

Unity: delivering high quality, affordable housing and related services which promote sustainable neighbourhoods, choice and the wellbeing of Black & Minority Ethnic communities in Leeds.



Homes & Enterprise

Supporting BME Communities

News

Spring 2013

“Clive saved us money!”

Our Financial Inclusion Officer, Clive Greenwood (right), has been kept busy this month. Here are some of his successes.

“Clive helped me to prove I needed my second bedroom.”

“I thought I’d have to move from my lovely home because I couldn’t afford to pay £14 a week. Clive argued that my disabilities meant I needed room for a carer and I don’t have to worry about the cuts any more.”

“Clive spotted I wasn’t getting enough benefits.”

“I had been paying towards my rent and council tax myself, but Clive realised that I’d been paying too much. The council gave me a huge refund! Now I’m getting everything I should, money will be far less tight.”



If you’re being affected by benefit cuts, get in touch and see what Clive can do to help you.



Lighter, brighter, friendlier:

office facelift finished

The refurbishment of our reception area and office frontage on Chapeltown Road has finally finished. The work was paid for under a heritage fund grant.

Thank you to all our customers for your patience during the work.



Get your questionnaires back!

There’s still time to return your maintenance questionnaire and to get on our waiting list for a new shower. But do it quick!

Our present 5-year maintenance programme is coming to an end this year, so we need to plan ahead for the next 5 years. We have been sent several questionnaires with no name or address on them. Could one of them be yours? Then send us another!

Surveys
page 9

The kitchen is the only item I feel needs replacing

Was this you?

We’d love to put you on our kitchens programme and look after your shower, but you didn’t put your NAME or ADDRESS on your reply!

Affected by the 'bedroom tax'?

Get off on the right foot and keep yourself in the black.

How do I know how much to pay?

The council has written to you, telling you how much extra you have to pay each week. If you are in arrears and have an agreement or court order, you need to add your arrears payment to the figure.

What if I want to pay monthly?

Remember that you need to pay in advance at the beginning of the month, not at the end.

If you pay a weekly amount towards any arrears, add this on to your weekly rent payment. Then use our easy formula.

$$\text{£ weekly payment} \times 4.35 = \text{£ monthly payment}$$

Struggling to pay? Don't be an ostrich - get in touch to see how we can help.



Are you a Unity resident?

Tell us what you think of our website



£20 voucher could be yours!

Just complete the quick survey at:

www.surveymonkey.com/s/V7QSPHK

Do you work full-time?

Find it hard to get time off work for repairs?

Ask for a 'first call' appointment to get the earliest visit of the day.

Easy ways to pay rent - find the best way for you

You'll need an Allpay card to pay over the internet, by text or at PayPoint outlets. Please call us on **0113 200 7700** to order one.

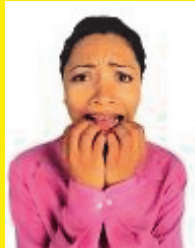
- **Direct debit.** Weekly, fortnightly, monthly - whatever suits you the best. It changes automatically when your rent changes, so it's the easiest method. Call us to set one up.
- **Standing order.** You're in control with this method, but you have to amend it every time your rent or benefit levels change.
- **By phone:** Call us to pay by debit or credit card.
- **At our office:** Pay with cash, cheque, debit card or credit card.
- **Paypoint outlet:** Use your Allpay card to pay by cash or card.
- **Online:** Use your Allpay card at www.allpay.net.
- **Mobile text:** Register on the Allpay website at <https://www.allpayments.net/textpay>



Nervous about benefits changes?

April's going to be a difficult month for a lot of people as new benefit cuts start to bite.

- Council tax benefit reductions - more people have to pay.
- Housing Benefit reductions for people with 'spare' bedrooms.



But are you claiming everything you should be? Could your bills be cheaper?

See page 4 for who can help you.

Gas prize draw winners

Everyone who kept their first gas safety check appointment last year was entered into a fantastic prize draw, with cash prizes from contractors IDM.

