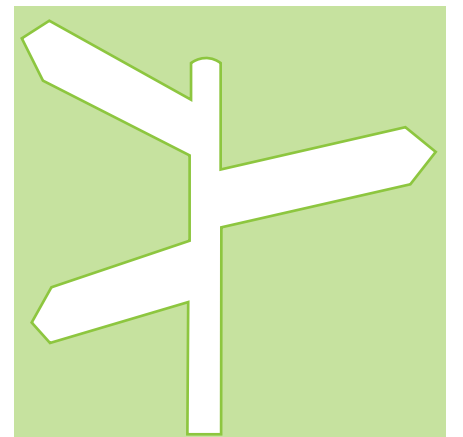
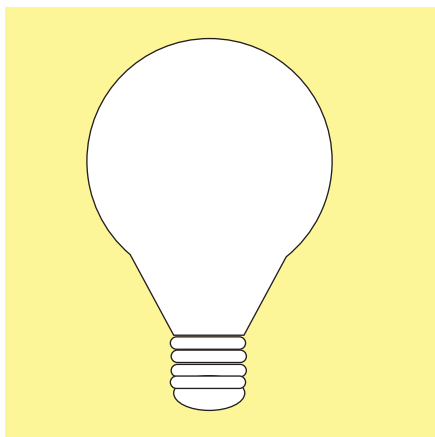
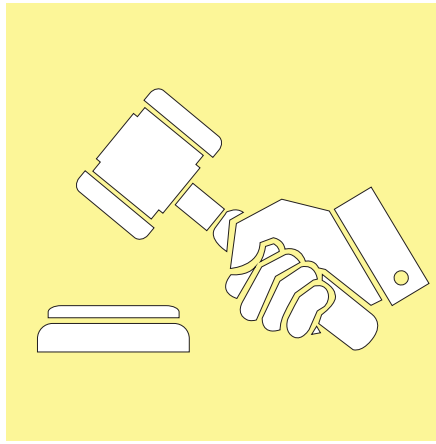
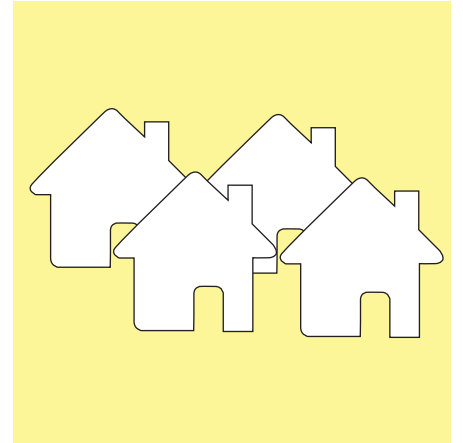


Self Assessment

2014/15





May 2014

Every few years, Unity checks how happy tenants are with the service we provide. We undertook a full Tenant Satisfaction Survey in 2014 and are pleased to report that 82.2% of tenants are satisfied with the overall service provided by Unity.



July 2014

We attended the annual Holbeck Gala to promote shared-ownership opportunities on our new development, Brown Lane East. The scheme has since provided homes for 42 families.



September 2014

Little London residents were visited by Housing Officers and Police Community Support Officers as part of an 'Action Day' to offer them free advice on crime and anti-social behaviour.



June 2014

We sponsored the annual Beeston Festival to provide our tenants and the wider community free advice on housing, employment and welfare.

August 2014

Work is underway on Stratford Court, a redevelopment on a council scheme, providing 28 homes for people over the age of 55 in the heart of Chapel Allerton.



October 2014

Unity achieves the Customer Service Excellence Award. An independent assessor examined all areas of the business and spoke to our Tenant Panel. Unity met and exceeded the standard required.



September 2014

Unity celebrates another year of providing housing choice, improving life opportunities and addressing inequalities at our AGM where Hardeep Singh Kohli is chief guest.

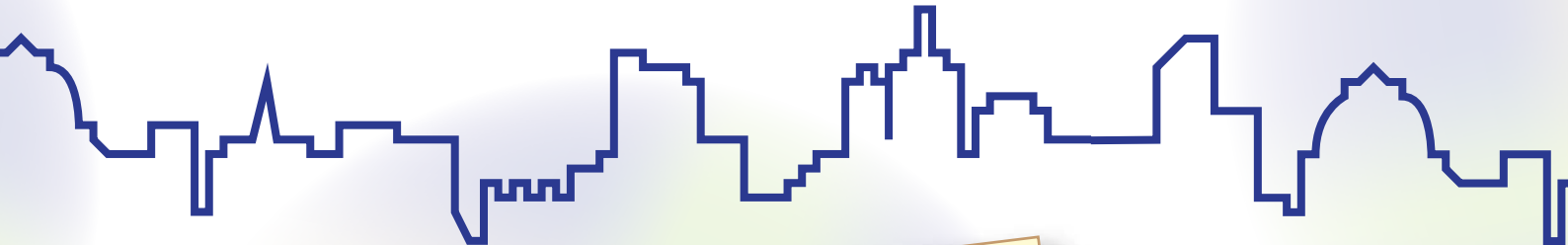


February 2015

Tenants moving into the new housing on and around Brown Lane East were welcomed to community at an event at Holbeck Working Men's Club.

March 2015

Residents were invited to take part in the 'Unity in Bloom' gardening competition to encourage tenants to raise the appearance of their estates. We provided opportunities for residents to be on the Judging Panel.



