about Unity's repairs, budgets and future plans.
- Tenant Panel minutes. These are chock-full of information and answers to the kind of in-depth questions that tenants ask. If you don't already come to our monthly meetings but would like to, get in touch!

The information that we used to create this report was closely examined by members of our Tenants Panel. Our thanks go to Zohra, Karen, Carol & Maxine.



Tails' of 2010/11

70.4% of tenants found Unity's staff to be helpful. With **63.4%** happy staff were able to deal with their problem efficiently.

74.3% of tenants are satisfied with the way Unity deal with Repairs & Maintenance

97% of appointments were made and kept.

We answered **76%** of all calls within six rings (**target 85%**)

During **2010/11** Unity replaced **115** Kitchens, **92** Bathrooms, **117** Windows/Doors, **56** Boilers and Aerial upgrades to **100** homes.

58.7% of respondents said they found it easy getting the right person to deal with their issue when calling Unity Housing Association.

73.6% of tenants said they were satisfied with the way Unity kept them informed about issues which may affect them as tenants.

78.3% of new tenants felt the condition of their new home was good and **21.7%** felt it was satisfactory. **87%** rating the overall service received from Unity during signup as Good with 13% rating it as satisfactory.

During 2010/11 there were **90** void properties, of which **78** were re-let.

Employed an Employment Outreach Worker, to assist our unemployed tenants and local residents find employment in their areas of interest or experience.

74.9% of Unity tenants were satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live (STATUS 2010)

We offer work placements for tenants to gain experience of working within an office

We have our Tenant Panel who review our services and their costs to ensure tenants are getting good value.

We inform our tenants of our Value for Money savings through our quarterly newsletters and Annual Reports to Tenants.

Funding obtained to refurbish Unity Business Centres

Completion of developments at Windrush Court, Chapeltown Road and Highfield Gardens, Wortley, creating **33** new homes for rent and low cost sale.

Started on site at Scott Hall Square, **24** houses for rent and low cost sale.

On-going development of the Chapeltown and Beston/Holbeck Housing Investments Plans

INVOLVEMENT, COMPLAINTS & CUSTOMER SERVICES

By finding out what you want, we can provide you with the best possible service.

Are there loads of ways for you to have your say about your home and the services you receive?

Do we offer you training to make your involvement more effective?

Do we understand that different tenants have different needs?

Is it easy to complain, and are complaints dealt with quickly, politely

You talk, we listen.

Our biggest success this year was our **Tenant Panel**. Set up in September 2010, it gives tenants the opportunity to meet with managers every month.



Panel members influenced how Unity is run in lots of ways.

- By choosing **Forrest** for Unity's new 5-year repairs contract.
- By setting rules for our **free gardening service**.
- By demanding **better follow-up on repairs** after mystery shopping checks.

Sometimes, things go wrong...

It's good when people take the time to complain. **Complaints are important.** They show us where we are going wrong.



26 formal complaints this year

Last year, we said we wanted **at least 75%** of complainants to be happy with how we dealt with them. **Target met!** But we're aiming higher in 2011/12.

Different people have different needs.

Unless we know who's living in our homes, we can't deliver the specialist services that our residents need.



2/3 of households sent census forms back. **Thanks!** We'll chase up the rest in 2011/12.

We use your information in lots of different ways.

- Offering **advice & training** for people struggling to find work
- Keeping an eye on how **benefit cuts** might affect you.
- Finding out who's **overcrowded**.



Percentage of people happy with how we dealt with their complaint

People were most unhappy with...



...our **gas contractors**, for missing appointments and poor service.

So how did we fix it? We replaced them with better contractors, **IDM**. So far, no complaints.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

We aim to keep your home up-to-date with modern fittings and fix things quickly when they go wrong.

Do our homes meet the government's 'Decent Homes' standard?

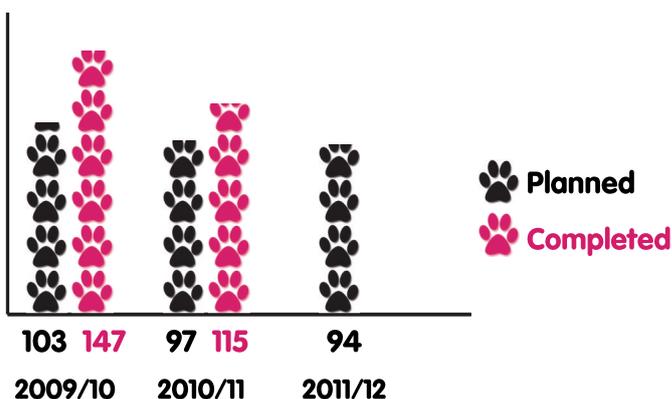
Is the repairs service cost-effective and does it meet tenants' needs? Do tenants have choices?