Mr Amin, Meanwood, won £300

Ms Saeed, Harehills, won £200

Mrs Jamieson, Meanwood, won £100

Do you want to win a cash prize in 2013? Get your gas safety check done first time!

IT's a success!

Unity Housing and Connect Housing recently ran an eight week long computer course, in partnership with Learn Direct.

The workshops were set up to help people to learn how to use IT to seek welfare advice, save money on bills and get easier access to local services. Attendees learnt how to use a computer, keyboard and mouse. They also practiced searching the Internet and sending emails.



These skills will be becoming increasingly important to our tenants. The course participants can now use their new knowledge to claim benefits online and find work with the Universal Jobmatch service.

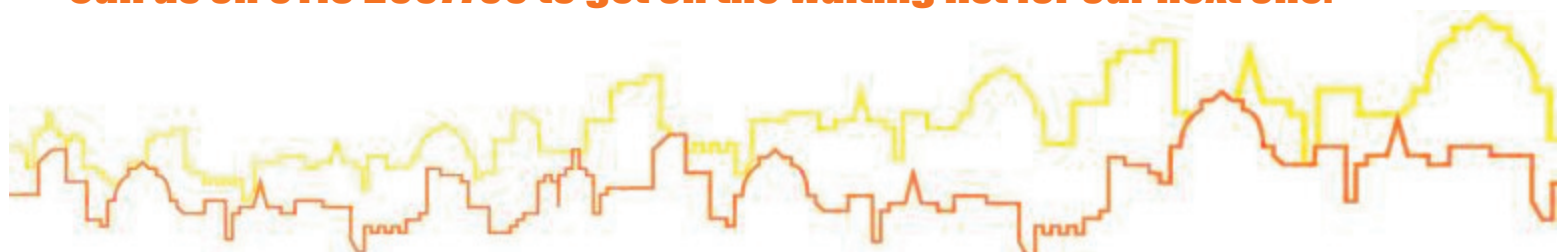
One participant, **Mr Moran, Moortown**, attended the course to help him keep in touch with his daughter. Another participant, **Ms Humphrey, Yeadon**, said:

"This has been a life-changing experience. It has given me confidence and opened up new horizons for me."

Following on from the workshops' success, we are planning to repeat them, to help more people to gain confidence with computers.


Are you interested in a basic skills computer workshop?

Call us on 0113 2007700 to get on the waiting list for our next one.



Want advice on how to be better off but don't know where to go? These people can help.

If you want advice on benefits, money worries or cutting your bills, it can be really difficult working out who you should turn to. Here's a list of people who can help, to help you find the best advice for your needs.

Who are they?	What are they good for?	How do I contact them?
	Debt advice, personal counselling.	T: 0113 248 4126 W: www.stvincents-svp.org.uk Visit them at 82 York Road, Leeds LS9 9AA, Monday - Friday 9am - 3pm
Welfare Rights Unit 	Advice on a wide range of benefits, help with claim forms.	T: 0113 376 0452 E: welfare.rights@leeds.gov.uk City Centre one-stop-shop, Great George St - call first to make an appointment. Monday - Wednesday 9am - 4.30pm Thursday 9am - 3.30pm Friday 9am - 4pm
	Good quality, thorough advice on benefits and other issues. Lots of information and guidance leaflets available from their website.	Drop in to one of their local offices across the city, including Chapeltown (Cross Francis St) and Harehills Children's Centre. T: 0844 477 4788 W: www.citizensadvice.org.uk
	Energy efficiency advice for people living in the Chapeltown area.	T: 0113 245 4344 E: energyadvice@chapeltowndt.org.uk
	Energy efficiency advice for low-income, elderly and disabled households in Leeds.	T: 0113 238 0601 E: greendoctorleeds@groundwork.org.uk
Fuel Tariff & Fuel Debt team at Chapeltown CAB 	Help with fuel debts and getting the cheapest tariffs.	T: 0113 262 2281 E: jenny.eugene@chapeltowncab.org.uk
	Expert, free debt advice over the phone. Excellent website information.	T: 0800 138 111 W: www.stepchange.org
	Online and telephone welfare benefits calculator. Help claiming welfare and educational grants from charities.	T: 0808 802 2000 W: www.turn2us.org.uk