November 2014

Work begins on Unity's first development outside of Leeds. Trinity Court is a scheme of ten flats aimed at people over the age of 55 with recognised support needs, in the area of Fartown, Huddersfield.



March 2015

Spring kicked off with a series of gardening workshops, aimed at encouraging tenants to grow their own produce at home by giving away free pots, seeds and soil.



January 2015

The flats on Brown Lane East are named 'Harding Villas' by children at the nearby primary school, after industrialist Sir Thomas Walter Harding.

Contents



Tenancy Standard 5

includes how much rent we lose by having empty properties (voids) and how long it takes us to let empty properties to someone else, as well as whether our homes are being let to those who most need them.



Home Standard 8

covers our performance on repairs satisfaction, repairs expenditure, gas safety, and the energy efficiency of our properties.



Neighbourhood & Community Standard 11

covers how we deal with anti-social behaviour, how many tenants we help access employment and training, and our involvement in the communities we have properties.



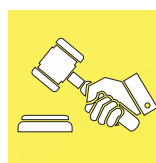
Tenant Involvement Standard 16

covers how well tenant's views are taken into consideration and our handling of complaints.



Value for Money Standard 20

covers initiatives we are using to save the company money and the number of tenants who are satisfied their rent and service charges are fair.



Governance & Viability Standard 23

examines to what extent our business is properly run by our managers and governed by our Board(s).



Plans for 2015/16 24





Tenancy Standard

Highlights

We supported 13 successful appeals against the 'bedroom-tax' to help tenants remain in their properties.

We helped 16 tenants move to a smaller home, so as to become exempt from the under-occupation subsidy. We continue to support and promote the national mutual exchange scheme.

The number of tenants under-occupying their home has fallen to 138, down from 205 in 2013

We are in the process of carrying out a Tenant Census to identify those likely to be affected by the shift to Universal Credit in December 2015.

We have partnered with 'MyHomeEnergySwitch' to help tenants identify where they could be saving money on their fuel bills by switching to cheaper tariffs

We've been helping tenants to adjust to the digital age at our weekly workshops. Using the Internet will become an essential skill as benefit claims and job applications are shifted online.

We are carrying out further research into which tenants are likely to be affected by benefit changes through our 2015 Census with a view to offering them the support and guidance they may need.

Our Performance

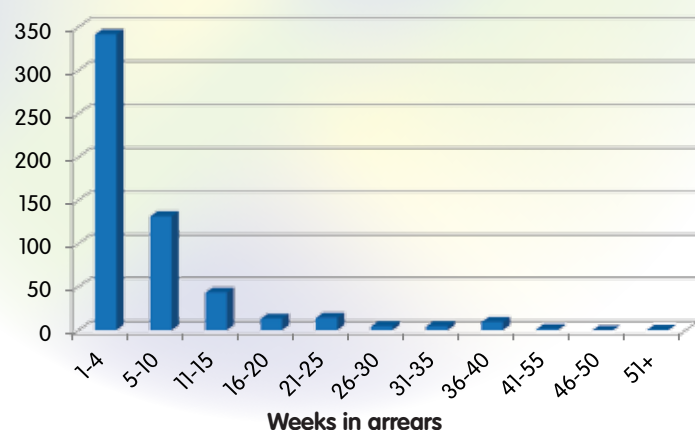
Arrears

	Actual 2013/14	Actual 2014/15	Target 2014/15	Meeting target	New target 2015/16
Arrears (actual)	£338,911	£336,344			
Arrears (%)	6.8%	6.4%	6.75%	✓	5.75%
Rent collected (%)	100.2%	103.1%	100%	✓	100%
Former tenant arrears (actual)	£224,524	£249,346			

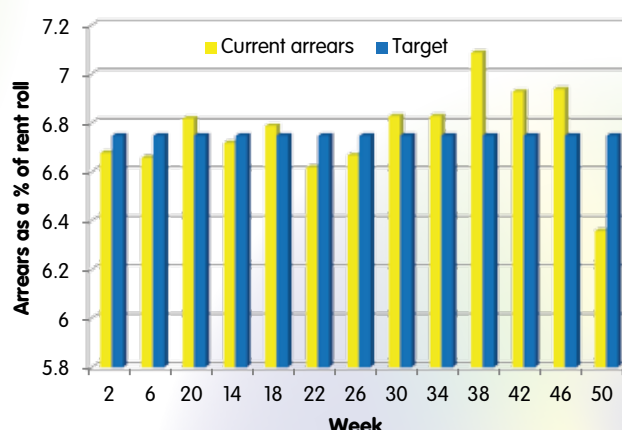
Voids & Lettings

% rent loss through voids	0.8%	1.0%	<2%	✓	<1.25%
Turnover of stock	5.8%	5.7%	<10%	✓	<10%
General needs re-let time	23 days	22 days	24 days	✓	22 days
% lets to nominations	60.6%	75.4%	50%	✓	50%
% General needs lets to BME tenants	67.7%	78.3%	50%	✓	50%

