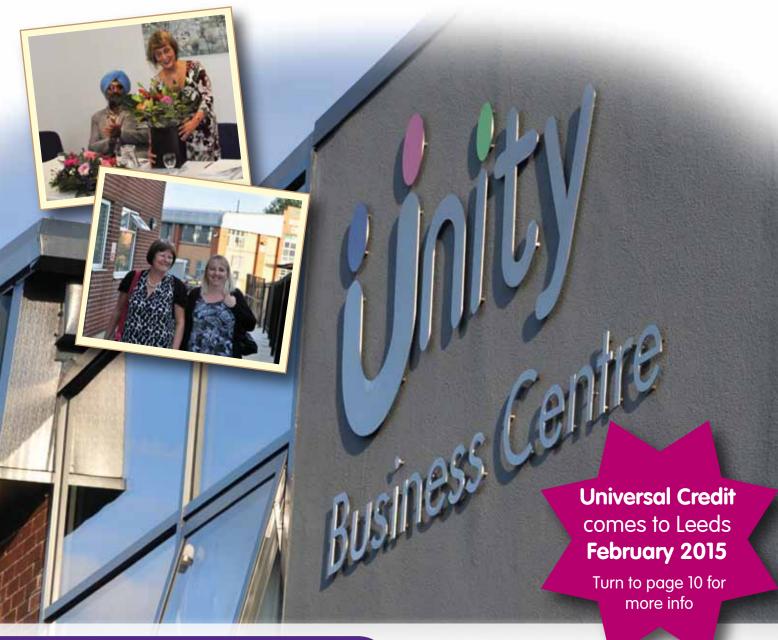
Unity News Winter 2014





Unity celebrates 27th AGM

Unity celebrates another year of providing housing choice, improving life opportunities and addressing inequalities at our AGM.

Chief guest at the meeting was Scottish broadcaster, journalist and comedian Hardeep Singh-Kohli, who entertained guests with a speech about the recent Scottish referendum.

Chief Executive Ali Akbor spoke of Unity's achievements over the past year including our

approach to financial and digital inclusion, our employment and enterprise services, the building of new properties, and providing opportunities for tenants to be involved in influencing service delivery at Unity Housing.

Also at the meeting, Unity's Chairperson Designate was formally elected as Karen Morley stands down in December 2014 after 5 years of service as Chairperson on Unity's Board.

(Story continues overleaf)

(Continued from first page)

Shruti Bhargava BSc MSc MBA has over 20 years' experience with a strong track record of leading on strategic challenges, cross organisation improvement, transformation and change and will assume the role of Chairperson in December.

The meeting was held at Unity's newly-refurbished Business Centre on Roundhay Road. The site has recently benefitted from over £1 million of investment that was paid for from ERDF funding, Leeds City Council and Unity. Works have included re-cladding the roofs, a new lift, new reception facilities and signage and new data





cabling for faster broadband, improving the service we are able to offer current and prospective business centre tenants.

The meeting was preceded by an informal 'Open Day' event which all Unity residents were able to attend to find out about the full range of our services. All Unity residents are invited to take advantage of our dedicated Employment Service and opportunities to get involved in decision-making at Unity via one of our Tenant Panels.

If you missed the chance to attend the Open Day and would like to find out more about any of Unity's services, please contact our Customer Service Team on **0113 200 7700**.

Want more of a say but working office hours?

If you've wanted to join our Tenant Panel, but thought you couldn't because you work office hours - now you can! We are pleased to introduce a new Tenant Panel meeting in the evenings.

For each meeting you attend we will award you a **£5 gift voucher** for giving up your time to help us improve services. We also pay for your travel expenses and provide refreshments.

Call Lewis on **0113 200 7751** or pop into the office for a chat to find out what's involved.