Tenants check on contractors - the results

Thanks to all the tenants who took part in our end-of-year contractor reviews with our major contractors. Selected members of our Tenant Panel and other service users joined forces with Maintenance staff to look at contractors' performance and agree how they could improve services in the next year.



Higher Purpose Cleaning Services



Tenants said:

"The communal window cleaning isn't good enough."

The contractors did:

They've replaced their window cleaners and taken on new ones.

Tenants said:

"They're the best gas contractors that Unity has ever had."

Our Tenant Panel was impressed with their high-quality presentation and asked them to keep up the good work.

Tenants said:

"We're happy with them but want better communication about appointment times."

The contractors did:

They're working on an action plan to improve their standards.

Tony's tips

Maintenance man Tony has a word

Shared owners - get your gas appliances checked for a bargain price!

One of the benefits of renting is that you get your gas appliances checked every year, so you know they're safe. But if you're a leaseholder or shared owner, you and your family could be at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning.

That's why we've set up a special deal with gas contractors IDM. You can get your appliances checked for a special low price. Just in get in touch with us to get a quote and get your check done, at a time to suit you.

Full service and gas safety check of all your household gas appliances

£74.09 (including VAT)



This issue's **£50** repairs satisfaction slip prize draw winner is Mrs Adams from Meanwood.



If you have a repair, send your slip back and you could win **£50!**



Community funding available for Chapel Allerton, Meanwood and Scott Halls

**£500 -
£2,000**

The new Chapel Allerton Community First Neighbourhood Challenge Fund is there to give money to local groups. Funding is available over four years and they are looking to fund projects that make a difference to communities.

The minimum that can be applied for is £500 and the maximum £2000.

Interested in applying for a community project for your area? Contact our Involvement Officer, Emma Oates, on **0113 2007743** or emma.oates@unityha.co.uk, or follow the link from Feel Good Factor's website at www.fgfleeds.org.



A Healthy Living Centre in Leeds

Feel Good Factor is a Chapeltown-based project that runs a whole load of fun activities for local residents. Here's a selection of what they've got on at the moment, but they also have art classes, alternative therapies and more.

Have a look at their full range of activities at www.fgfleeds.org, or call down to their office at **53 Louis Street**, where you're sure to get a friendly welcome. Or get their quarterly email update - ask to sign up for 'What's On' at office@fgfleeds.org.

Busy Fingers



Busy fingers is a needle craft group for beginners and experienced knitters and sewers. Here's Noleen with her newly knitted cushion cover. Come and join our group, have fun and meet new people.

Thursdays 1.30 - 3.30pm
At Feel Good Factor
Cost: 50p per session
Contact: Jaki 0113 350 4200

Gardening Workshops




Come along to learn or share your skills in our beautiful and edible garden. Includes: growing from seed, herbs for the kitchen, composting and healthy soil, growing in containers and wildlife gardening.

Wednesday 17 April - 5 June
From 10.30am - 12.30pm
Cost: **Free**
Louis Street Gardens at FGF
Contact 0113 350 4200

Also Easter holiday session
Wednesday 10 April 10.30 - 12.30pm
fun activities in the garden for all the family, including planting seeds to take home, give us a call to book your place.


Walking Groups



Our weekly walking groups are a fantastic way to take regular exercise, it is sociable and enjoyable. A great way to start improving your health, get out in the fresh air and meet new people. Call us to for the planned walking routes.

Monday - 10.15 - 11.30am
Potternewton Strollers Meets at St Martins Practice, Chapeltown Road.
Walks have included; Roundhay Park, Golden Acre Park and the Leeds Canal.