Number of arrears cases in bands



Arrears throughout 2014/15



Supporting tenants to maintain their tenancies

151

appointments made with our Financial inclusion Officer

9

Personal Independence applications made

7

JSA and Income Support applications made

67

fewer under-occupiers than 2013

64

successful bids for Discretionary Housing Payments

12

customers referred to debt advice

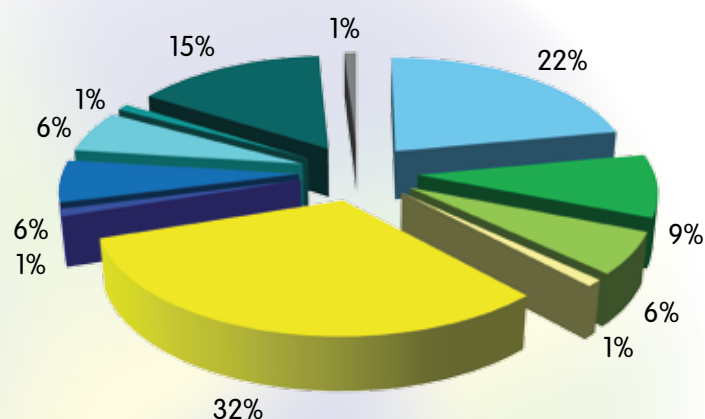
13

Trust and Grant applications made

51

food vouchers issued

Lettings to BME groups



- White British
- Black Caribbean
- White & Black Caribbean
- White & Black African
- Black African
- Black Other
- Asian Other
- Asian Pakistani
- White Irish
- White Other
- Other

New tenant surveys

	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you rate the standard of your property when you moved in?	93%	7%	0%
How would you rate the overall service received from Unity?	100%	0%	0%

Exit surveys

	Good	Fair	Poor
How would you describe the services that you have received from Unity?	69%	17%	14%
Would you recommend Unity to your friends or relatives?	Yes	No	
	82.8%	17.2%	

Benchmarking Data

Unity Housing Association

	Rent collected	Rent arrears	Re-let times	Rent loss through voids
Housing Association A	103.1% ★	6.4%	22 days	1.0%
Housing Association B	100.5%	2.8%	20 days	1.0%
Housing Association C	99.9%	1.9%	30 days	1.5%
Housing Association D	99.7%	4.4%	16 days	0.6% ★
Housing Association E	99%	2.1%	28 days	1.6%
Housing Association F	99%	2.8%	38 days	1.6%
Housing Association G	97.7%	4.9%	71 days	4.3%
Housing Association H		1.9% ★	8 days ★	1.6%
Housing Association I		2.9%	18 days	
	101.1%	4.8%	29 days	

Business Planning Objectives

Objective 2 - Provide high quality affordable housing services

Objective	Our performance	Objective met?
2.1 Continue to improve our approach to managing turnover and reducing void levels	As at March 2015, rent loss through void was 0.95% against a target of 2%. Our average re-let time was 21.06 days against a target of 24 days.	✓
2.2 Continue our drive to reduce rent arrears and review best practice and results of comparable organisations	As at March 2015, arrears were at 6.36% against a target of 6.75%, having fallen by 0.48% since March 2014. Arrears have continued to fall in 2015/16 but benchmarking against other housing associations shows that Unity's arrears are comparatively high.	✓
2.3 Review and improve our programme of work aimed at ensuring we are sensitive to the needs of tenants and legislation in terms of the size, affordability and demand of our accommodation	The number of tenants under-occupying their home has fallen to 138, down from 205 in 2013. We supported 13 successful appeals against the 'bedroom-tax' to help tenants remain in their properties. We helped 16 tenants move to a smaller home, so as to become exempt from the under-occupation subsidy.	✓

Objective 4 - Provide training and employment opportunities and promote financial inclusion

Objective	Our performance	Objective met?
4.1 Review our current 'housing plus' offer and success to date and agree our future priorities-see also objectives 5 and 6	We continue to provide additional services to our tenants including the Financial Inclusion Service and Employment Services. 151 appointments were made with the Financial Inclusion officer in 2014/15	✓
4.1 Continue to promote financial inclusion and support our tenants with the impact of welfare reform, the cost of living and banking and credit facilities	We continue to support tenants with budgeting, and offer advice about banking and crediting facilities through our Income Support Team. We continue to promote opportunities for tenants to cut costs and maximise their income in our quarterly newsletter	✓





Home Standard



Highlights

100% of properties were gas-safety compliant as at the end of March 2015.

The Average SAP rating (a rating out of 100 which denotes how energy-efficient a property is) of our properties was 73.7 against a target of 73

36 properties were adapted to meet the needs of the tenants living there

A further 84 Energy Performance Certificates were attained in 2014/15. We now hold accurate energy performance information on 95% of our properties.

All our homes continue to meet the 'Decent Homes Standard'.

Our repairs contractor, Forrest, attended a Tenant Panel meeting so that tenants had the opportunity to express any concerns they had about their performance.

Our Performance

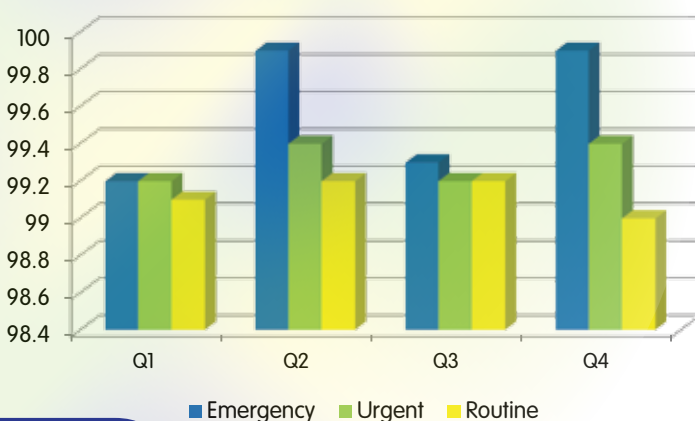
	Actual 2013/14	Actual 2014/15	Target 2014/15	Meeting target	New target 2015/16
Repairs, servicing and condition					
Emergency	99%	99.9%	99%	✓	99%
Urgent	98.6%	99.4%	99%	✓	99%
Routine	99.1%	99%	99%	✓	99%
First-time fix	98.9%	95.8%	95%	✓	95%
Appointments made and kept	99.7%	99.1%	99%	✓	99%
Gas servicing	100%	100%	100%	✓	100%
Average rd SAP rating	73	73	73	✓	73