Congratulations to Mr Solomon & Ms Tickhill, Meanwood who have won the **£50 prize draw** for returning their repairs satisfaction survey

And Mr Leake,
Chapeltown who has
the **2nd prize of £30**for returning his
Tenant Satisfaction
Survey

And Ms Nelson, Little London who has the 1st prize of £50 for returning her Tenant Satisfaction Survey

And Mr Miller,
Crossgates who has
the **3rd prize of £20**for returning his
Tenant Satisfaction
Survey

Little London residents benefit from free advice on crime

In September Unity Officers Rashpal Sahota, Clive Greenwood, Preet Lall and Lewis Holloway were assisted by Police Community Support Officers to visit tenants living in Little London. The aim of the visits was to assess the views of residents regarding crime and anti-social behaviour.

From what the residents have said, Unity has been able to build a better picture of where problems are occurring in the area and work in partnership with local Police Community Support Officers Sam Pemberton and Jordan Kennedy to tackle them.

During the visits officers were able to give advice around priority crime such as burglary and car crime and occupants were given details on how to contact police to report a crime and also what number to contact to supply information anonymously.

Unity had already provided skips to the area to assist in a clean-up operation and carried out an Environmental Visual Audit with the aim of tidying up the gardens and communal areas.

Financial Inclusion Officer Clive, was also encouraging residents currently paying their rent by standing order to switch to Direct Debit. Many residents find paying their rent by Direct Debit much more convenient because if the amount of rent you pay changes, Unity will adjust it for you so you don't have to contact your bank. If you'd like more information, please contact Clive on 0113 200 7753.

Annual Report to Tenants available to download!

Unity aims to be open and honest with our tenants which is why we publish our performance data in our Annual Report to Tenants. The 2013/14 Annual Report to Tenants was signed off by our Tenant Panel who were also involved in selecting what should be included in the report.

Download a copy by visiting unityha.co.uk and going to the **'Publications'** page. If you'd like a hard copy, please request one by giving us a call or visiting our office.

Will I receive a copy in the post?

Printing and posting of the Annual Report to each tenant costs the organisation around $\mathfrak{L}1200$. This is money that could be spent on home improvements. Not everyone will want a copy of the report, which is why we are only sending one to those who request it.







Leeds Media Centre is selected as headquarters for UK's largest local television license holder!

The launch of a brand new MADE Television franchise is expected to create more than 50 jobs and more than £1 million of investment in the city.

Jamie Conway, CEO of MADE Television said: 'This is the dawn of an exciting new era in UK television broadcasting. From an operational point of view, Leeds was always our number one choice for locating headquarters.'

The local TV channel will be broadcast across all major platforms including Freeview, Sky, Virgin and Freesat. News and entertainment content will be produced locally in Leeds.

'Made in Leeds' as it will be known, will air to a potential audience of 3.5 million across Leeds, Wakefield, Dewsbury, Halifax and Huddersfield. You will be able to watch Made in Leeds on Freeview 8, Virgin 159 and Sky 117. Made in Leeds will be producing one hour of news every night, with a 6pm and 9pm bulletin presented by Jason Thornton. This is followed by a nightly entertainment magazine programme, showcasing good news stories

and looking at what's on across Leeds.

There's also weekly sports, music and entertainment programmes lined up, some of which will be filmed on site and some of which will be filmed on location around the region.



Unity achieves Customer Service Excellence Award!

Unity is pleased to announce that we have achieved the Customer Service Excellence Award.

An independent assessor visited the premises and looked at each area of Customer Service, including engagement and consultation, staff professionalism and attitude and the quality and range of information provided. He talked to front line staff, managers and our Senior Management Team.

He also took a keen interest in how Unity meets the diverse needs of a range of tenants, including disabled and vulnerable tenants.

The assessor spent time in each department, including housing, maintenance and complaints handling. As part of his investigation, he also

attended a Tenant Panel meeting, in order to talk to members about opportunities they have had to influence service delivery.

Unityis accreditation coincides with the closure of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey which began in spring/summer this year. We are please to report

that 89.9% of tenants are satisfied with the overall services provided by Unity, and 90.3% of tenants are satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service. This result surpasses our ambitious target of 88% which we achieved in 2012.