Do we get things 'right first time'? Do we comply with health & safety regulations?

Can you can ask for a 'local standard'? It's a service tailored to suit people in your area or with similar needs.

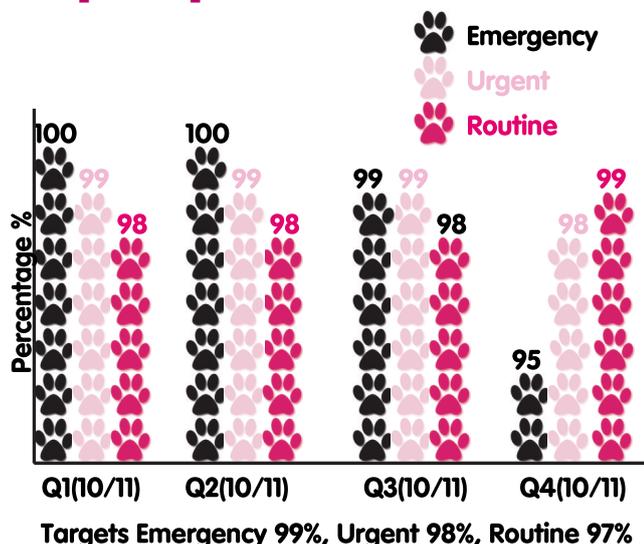
Modernising our homes

Kitchens



Number of kitchens replaced in Unity's programme - **planned** and **completed**

Repairs performance



Replacement programmes

By spending 72% of our £1,449,000 repairs budget on planned maintenance programmes (e.g. kitchens, windows, doors, bathrooms), we got better value for money. This much saving of £25,000 Which was spending on more planned maintenance.



Fires - 100% safe

We made sure that all of our homes had a gas safety check and service in 2010/11. However, our gas contractors missed a lot of appointments.

Because of the poor service, we finished their contract and have taken on an alternative company, **IDM**.

Replacement programmes	How many did we plan to do?	How many did we actually replace?
Kitchens	97	115 new kitchens
Bathrooms	15	92 new or partial bathroom refurbishments
Window & doors	49	177 new windows or doors
Boilers	60	56 new boilers
Digital TV aerials	126 flats	100 flats' aerials

LETTING HOMES, RENTS AND TENANCY

The rules for deciding who can move are fair and help to create sustainable communities.

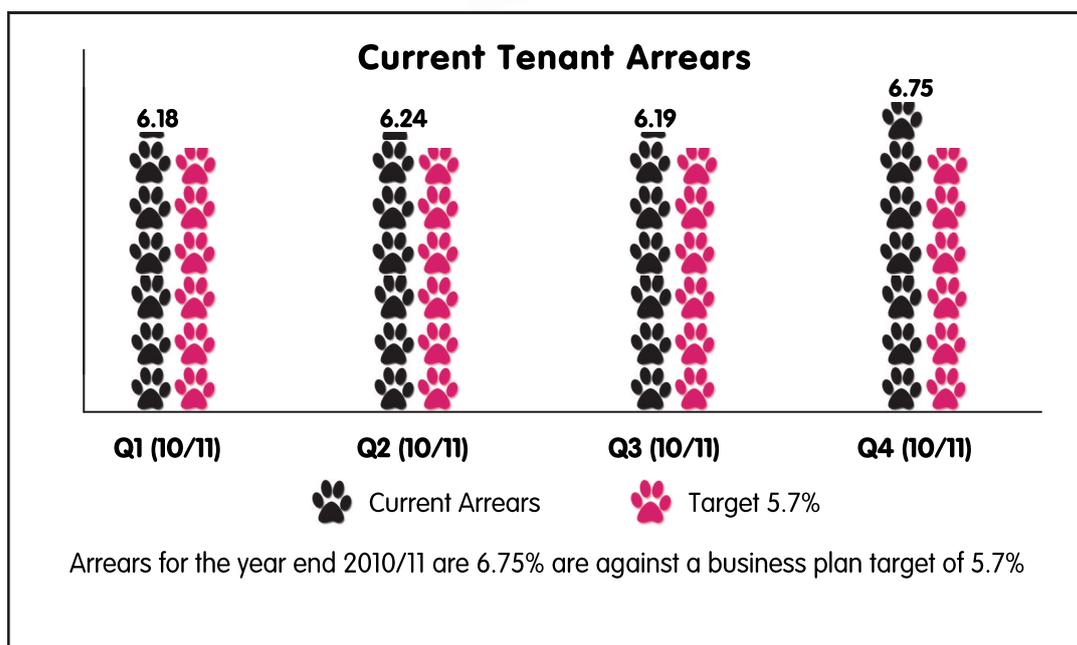
Rents and rent increases are within limits set by the government.