Monday - 9.45 - 11.30am
Belle Isle & Hunslet Strollers Meets at Belle Isle Family Centre, Belle Isle Road.
Walks have included: Middleton Park, Potternewton Park and Temple Newsam.



Cost: **Free**
Contact: **Hillary**
0113 350 4200



Our housing officers check all our homes every three months. They'll be happy to call in on you or to do a joint inspection of where you live - please call us to arrange.



Rashpal Sahota

Additional languages:

- Hindi
- Punjabi

Friday 17th May	Burmantofts & others: Haslewoods, Rigton Green, Glenthorpe Crescent, Leopold Street, Ashton Court
Friday 24th May	Chapelton: Jackie Smart Court, Louis Street, Cowper Street, Dodgson Ave, Hillcrests, Frankland Place
Friday 31st May	Chapelton: Harehills Ave, Newtons, Pear Tree House, Windrush Court
Friday 7th June	Chapelton: Spencer Place, Markham Avenue, Vicars Road, Gathorne Terrace, Pasture Road
Thursday 13th June	Beeston: Harlech Park Court, Beverleys, Joy Row, Rington Road, Burlington Road, Lodge Lane, The Grange
Thursday 20th June	Little London: Devon Close, Leicester Close
Thursday 27th June	Woodhouse & North Leeds: Cliff Terrace, Unity Close, Deighton View, Blackmoor Road, Fir Tree Approach
Thursday 4th July	Meanwood: Stainbecks, Bentleys, Stonegates



Kamila Maqsood

Additional languages:

- Urdu
- Mirpuri

Thursday 25th April	Harehills: Copgrove Road, Ryan Place, Upland Gardens, Fearnville Road, Montague Avenue, Lawrence Gardens, Dorset Road, Ruthven View, Luxor Road, Cowper Grove
Thursday 9th May	North Leeds: Scott Halls, Fieldhouse Drive, Pennythorne Drive
Thursday 16th May	Harehills: Ponderosa Close, Hill Top Mount, Ellers, Alcesters, Bayswaters, Bexleys, Elford
Thursday 23rd May	Beeston: Parkwoods, Stratforde, Sefton Terrace
Thursday 6th June	Hyde Park & Armley: Rosebank Crescent, Hessele Road, Royal Parks, Tagore House, Mitford Road, Model Avenue, School Mews, Wesley Road, Fielding Gate, Mistress Lane, Highfields, Reyden Mews
Thursday 13th June	Crossgates & Harehills: Thorn Drive, Briarsdales, Nowells, Kitcheners, Kimberleys, Pooles, Maryfields, Thornfield Way
Thursday 20th June	Chapelton: Sholebros, Mandela Court, Olrika Court, Chapelton Road, Mexboroughs, Reginalds



If you want more say in where you live and the services you get, join **Unity's Tenant Panel!** Our friendly, informal meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month - they're your chance to meet with managers, influence strategy and change things where you live.

To find out more, contact **Emma Oates**, Involvement Officer, on **(0113) 200 7743** or at **emma.oates@unityha.co.uk**.



So, what have our tenants been up to?

This spring, the Tenant Panel has been out and about in **Fielding Gate, Armley**.

- They inspected the whole estate and reported back to Unity's managers.
- They demanded improvements to fencing.
- They will be questioning the housing officer to find out what she's doing to make sure that residents look after their homes and gardens.
- They asked for a bit of extra attention in 2013 to get the estate looking better.



Report sent to managers, who have to respond to the issues raised

And what's happening next?

As well as our regular **Tenant Panel** meetings on the first Tuesday of every month, we're focussing on particular areas where tenants have asked for improvements or action.