Tenant Satisfaction

Monthly maintenance satisfaction	98.4%	95%	✓	95%
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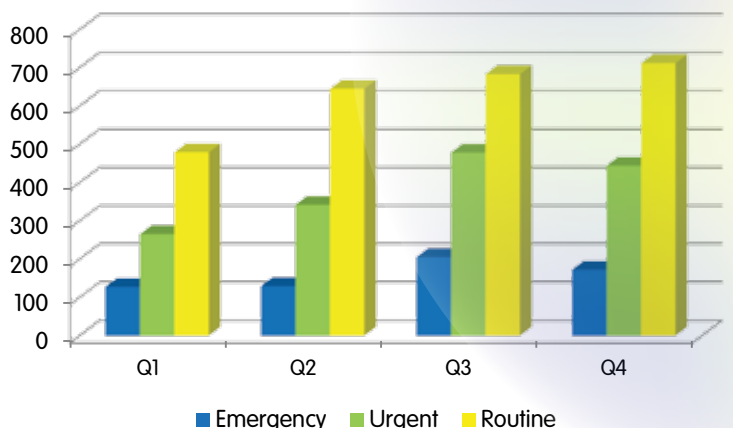
Responsive Repairs

Responded to within the timescale



Responsive Repairs

Number of jobs logged



Responsive Repairs Satisfaction

	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
How well did we deal with your repair?	93%	6%	1%
How good was the repair?	91%	8%	1%
How good was service from Contractor?	93%	6%	1%
	Yes	No	
Did the contractor keep appointment?	98%	2%	
Was the repair fixed on the first visit from the contractor?	95%	5%	

Planned Maintenance Satisfaction

	Satisfaction with service from Unity	Satisfaction with service from contractor	Satisfaction with quality of work	Satisfaction with quality of materials
Kitchens	100%	100%	100%	100%
Doors	93%	91%	92%	91%
Boilers	89%	89%	89%	89%
Bathrooms	96%	96%	96%	96%
Painting	99%	100%	100%	n/a
Gas servicing	99%	99%	99%	n/a

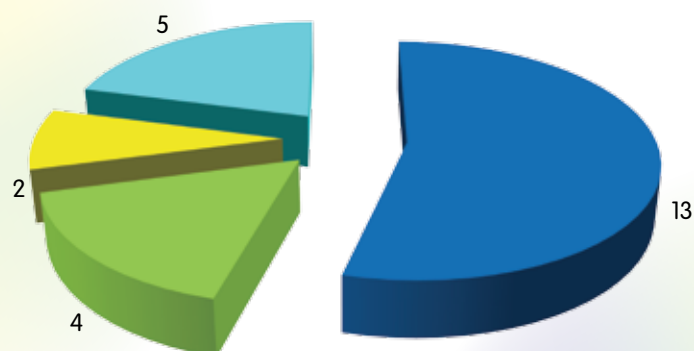
Benchmarking Data

	Gas Safety Compliance	Emergency repairs completed within target timescale	Urgent repairs completed within target timescale	Routine repairs completed within target timescale	Appointments that were kept	First time fixes	Satisfaction with repairs service
Unity	100%	99.9%	99.4%	99%	99.1%	95.8%	98.4%
Association A	100%	98.1% (13/14)	93.2% (13/14)	96.9% (13/14)			
Association B	99.6%						
Association C	99.9%	100% (13/14)	98.3% (13/14)	97.2% (13/14)			
Association D	100%				95.4% (13/14)		96.6% (13/14)
Association E	99.8%	94%	96%	96%	80%		90%
Association G	100%						
Association H						90%	89%
Association I	100%	100% (13/14)	98.5% (13/14)	98.4% (13/14)	99% (13/14)	99% (13/14)	90%(2013/14)

Planned/Responsive Repairs Split



Areas for dissatisfaction with repairs



■ Planned maintenance ■ Responsive maintenance

■ Contractor ■ Missed appointments
■ Incomplete repairs ■ Recurrence of visits

Business Planning Objectives

Objective 1 - Provide and continue to develop high quality mixed tenure housing which reflects needs and aspirations

Objective	Our performance	Objective met?
1.1 Maintain our levels of investment and our planned approach to repairs, servicing and maintenance	We achieved a 61/39 split between planned maintenance and responsive repairs cost, surpassing our 60/40 target. As at March 2014/15 with 100% gas safety compliance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.2 Continue our approach aimed at increasing the SAP ratings of our properties and minimising energy costs	<p>The Average SAP rating (a rating out of 100 which denotes how energy-efficient your property is) of our properties was 73.7 against a target of 73</p> <p>A further 84 Energy Performance Certificates were attained in 2014/15. We now hold accurate and usable energy performance information on 95% of our properties.</p> <p>We have partnered with 'MyHomeEnergySwitch' to help tenants identify where they could be saving money on their fuel bills by switching to cheaper tariffs</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>





Neighbourhood & Community Standard



Highlights

We completed two major new housing developments in the areas of Holbeck and Chapel Allerton, which have provided 70 new homes. The building of these new homes provided a total of 16 work experience opportunities with our contractors.