Estate Walkabouts



Rashpal

4th December & 25th March 10am-2pm: Chapeltown/ Harehills: Spencer Place, Markham Avenue, Pasture Road, Gathorne Terrace, Vicars

Road/Terrace, Rossington Place

12th December & 3rd March 10am-2pm: Beeston: Tempest Road/Place, Harlech Park Court, Lodge Lane, Beverley Avenue/Square, The Grange

12th January 10am-1pm: Little London: Devon Close, Leicester Close

Woodhouse/ Moortown: Unity Close, Hartley 21st January 12pm-4pm: Avenue, Cliff Terrace, Deighton View, Blackmoor

Road, Fir Tree Approach

27th January Meanwood: Stainbeck Road/Avenue, Bentley Lane/Gardens, Stonegate 10pm-12.30pm: Drive/Crescent/Edge/Grove

4th February Burmantofts/Chapeltown/Harehills: Rigton Green, Haslewood View/Drive, Leopold Street, Ashton Court, Hovingham Avenue/Mount

1.30pm-3.30pm: 12th February Chapeltown: Jackie Smart Court, Louis Street, Cowper Street, Dodgson Avenue,

10am-12.30pm: Frankland Place

Chapeltown: Harehills Avenue, Newton Grove, Pear Tree House, Windrush Court 20th February



19th February 1.30pm-5pm:

4th December &

Hyde Park & Armley: Rosebank Crescent, Hessle Road, Royal Parks, Tagore House, Mitford Road, Model Avenue, School Mews, Wesley Road, Fielding Gate/Mews, Mistress Lane, Highfield Gardens, Reyden Mews

11th December & 26th February

Crossgates & Harehills: Thorn Drive, Briarsdale Mews/Garth, Kitchener Place/Street, Kimberley Place, Poole **10.30am-2.30pm** Crescent/Road, Maryfield Crescent, Thornfield Way

8th January & 5th March 1.30pm-4.30pm Chapeltown: Sholebrokes, Mandela Court, Umoja House, Olrika Court, Chapeltown Road, Mexboroughs, Reginalds

15th January 11am-2.30pm Harehills: Copgrove Road, Ryan Place, Upland Gardens, Fearnville Road, Montagu Avenue, Lawrence Gardens, Dorset Road, Ruthven View, Luxor Road, Cowper Grove

28th Jan, 1.30pm-5pm

North Leeds: Scott Hall Green/Grove/Square, Fieldhouse Drive, Pennythorne Drive

5th February 1.30pm-4.30pm Harehills: Ponderosa Close, Hill Top Mount, Ellers, Alcester Terrace, Bayswaters, Bexleys, Elfords



Kamila





Think you have a problem with damp?

You probably have a problem with condensation

Of course, it's important to keep your home heated over the colder months. However, it's equally important that you keep your home well-ventilated to prevent problems with condensation or mould.

Surface damp and mould is caused by water condensation. It is common in bathrooms where hot water makes the atmosphere steamy, but it can affect other rooms as well. It happens when warm, moist air hits a cold surface. Follow these rules and you should be able to prevent any problems:

- After a bath or shower, open a window and close the bathroom door
- Dry clothes outdoors or in dryer. If drying clothes indoors, open a window in that room and shut the door.
- Never block, stuff or cover air bricks. You will almost certainly have problems with condensation if you do.
- Never place wet clothes directly on radiators as moisture seeps straight into the walls behind it.
- Black mould feeds on residues from shampoos and soaps. Make sure that you clean the tiling, grouting and sealant in your bathroom at least once a fortnight.
- Don't push furniture against walls. Leave a gap for at least 5cm for warm air to get to the walls.
- If you're doing something steamy (such as cooking, or ironing) shut the door, use an extractor fan or open a window.
- It's better to keep your heating on lower for longer, rather than higher for a short-time.
- Treat mould as soon as you see it to prevent it from spreading.