- **Tuesday 7th May, Tenant Panel, 1 - 2.45pm @ Unity's offices**
- **Tuesday 4th June, Tenant Panel, 1 - 2.45pm @ Unity's offices**
- **Tuesday 2nd July, Tenant Panel, 1 - 2.45pm @ Unity's offices**
- **April - June, Landscaped areas review**
Tenant Panel members are visiting all the communal landscaped areas, photographing them and putting together a report. We will use that to put together a 5 year programme (tied in with the external repainting programme) to update the areas and bring them up to a good standard.
- **Focus on Harlech Park Court**
Local residents have asked for an action plan to get the close looking better and make it a nicer place to live.
- **Working with Scott Halls residents looking at a community orchard**



Fielding Gate: worn fencing needs replacing (above) and some residents need to take better care of their gardens (below)



Want to have your say about what gets replaced in your home? Fill in this page and send it back.

Repairs & replacements

Unity's Maintenance team is working with our Tenant Panel to set a new 5-year planned maintenance programme. This is our plan for which homes are getting new items, like kitchens or windows. We base our plan on how old items are, what condition they're in and how important they are to the people who live there.

We cannot promise that we will be able to replace the things you want, but we will take your opinions into account when deciding what work to do to your home. Please note, if your home is less than 10 years old it is unlikely that we will replace anything in the next 5 years, as older homes will be in greater need.

Showers

We know that some of our homes have showers, but a lot don't. Showers are quicker, more convenient and cheaper to run, so we want to make sure that all our homes have one by the end of our next 5-year plan.

If you have put in your own shower, we would like to offer to repair or replace it for free when it breaks down. Our Maintenance team will be more than happy to do this as long as it has been installed correctly, on the understanding that if it is uneconomical to repair, we will replace it with a Unity standard shower.

Name:

Address:

Q1. What is your top priority for your home? What wants renewing the most urgently?

Please tick one box only, or else your answer will not count.

- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- New shower
- Windows
- External doors
- Insulation
- Boiler
- Nothing - it's all fine
- Other (please say what below)

Q2. What would be your second priority?

Tick one box only

- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- New shower
- Windows
- External doors
- Insulation
- Boiler
- Nothing - it's all fine
- Other (please say what below)

Q3. Do you have a shower?

If you tick 'no', we will put your home on our showers programme.

- Yes - Unity fitted it.
- Yes - it was fitted by the council with a Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Yes - I fitted it myself. I would like Unity be responsible for repairing and replacing it.
- Yes - I fitted it myself. I don't want Unity to repair or replace it.
- No



Q4. Are you interested in working with our Maintenance team to set the new programme?

- Yes
- No

Please return this questionnaire now. Just detach the page, fold it up (instructions overleaf) and pop it in the post. Freepost - no stamp needed.

4. Tuck into flap A

Emma Oates
Tenant Neighbourhood & Involvement Officer
Unity Housing Association
FREEPOST NEA2498
Leeds LS7 3HY