There's clear information about how to move and how to keep to your tenancy agreement.

When tenants are struggling to keep to their tenancy agreement, Unity will offer support.



Overcrowded? We aim to help you move.



Happy new tenants

92.9% of our tenants were satisfied with the standard of their property when they moved in.

98.6% of our tenants were satisfied with the overall service they received from Unity.



Housing Transfers

In light of proposed government changes Unity will proactively work with Leeds City Council to assist tenants who need transfers, subject to clear rent accounts and keeping to their tenancy agreements.

Unity's Average Rents

	UHA	Leeds	W. Yorkshire	Yorkshire & Humberside
Av. Rent	£70.98	£69.81	£63.74	£65.28



NEIGHBOURHOODS & COMMUNITY

Are our estates and communal areas kept clean and safe?

Do we work with others to promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing?

Do we tackle anti-social behaviour effectively before it gets out of control?

If you suffer from anti-social behaviour, is it easy to report and are you kept well informed?

Neighbour problems? Call us.

When people behave in a way that stops other residents from enjoying their home-life, we call this anti-social behaviour (ASB).

8 recorded cases of serious ASB



We recorded 17 cases last year, and we believe that there is more serious ASB in our neighbourhoods that we're not picking up on. To improve how well we record and monitor ASB in 2011/12, we're **improving our IT systems** and **training our frontline staff**.

Our housing teams regularly **meet with other partners** - police, other landlords, the council's ASB and Area Management teams - to exchange information and to work on neighbourhood problems together.

Keeping an eye on things

Our housing officers aim to visit where you live at least 4 times a year, to check everything's okay. We also have a monitoring system for our cleaners and gardeners, who drop off feedback cards for tenants to return. We're happy with the results but need to make sure that they drop off more cards in 2011/12.



79% of tenants happy with gardening



Estate action

To make best use of our time and your rent money, we focus on areas where the residents are least happy. In 2010, we had **two priority estates** - Stonegates (Meanwood) and Thornfields (Crossgates)

In Crossgates, we worked with residents and police to clear up a bad drug-dealing problem.

100% of Thornfields residents now think that their estate is a better place to live
Unity resident survey, September 2010

We put on extra kids' activities in the Stonegates, but a lot of residents still dread the school holidays. In 2011/12, we'll **work more closely with Stonegates residents**.

Help into work



To improve our residents' work prospects, we took on an **Employment Outreach Worker**.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The services that you get for your rent money should combine quality with good value.

Services are cost-effective, efficient and high quality.

Services meet tenants' needs.

Tenants are consulted about decisions that affect them directly, like service charges.

Unity makes the most of the money it gets from tenants' rents, government funding and any other sources.