Problems caused by condensation







Water running down windows? Black mould on grouting and curtains? You probably have a problem with condensation

Problems caused by damp or leaks







If you see brown stains on your ceiling, green algae near drainpipes or on walls, or powdery salts on walls, you may have problems with leaks or damp.

Lost your communal key?



If you have lost your communal key, you will have to pay the full cost of the replacement. This is £15. All payments must be paid in full prior to receiving your new key - it cannot be added to your rent account as a recharge.

Contractors using your electricity?

They should ask permission first



As a general rule, if you are having a repair or replacement carried out in your home, contractors should not use your electricity to power their equipment. If they need to use your electricity, to charge their equipment for instance, they should ask your permission first.

If you allow the contractor to use your electricity, it should not cost you more than a few pence. Bear in mind that if you choose not to allow the contractor to use your electricity, they may have to stop work and return at a later time.

Using an electric fire?

Do not use as your main heating

If you have an electric fire in your property, by all means you may turn it on if it's cold. However, it should not be used instead of your central heating.



Constant use of electric fires causes them to burn out meaning they need to be replaced more quickly. These are very expensive to replace.

If your electric fire is on constantly, and needs replacing before the end of its life, you could be expected to pay for its renewal.

Leaving your home



Moving home is a stressful time; thinking about packing up your things, taking final meter readings and arranging removal services. But there are a few things we expect you to do before leaving one of our homes.

Once your tenancy ends you must leave your home empty, secure, clean and tidy.

You will be charged if:

- There is any damage to the structure of the property caused by negligence
- There is any damage to the fixtures and fittings, such as kitchen cupboards caused by negligence
- We have to remove any of your belongings or rubbish
- ☑ We need to professionally clean your property

The condition of properties returned when we transfer a family is improving, and we have recently moved some families who have left their old home in excellent condition. But some people who have moved on from Unity are being recharged for clearing and cleaning their old homes.



Charges start at £350, and just because you no longer live in one of our homes doesn't mean you won't have to pay.









Taking the first step on the property ladder?

Through the shared-ownership scheme you can purchase up to 75% of your property. The aim is to help first-time buyers who can afford mortgage payments but can't afford a big deposit. Terms and conditions (others may apply):

- Suitable for first-time buyers only
- You must live in the property
- You need to have a connection to the local area for instance family or children attending a local school.
- You will need to satisfy Unity and your mortgage provider that you will be able to keep up with rent, mortgage and service charge payments (where applicable)

If you'd like to purchase a share in one of our brand new properties, please contact Rosa Homes:



01924 206 981 www.rosahomes.co.uk

Unity Housing announces first development in Huddersfield!

Unity Housing Association currently own and manage nearly 1200 properties in Leeds.

With another 150 new properties planned to be built over the next 5 years, it is inevitable that we will expand outside of Leeds to provide homes for people that need them.

We are very pleased to introduce our next development, Trinity Court, in Huddersfield which will feature ten refurbished properties, with rents starting from £70 per week (plus service charge).

These wonderful properties are set in the heart of the popular area of Fartown, and benefit from excellent local amenities and transport links.

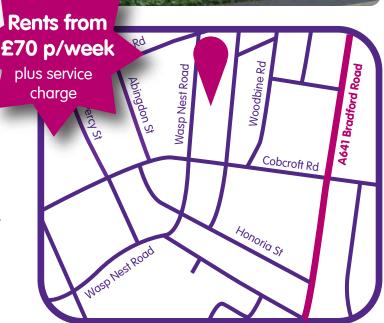
The properties will become available from January 2015. More information on how to apply will become available shortly.

Those interested should register their details and we will get back to you.

How do I apply?

- **Step 1** Call Rosa Homes on 01924 206 981
- **Step 2** Receive an application form
- **Step 3** Complete and return your application form to Rosa Homes.
- **Step 4** If your application is accepted, you'll be invited to view the property
- **Step 5** Pay Rosa Homes £250 to reserve the property (if your application is accepted and after viewing you've said you want the property)
- **Step 6** Get a mortgage (seek independent financial advice; i.e. Bank, Building Society, Mortgage Advisor)
- **Step 7** Find a solicitor to deal with legalities of purchase (Provide us with your solicitor's details)









What is Universal Credit?