We refurbished two of our three business centres, Unity Business Centre and Chapeltown Enterprise Centre, to improve the offer to new and existing tenants.

We employed a Network Business Advisor to assist tenants and the wider community in setting up their own businesses.

Our Employment Service Team helped a further 60 people access work opportunities and 61 people find training opportunities.

Following a suggestion from the Tenant Panel, we have made a change to way in which anti-social behaviour is recorded and monitored. Each case is now logged formally and reported to our Operations Committee.

The Leeds Collaborative Group, a collective of involved residents from four different Yorkshire housing associations have compared landlords' approaches to dealing with anti-social behaviour and as a result Unity is better-equipped to deal with any complaints.

New Developments & Refurbishments



Brown Lane East is a development comprising of 26 properties for affordable rent and 16 shared-ownership properties. It is a redevelopment of a brownfield site, promoting the wider regeneration of the Beeston and Holbeck.



Stratford Court is a redevelopment of a council scheme featuring 24 flats and 4 bungalows, exclusively for those over the age of 55. It is in the convenient location of Chapel Allerton, close to shops, cafes and local amenities.



Trinity Court is Unity's first development outside of Leeds; in the neighbourhood of Fartown, Huddersfield. It features ten refurbished flats for those over the age of 55 with support needs.



Through our subsidiary company, Unity Enterprise, **Unity Business Centre** and **Chapeltown Enterprise Centre** provide office and workshop units for small businesses and voluntary sector organisations.

Unity Business Centre and Chapeltown Enterprise Centre underwent major refurbishments in 2014/15 to improve the services that we are able to offer our business tenants.

Works included re-cladding roofs, new doors and windows, new lifts, new signage and data cabling for faster broadband. The improvements were paid for with £1.4 million of Government and Unity funding.

New Businesses Triumph



Existing tenants, **LEEP 1** - a self-advocacy group aimed at encouraging adults with learning difficulties to stand up for themselves – converted an office unit into a café which attracts workers from the centre as well as passing trade.



New tenants include **Petals 3**, a florist on the ever busy Chapeltown Road, providing fresh flowers and bouquets for all occasions.



Nadeen Strachan is an independent, graduate fashion designer and seamstress. She offers a tailoring service to make clothes to suit your requirements as an individual and is able to customise and perform alterations on your existing garments.

Case Study, Network Business Advice

Our Network Business Advisor helped Michael* to develop his business by helping him to access finance to purchase much needed equipment for his auto-repair workshop and develop a business plan to give him a clear guideline to follow.

Our Network Business Advisor connected Michael with suppliers of products at much more affordable prices than others had quoted. He advised him on how to market his business and develop his brand. He is also helping him to develop a database system for his growing clients.

Unity's Employment Services Team

Unity Employment Services was set up in May 2011 to support Unity tenants and the communities in which they live to get back into employment and training. The Team can help tenants with practical job skills such as preparing a CV, guidance for job searching and applications, and practising interview technique. Since they joined Unity they have helped hundreds of people!

	12/13	13/14	14/15	Total
Employment	35	44	60	177
Training	36	45	61	211
Voluntary work	14	12	20	48

Case Study: Jack*, Married, 27

Jack was already in work but wanted to progress in his career by learning a new trade.



*Names have been changed to protect the identities of those concerned. Images do not represent those in the case studies.

Unity Housing is pleased to offer local people work experience opportunities through the building of new homes. The Team sent Jack information on how to apply and he responded straightaway. He was invited for interview and was successful in securing a six month placement.

Jack 's enthusiasm for his job meant that he was invited to work after the six months had ended, until the building work was complete. Since leaving the site Jack has successfully found alternative employment and is hoping to buy a home for him and his family.



Case Study: Ben*, Single, 34

Before meeting The Employment Team Ben, was on disability benefits and was severely depressed. He hadn't worked for thirteen years. He had recently been made homeless and had nowhere to stay.

In the first meeting the Team offered to refer Ben for housing advice. The following week, Ben went to view a Unity property and accepted straight away. He was referred to the Financial Inclusion Officer for advice about where to find affordable furniture.

Ben returned to the Employment Team, wanting to brush up his IT skills. The Team were running courses at the Employment Hub, which he joined. He successfully completed the course which gave him the confidence to start applying for jobs.

Case Study: Sharon*, Single Mother, 40

Before meeting The Employment Team Sharon was struggling with alcohol addiction and had a small child at home as well as an older child. She was sinking into depression and wanted to do something with her life.

On the first meeting with the Employment Team Sharon opened up about her addiction and how she was feeling. The Team got her an appointment at the local addiction unit where she was put on a programme for 9 weeks to help her get out of old habits and make new healthier ones.

After the programme had finished The Team referred her to the Volunteer Centre where she got a better idea of what she wanted to do. Sharon is volunteering at her local food bank.