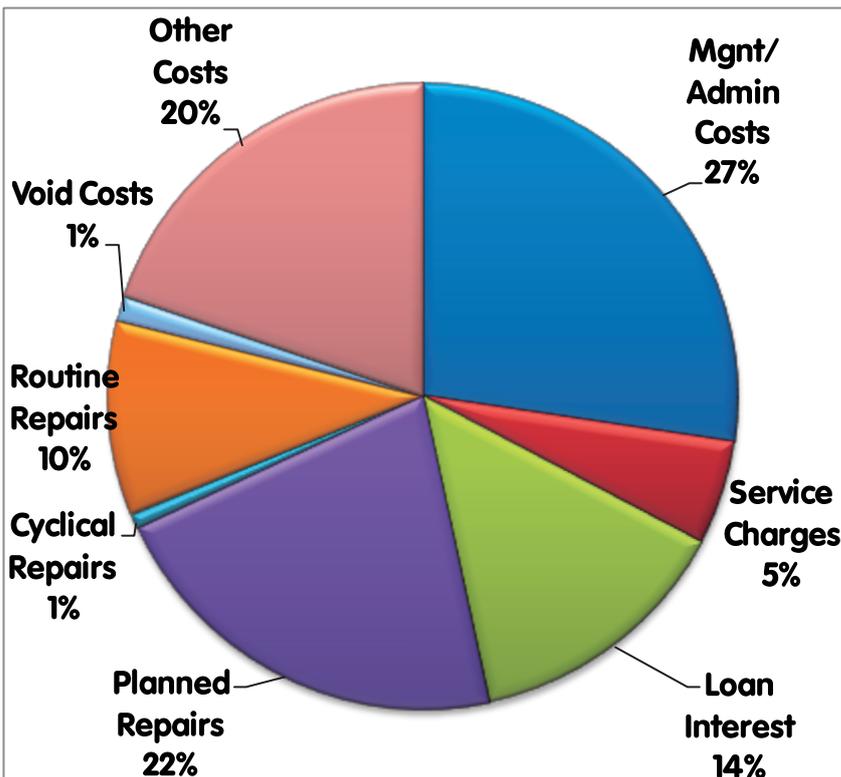
Value for money for your rent



Percentage of tenants who thought that their rent was value for money



What your rent money went on



This year's savings

Day-to-day repairs contract

We went through a procurement exercise and chose a new maintenance contractor.

There was stiff competition from six companies, but Unity's managers and Tenant Panel chose **Forrest** for the new **5-year repairs contract**. The long contract gives Forrest stability and saves money.

This contract will result in a **5%** saving on **ALL** repair costs, this money will be re-invested to enable us to do more planned maintenance.

Gas & Electric contract

Purchase electricity & gas on the wholesale market through a buying agency (Inenco) - 3 year contract .

Waste Management contract

Reduced waste management costs renegotiation contracts with LPR & Biffa costs reduced from £7,460 to £5,236.

Annual saving - £2,224

External Painting contract

Re-tendering of external painting contract over a 5 year period.

Annual saving - £20,000
Contract saving -£100,000

PLANS FOR 2011/12

Resident involvement

- We'll hold **monthly Tenant Panel meetings** - residents and managers working together.
- We'll improve our tenants' ability to scrutinise and influence the services that they receive, by arranging accessible **formal training** and supporting their development.
- We'll **survey all our tenants**, to check how they feel about their neighbourhood and to find out what their priorities are for **improving their home**.

Complaints

- We'll offer **training** for residents in **complaints management**, to enable active residents to scrutinise our complaints service.
- We'll aim to **improve our complaints handling** so that 85% of people who make a complaint are happy with how we dealt with it.

Customer services

- We already have **up-to-date information** for 64% of our households - we'll make sure that we contact the rest.

Lettings

- Once we've got all our households' details up to date, we're going to use the information to see who's overcrowded and needs help to **move to a larger home**, and who'd find it easier in a **smaller home**.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

- We'll **fully train our frontline staff** in handling, recording and monitoring ASB cases. By this time next year, we aim to improve the number of cases that we record and how satisfied people are with how they're dealt with.

Neighbourhoods

- Some **Stonegates** residents are still suffering from neighbourhood ASB. We'll **work closely with residents and other agencies** to improve the quality of life in that area.
- We'll keep a closer eye on our **gardeners and cleaners**, to make sure that they're dropping off enough **feedback cards**. This means that residents can let us know quickly if there's a problem.

Value for money - repairs

- After successfully appointing Forrest on a 5-year repairs contract, we're going to go through the same process and award a **5-year contract for our gas contractors**. This will save money and build a better working relationship.

Local Offers By 1st April 2011 all housing associations were required to establish Local Offers to detail the standards of service tenants can expect. This is a regulatory requirement set by the current regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

By March 2011, the following local offers had been agreed with tenants.

- Target time for routine repairs reduced from **28** days to **21** days
- Better repairs appointments - **2 hour slots** instead of just morning or afternoon
- New neighbourhood management standards with improved timescales for removing dumped rubbish and abandoned cars
- Publication of a quarterly **resident involvement calendar**
- Improved service for tenants who use **stair or through lifts** (to be introduced fully when contract is retendered in 2011)
- **Gardening service** for **disabled** and **elderly** tenants (to be agreed and introduced in 2011/12)