In February 2015, new claimants for Jobseeker's Allowance will be affected. If this applies to you, please let us know - we can apply for your rent to be taken from your benefits so you don't have to worry about it.

Universal Credit is expected to arrive in Leeds in **February 2015.** It will replace:

- ☑ Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- ☑ Income-related Employment Support Allowance
- ✓ Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- ✓ Child Tax Credit
- ☑ Housing Benefit

What else will Universal Credit change?



Normally you will apply for it online.



It will be paid late and **monthly** like a wage.



It can only be paid into a **bank account**.



A single person or a couple making a joint claim will get **one** payment each month.



Universal Credit is **capped**. You will get no more than £2166 per month.



You will have to pay your **rent** and other bills from it.



You can work and get Universal Credit.

Who could benefit?

Unlike current benefits Universal Credit does not stop at 16 hours worked (JSA, ESA) and you don't have to work a minimum number of hours to get it, for example 24 or 30 hours (Working Tax Credits).

So if you start work and build up your hours slowly, or if your hours drop, you keep your wage and your Universal Credit adjusts without stopping. Your Universal Credit just reduces as you earn more. This means you could benefit if:

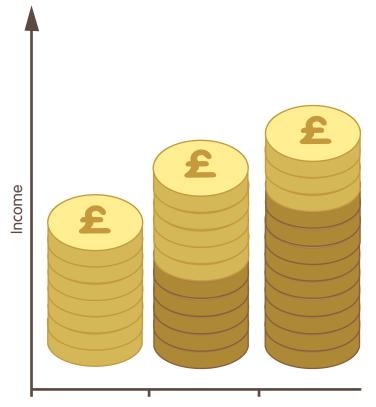
- You are working on a zero-hour contract
- You are working on a temporary or seasonal contract



Wages



Universal Credit



Unemployed person

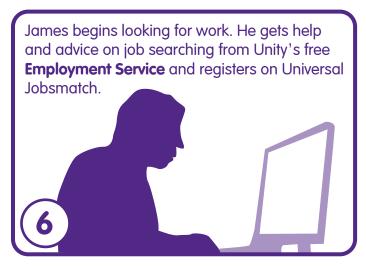
Someone working 16 hours a week Someone working 30 hours a week



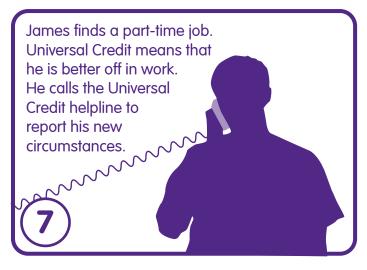


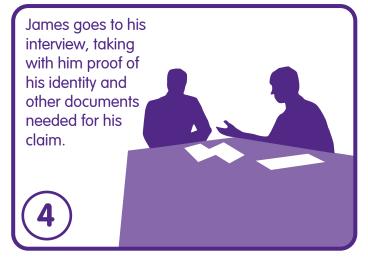
At the interview
James accepts
his Claimant
Commitment and
signs it. This is the
record of the
responsibilities he
has accepted in
return for getting
Universal Credit.

















How to apply for a bank account

In order to apply for a bank account you will need to have proof of identity, such as a passport or driving license and proof of address such as a council tax or utility bill. Some banks will also accept a benefits notification letter or a note from a social worker.

You can fill in the application form at the branch, online, over the phone or by post. The application form will ask you for a few details about yourself and about how much money you will be paying in each month.

Make sure you understand everything before you sign. Some bank accounts have monthly fees. They will often charge you if you go overdrawn and the charges vary from bank to bank.

Free bank accounts

Ideally you will be looking for a free 'Basic' bank account that will allow you to:

Pay your bills by Direct Debit or Standing Order

Receive payments such as your salary, wages or benefits.