Anti-Social Behaviour

	Year End 2013/14	Q1 2014/15	Q2 2014/15	Q3 2014/15	Year End 2014/15
Number of new cases	6	35	21	1	4
Number of cases closed	6	13	5	6	16
Number of cases to court	0	0	0	0	0
Number of open cases	12	34	50	45	33



Business Planning Objectives

Objective 1 - Provide and continue to develop high quality mixed tenure housing which reflects needs and aspirations

Objective	Our performance	Objective met?
1.3 Deliver our current new development programme	We completed a major development; Brown Lane East, Holbeck. Stratford Court, Chapel Allerton was completed in 2015/16 with some slippage against the target date for its completion. We refurbished a further 10 flats in Huddersfield adding our first semi-supported scheme to our portfolio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.4 Produce a viable new development programme, additional to our current programme, taking account of demand and the aspirations and mobility of BME communities	We have plans to build a further 188 properties between March 2016 and March 2019 in areas of Leeds which we do not currently hold stock.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1.5 Carry out appraisals of the demand and opportunity to provide specialist accommodation eg, for older people, vulnerable people etc	We refurbished 10 flats in Huddersfield suitable for people over the age of 55 with recognised support needs. Stratford Court, a development comprising of 24 flats and 4 bungalows, completed in 2015/16 has provided further accommodation for those over the age of 55 in Chapel Allerton. The scheme is equipped with a lift, making all of the flats wheelchair accessible, and wet-room showers which are ideal for those who struggle to get in and out of the bath.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Objective 2 - Provide high quality affordable housing services

2.4 Work with local voluntary organisations and other partners on a pilot programme in Chapeltown and Harehills to support older people to live healthily and independently in their own homes	We continue to support organisations such as Feel Good Factor and Zest Health for Life which run projects aimed at helping older people to live healthily and independently in their own homes and are particularly active in the communities in which we hold stock.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Objective 4 - Provide training and employment opportunities and promote financial inclusion

4.2 Continue our programme of work aimed at securing training and employment for our tenants and families and refocus our efforts on supporting young people	The Employment Services Team helped 60 people secure work and a further 61 people find a training opportunity. 20 people secured a voluntary work opportunity with help from the Employment Service Team. Through the Headstart Programme, we provided work opportunities for 3 young people in our offices and provided opportunities for students on work experience programmes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Objective 5 - Provide business support and encourage local enterprise

Objective	Our performance	Objective met?
5.1 Complete the refurbishment of our Unity Enterprise facilities	Unity Business Centre and Chapeltown Enterprise Centre underwent a £1.4 million refurbishment, improving our offer to new and existing tenants.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.2 Review the Enterprise offer and business model	We devised a new rent plan which takes into consideration the refurbishment works and goes some way to ensuring that the Unity Enterprise is a viable business in its own right.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5.3 Continue to develop and support the Chapeltown Enterprise Network	We continue to work in partnership with the Chapeltown Enterprise Network in supporting those from the LS7 to initiate and expand their businesses. In 2014/15 the Network Business Advisor together with the Chapeltown Enterprise Network have supported 67 businesses, 21 social enterprises and saved and/or created a total of 27 jobs.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Objective 6 - Work with partners to encourage the regeneration of our target neighbourhoods

6.1 Encourage and participate in neighbourhood regeneration initiatives relevant to our existing tenancies and to areas in which we are carrying out new development	Unity's largest development in 2014/15 was Brown Lane East, in Holbeck – comprising of 42 properties. We are part of the Holbeck Neighbourhood Forum which is aimed at bringing stakeholders, including businesses together to complement the wider regeneration of Holbeck.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Continue to promote and participate in the regeneration of Chapeltown and Harehills	We continue to play a lead role in the Chapeltown Housing Strategy which is aimed at bringing empty properties back into use.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Encourage and support the emerging regeneration initiatives in Beeston and Holbeck	We continue to have a presence at, and sponsor community events in Beeston and Holbeck to offer local people free advice on housing, employment and welfare.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>





Tenant Involvement Standard



Highlights

We carried out a full Tenant Satisfaction Survey to help us identify areas for service improvement and to bring to our attention any issues affecting our residents' homes and neighbourhoods.

We encouraged residents to take pride in their estates by taking part in the 'Unity in Bloom' gardening competition. We provided opportunities for tenants to be on the Judging Panel.

We conducted research into our tenants' preferences to find out if tenants would find it more convenient to communicate with us by email and social media. We anticipate value for money savings, in instances where tenants are happy to do this.

Our Tenant Panel have been involved in inspecting void properties in order to better understand how Unity's budget is spent and to make suggestions as to where we could be saving money bringing empty properties back into use.

Our Tenant Panel have been involved in monitoring the performance of our repairs contractor and assessing tenders from other contractors.

We continue to sponsor the annual Beeston Festival to raise awareness of our services and provide free housing, employment and welfare advice to local people.

2014 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

As a Registered Social Landlord, Unity aims to carry out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey every 3-4 years. The 2014 Tenant Satisfaction Survey was statistically valid with 404 returns (a 40% response rate). Unity needs to build on these positive results to become a high-performing organisation.

Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the services provided by Unity?

	Responses	2006	2009	2010	2012	2014
Very satisfied	194	62.1	66.6	79.4	88	82.2
Fairly satisfied	138					
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	30	13.9	15.4	8.7	4.9	7.4
Fairly dissatisfied	22					
Very dissatisfied	20	24	18	11.9	7.1	10.4

How satisfied are you with your neighbourhood as a place to live?

	Responses	2012	2014
Very satisfied	182	85.2	82.3
Fairly satisfied	149		
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	34	8.3	8.5
Fairly dissatisfied	20		
Very dissatisfied	17	5.5	92.4

Generally, how satisfied are you with the way Unity deals with repairs and maintenance?

	Responses	2006	2009	2010	2012	2014
Very satisfied	198	53	60.2	74.3	86.3	85.4
Fairly satisfied	148					
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22	10.2	15	9	3.5	5.4
Fairly dissatisfied	24					
Very dissatisfied	13	36.8	24.8	16.7	10.2	9.1

How satisfied are you that Unity listens to your views and acts upon them?