Flap A

1. 1st fold



2. 2nd fold



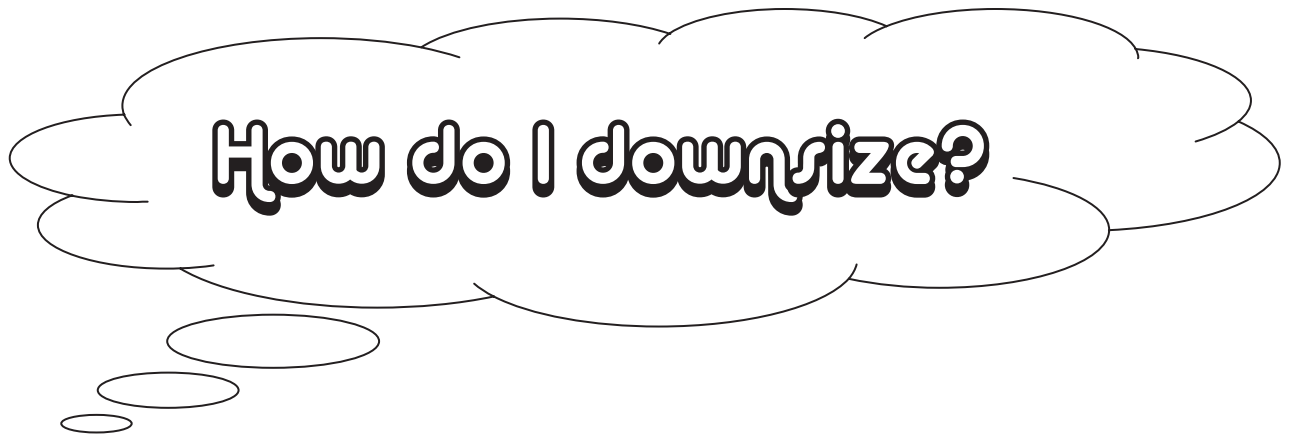
3. 3rd fold



Follow the instructions from 1-4,
then pop it in the post box.

Freepost - no stamp needed.

Thank you for your help.



With the new Welfare Reforms kicking in this April,, a lot of people are wondering how they can avoid the Housing Benefit reductions by moving into a smaller home. There is a range of options open to you if you need to move. Make sure that your home and your rent account are in order, to give yourself the best possible chance of moving.

Leeds Homes



Ask us for a Leeds Homes application pack to register for rehousing with all the main social landlords in Leeds. Once you have your membership number, you can bid for any property advertised in the weekly Leeds Homes magazine. You can find more information at www.leedshomes.org.uk. Once you have successfully registered, tell us that you want to downsize so that we can do our best to help you to move.

Find a mutual exchange with 'house exchange'

You can access this national home-swap scheme online at www.leedshomes.houseexchange.org.uk. Complete their simple online form to look for a mutual exchange partner in Leeds or anywhere else in the country. Once you've found someone to swap with, get in touch with Unity for the next step.

To access all the site's features for free, you need to choose 'Leeds Homes' as your landlord option. If you don't have internet access, our reception team will be happy to help you to register. Just call us to make an appointment.

Unity ⇄ Unity mutual exchange scheme

To help Unity tenants who want to move to the right size home, we've introduced a scheme to help you to find your ideal home exchange.

Ask our reception team for a form. They will put your details on file and your home will be displayed in our folder on the reception desk. You and other tenants can look through to find another Unity tenant who's an ideal match.



Useful information

Contacting Unity

T: (0113) 200 7700

F: (0113) 200 7701

E: uha@unityha.co.uk (general)
repairs@unityha.co.uk (repairs)

W: www.unityha.co.uk

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 numbers (see below).

If we have to change our emergency numbers for any reason, you can get the new one by phoning (0113) 200 7700 and listening to the message.

Emergency repairs ☎ 0845 634 2766
(e.g. serious floods & leaks, total loss of water and electricity, only toilet is blocked)

Emergency gas repairs ☎ 01757 244 510
(e.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unity's office is closed the next day)

Transco (gas leaks) ☎ 0800 111 999

Leeds City Council services

These are the contact numbers for the council services that you are entitled to.

Adult social care ☎ (0113) 222 4401

Anti-Social Behaviour ☎ (0113) 222 4402
onestop@leeds.gov.uk

Children social care ☎ (0113) 222 4403

Council tax, housing benefit ☎ (0113) 222 4404
lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk

Complaints & compliments ☎ (0113) 222 4405

Environmental services ☎ (0113) 222 4406
Refuse collection, recycling, noise nuisance, pest control, grass cutting, graffiti removal, dog wardens
refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk

Highways ☎ (0113) 222 4407
Street cleaning, street lighting highways@leeds.gov.uk

Registrars ☎ (0113) 222 4408
Births, deaths & marriages

Planning ☎ (0113) 222 4409

Minicom ☎ (0113) 222 4410

Contact the council's environmental services on (0113) 222 4406 to get bulky waste items taken away for free - old furniture, carpets, boxes, bagged rubbish.



**Unity's office is a Hate
Incident Reporting Centre**

Unity Housing Association
113-117 Chapeltown Road
Leeds LS7 3HY