Most free bank accounts have no overdraft facility and will charge you if you go overdrawn.

Some bank accounts have a monthly fee which covers extra features such as:

✓ Increased overdraft facility

✓ Car breakdown cover

▼ Travel or mobile phone insurance

This type of bank account is generally not suitable if you have a low-income. You need to consider whether you will actually use these features and whether or not you'd be able to get them cheaper elsewhere.



Free Basic Bank Accounts

Bank	Name of account	Branches:	Standing	Online Bu	Depit Con	ATM ACCC
Bank of Scotland	Cash Account	City Centre	/	/	/	May charge
Barclays	Cash Card Account	City Centre, Leeds University, Beesto Crossgates, Moortown, Horsforth	on, /	\	\	√
Co-Operative Bank	Cashminder	City Centre	\	/	/	✓
Halifax	Easycash	City Centre, Headingley, Hunslet, White Rose, Bramley, Crossgates, Moortown, Horsforth	✓	/	✓	√
HSBC	Basic Bank Account	City Centre, Leeds University, Headingley, Chapel Allerton, Armle Crossgates, Moortown, Horsforth	у, 🗸	\		\checkmark
Lloyds TSB	Cash Account	City Centre, Roundhay, Harehills, Hunslet, Armley, Crossgates, Moortown, Horsforth	\checkmark	\	\	May charge
Nationwide	Flex Cash Card	City Centre	/	\	\	✓
Natwest	Basic Account	City Centre, Headingley, Chapel Allerton, Crossgates, Adel	\checkmark	\	\	May charge
Post Office	Card Account	(with banking facilities) City Centre, Headingley, Crossgates				
RBS	Basic Account	City Centre	\checkmark	\checkmark	\	May charge
Santander	Basic Current Account	City Centre, Leeds University, Headingley, Roundhay, Crossgates		\		\checkmark
Yorkshire Bank	Ready Cash	City Centre, Burley, Burmantofts	/	\checkmark	✓	\checkmark
All of the above accounts offer withdrawals at Post Office branches and allow wages and benefits to be paid into the account. None of these accounts offer a cheque book or overdraft facility. This means you will incur a charge if you go overdrawn.						

All of these accounts have penalties for bounced Direct Debit or

All information in correct at the time of print, but banks regularly

Standing Order, some as much as £42.

change their offers, their terms and conditions.

13





Prevention is better than cure

What you should do in the event of a fire may vary, depending on the type of building you live in.
Wherever you live, it is always better to try and prevent a fire than it is to have to deal with an emergency situation, which is why we have produced some fire safety guidelines.

Fitting a smoke alarm

You are four times more likely to die in a fire if you do not have a smoke alarm fitted in your home than if you do.

- Fit smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Test the batteries in your smoke alarm every week. Change them every year. Never remove them.
- Don't put alarms in or near the kitchen or bathroom where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.
- If it is difficult for you to fit your alarm yourself, contact your local fire and rescue service for help (details overleaf). They'll be happy to install it for you.

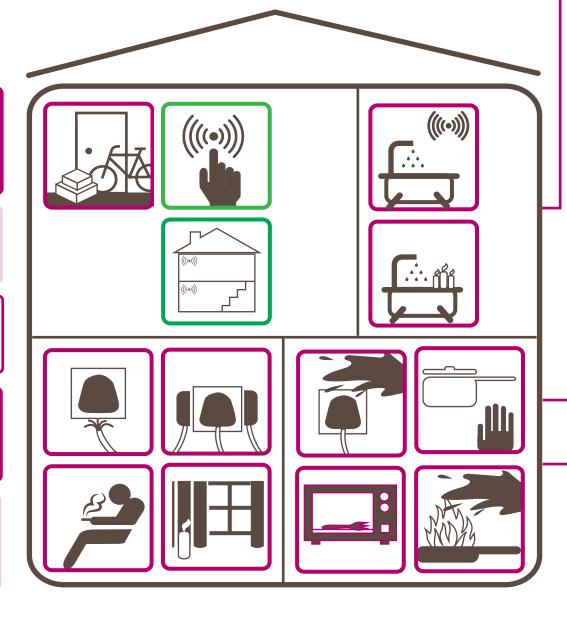
21 people die each year because the battery in their smoke alarm was flat or missing at the time of the fire.

Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents.

Three fires a day are started by candles.

Every five days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.

Faulty electrics cause around 6000 fires in the home across the country each year



Top tips to prevent a fire:

In the bathroom

Do not smoke or use candles in the bathroom as many toiletries are extremely flammable and will ignite easily if close to a naked flame. Pressurised containers could explode.

In the kitchen

- Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out so they don't get knocked off the stove.
- ✓ Keep tea towels and clothes away from the cooker and hob
- ▼ Keep electrics, leads and appliances away from water
- Place toasters away from curtains or kitchen roll. Check nothing has fallen into the toaster that could catch fire before using it.
- Clean your oven, hob and grill regularly. A build up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.
- Make sure food is dry before putting it in hot oil so it doesn't splash.
- If oil starts to smoke it is too hot. Turn off the heat and allow it to cool.

In the living room

- ✓ Keep your eyes peeled for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as scorch marks or flickering lights.
- ✓ Unplugging appliances when not in use reduces the risk of fire
- ✓ Place portable heaters against a wall to stop them from falling over
- ✓ Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes.
- If you smoke, take extra care if you feel tired, have been drinking or taking medication which makes you feel drowsy.
- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and are kept away from curtains.

In case the worst happens:

Plan an escape route:

- Make sure everyone in the household knows the quickest way to escape
- Think of a second route in case your first exit is blocked
- If you live in a block of flats, count the number of doors you go through it may be difficult to see if there's lots of smoke.

If there is a fire:

- ☑ Do not attempt to tackle fires yourself.
- Get everyone out of the building as soon as possible.
- Don't waste time investigating what has happened or rescuing valuables.
- If there's smoke, keep low where the air is clear.
- Before you open a door check if it's warm. There could be fire on the other side.
- Call 999 as soon as you are out of the building.

If your escape is blocked:

- If you can't get out, get everyone into one room, ideally with a window or a phone.
- Put bedding around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke. Open the window and shout for help.
- If you're on the ground floor, try and escape through the window. Use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself down. Don't jump.
- If you can't open the window, break the glass in the bottom corner. Make sure jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket.

If you're concerned about fire safety, book an appointment with the West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service. They can visit your property and give you some free advice.

Book online:

www.westyorksfire.gov.uk/contact#safety-check



Christmas Opening Hours

Monday 22nd December: 9am-5pm Tuesday 23rd December: 9am-5pm

Christmas Eve: 9am-12pm Christmas Day: CLOSED **Boxing Day: CLOSED**

New Year Opening Hours

Monday 29th December: 9am-5pm Tuesday 30th December: 9am-5pm

New Year's Eve: 9am-12pm New Year's Day CLOSED Friday 2nd January: CLOSED

Contacting Unity

T: 0113 200 7700

E: uha@unityha.co.uk 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 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

0845 634 2766

e.g. serious floods and leaks, total loss of water and electricity, the only toilet is blocked.

Emergency Gas Repairs 01757 244510



e.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unityis office is closed the next day.

Transco (gas leaks)



0800 111 999

Repairs by email:

repairs@unityha.uk

For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact Lewis Holloway on 0113 200 7751.

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

1 0113 222 4404

lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk

Complaints and compliments

0113 222 4405

Environmental services

Contact the Council's environmental services to get bulky items taken away for free.

0113 222 4406



refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk

Highways

0113 222 4407



highways@leeds.gov.uk

Registrars



0113 222 4408



A charitable Housing Association registered with the Housing Corporation LH3737. Registered under the Industrial & provident Socieities Act 25616R Affiliated to the NHF VAT Registration no. 734 5524 34











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.

Problems understanding?

business for neighbourhoods