	Responses	2009	2010	2014
Very satisfied	165	56.3	63.9	75.2
Fairly satisfied	140			
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	59	26.3	25.5	14.6
Fairly dissatisfied	21			
Very dissatisfied	20	17.4	10.6	10.1

While it is important to use the empirical evidence garnered by means of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey to inform and improve services, it is also worthwhile examining the anecdotal evidence provided by the tenants to highlight areas for improvement.

Having studied these comments, Unity drafted an action plan to respond to them. Any comments pertaining to tenancy issues, or repairs and maintenance issues were dealt with accordingly - but a number of comments could only be addressed through community consultation and engagement.

Here are a few examples of how Unity responded to such comments:

Tenants mentioned:

Neighbours leaving their garden messy, bringing down the look of the neighbourhood.

It would be a good idea to inspect gardens and enforce tenants to keep them in better order

I have raised my concerns ... about the tenants' rubbish in their gardens

This estate has so many children who group together and run riot. No supervision from their parents and out until late. They play football outside my house and the ball is continuously hitting the garden railings, house and my car.

If signs can be put up saying 'do not play football in the street', and some kind of law to be enforced.

Police presence is visible at times but we think there needs to be some improvement

The open dealing of drugs continues to be a problem.

Bad area, drugs, fighting, kids can't play outside due to cars

We hosted some community action days in partnership with local police so as residents could raise any concerns they have about crime and anti-social behaviour.



We did:

We arranged the 'Unity in Bloom' gardening competition to encourage residents to take pride in their gardens and raise the appearance of their estates. We provided opportunities for tenants to be on the Judging Panel.

We also hosted 'Gardening Workshops' on several estates throughout the spring to encourage novices to take an interest in growing flowers, fruit, vegetables and herbs.

We hosted several Arts & Crafts workshops aimed at children on several estates. It was hoped that children and their parents would interact with one another and create friendships. The idea was to keep children occupied with activities that do not involve 'ball games'.

We also produced a handy guide of things to do in the summer holidays which we distributed on some estates. By encouraging families to have affordable days out, it is hoped that it will take pressure off the estates during the school holidays.



Ways of Getting Involved

Tenant Panel

Unity's Tenant Panel has been established since 2010 and is open to all tenants. Our Tenant Panel is a fun, friendly group of Unity residents that meets up monthly to discuss issues affecting the business, our homes and our tenants.

As well as attending meetings, the Tenant Panel get involved with practical on-site inspections, mystery shopping exercises and interviewing and assessing our contractors to help us monitor their performance.

Scrutiny Panel

If tenants want to challenge and influence how Unity's housing services are delivered then they can join our Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

Tenant Scrutiny of services is a cornerstone of ensuring that Unity is properly run. Our Scrutiny Panel meets every three months to closely examine how Unity is performing. Because it is a more committed role that requires particular skills, tenants have to apply to join the Scrutiny Panel.

Leeds Collaborative Group

Tenants from four housing associations attend this six weekly-forum, supported by their respective involvement officers to compare approaches and share best-practice. It is currently attended by two tenants.

Key investigations the group have carried out this year include:

- ✓ Tenants' use of pre-payment meters and whether or not landlords are doing enough to support tenants from migrating from expensive tariffs
- ✓ What happens to household items left behind by tenants when vacating their properties; whether it is recycled, gifted to another tenant or collected by a charity
- ✓ What strategies landlords have in place to support victims of domestic violence
- ✓ Landlords' communication with their tenants, including printed media, email bulletins and social media and whether their choices matches with tenants' preferences

Case Study - Unity in Bloom

Each of Unity's residents has been invited to enter their garden or outdoor space into the 'Unity in Bloom' gardening competition. For the first time, there were two categories; meaning that those who grow their own fruit and vegetables benefitted from the rewards on offer.

The aim of the competition was to encourage residents to take pride in the appearance of their estates, and promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging tenants to grow fruit and vegetables at home.

Some of Unity's tenants went to extraordinary lengths to bring up the appearance of their estates.



The Tenant Panel took two full days out of their busy schedule to visit properties across Leeds. They had very hard task in selecting the winners.

To celebrate the success of the competition, each of the participants was invited to an Awards Ceremony in which the winners and runners up were offered prizes. Such was the variety of the gardens entered that Unity's Tenant Panel have suggested that more categories be introduced in next year's competition.

Case Study - Tenants attend Domestic Violence Conference

Some members of the Tenant Panel, who were particularly concerned about the issue of domestic violence, attended a conference aimed at raising awareness of the issue in Leeds.

Following the conference, Unity revisited our policies and procedures with help from our Tenant Panel to make sure that we are fully equipped to deal with a domestic violence situation.

One tenant who attended is interested in becoming an ambassador for protecting victims of domestic violence within her community and plans to seek a training opportunity to enable her to do this.

Unity also issued advice for victims and friends and relatives of victims in our quarterly newsletter.

Business Planning Objectives

Objective 3 - Involve and work with our tenants and the communities we serve to inform and improve services.

Objective

- 3.1 Continue to expand and extend the input of our tenant involvement panels and our Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Our performance

The Tenant Panel continues to be well-attended. There is now also an evening session to accommodate those who would like to be involved but struggle to attend meetings due to their work commitments. Furthermore, the Panel have been involved with a number of practical investigations. Scrutiny reviews have taken place every three months, but a separate Scrutiny Panel has not been viable.

Objective met?



- 3.2 Review the results of our 2013/14 Tenant Satisfaction Survey and introduce a related service improvement programme

Following the feedback from the 2014 Satisfaction Survey we produced a programme of events aimed at alleviating some of the concerns raised.



- 3.3 Participate with the Leeds Collaborative Group of Housing Associations on shared approaches and practice on tenant involvement

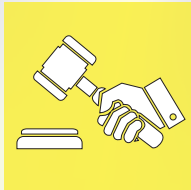
Two members of the Tenant Panel continue to attend and play an active role in the Leeds Collaborative Group.





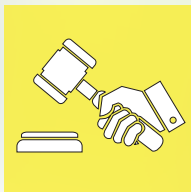
Value for Money Standard

Highlights



Governance & Viability

The Board has ensured that a long and Value for Money efficiency log are in place documenting efficiency improvements, which provide financial as well as social returns.



Governance & Viability

Budgets and business plans include efficiency targets and improvements in services based on action plans. We engage in rigorous sensitivity testing and we assess all our risks and we have developed measures to manage and mitigate the impact of these.



Tenant Involvement

We are developing our Tenant Scrutiny Panel to play a key role in challenging our performance, priorities and services, thereby helping to deliver better Value for Money.



Home

As part of our budgeting and ensuring Value for Money we project the future ratios of routine versus cyclical and planned maintenance. It is important that proportion of expenditure on routine repairs does not grow too large as routine repairs are not as cost effective.



Home

Office cleaning and commercial cleaning has been let as one contract to obtain economies of scale and reduce cost. We let our cyclical painting on a longer contract period (5-7 years).



Home

We have been able to reduce costs by 7% against other contractors taking part in the communal cleaning tender process.



Home

We let our domestic lift maintenance and servicing requirement with our commercial lift requirements as one contract. This obtains economies of scale and has reduced costs.



Home

We have ran mini-tendering exercises to ascertain that the current schedule of rates prices for kitchen and bathroom renewals are competitive



Home

We use Inenco (an energy broker) to negotiate the procurement of energy supplies for our communal and commercial buildings. This enables us to obtain cost savings via bulk purchasing.



Home

All our communal metering has been switched to smart metering reducing our costs in respect of meter readings and verifications.

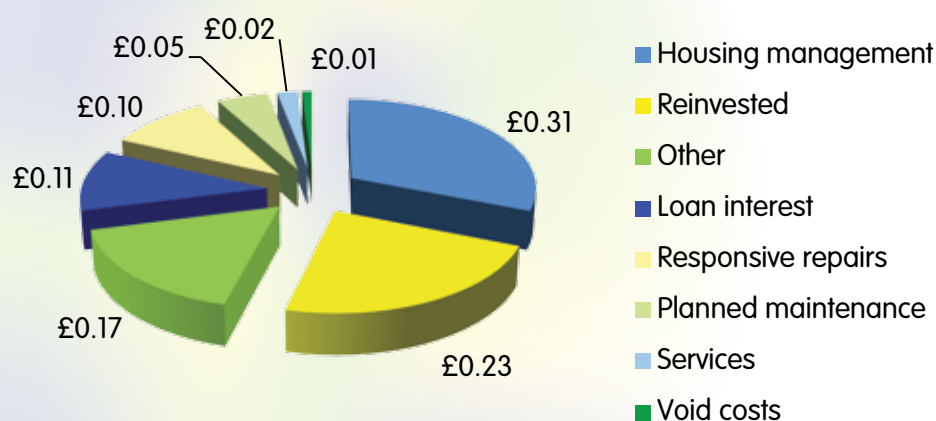
Financial Performance

The Association makes effective use of its financial strength and capacity to support its objectives and spending priorities. The following table illustrates how we have consistently improved our financial performance year on year.

	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
TURNOVER	5605	5407	6196	5542	4859
Operating costs	(4040)	(3986)	(4935)	(4644)	(4118)
	1565	1421	1261	898	741
Sale fixed assets	24	8			12
Interest received	72	32	27	42	42
Interest paid	(575)	(454)	(431)	(516)	(516)
SURPLUS	1086	1007	857	424	279

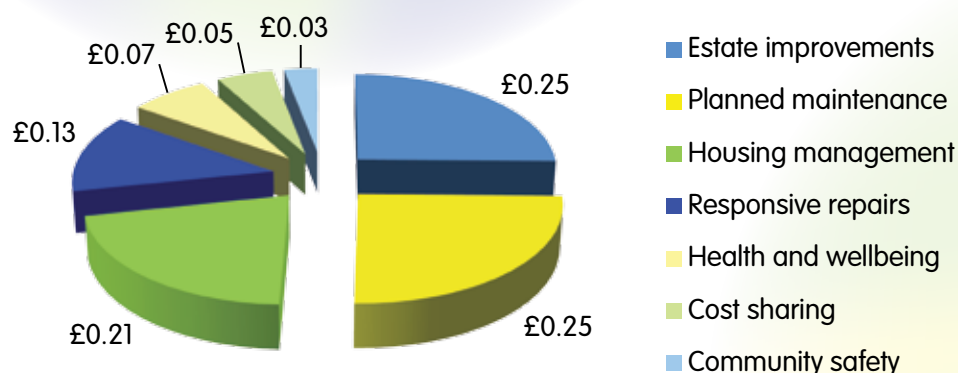
How each £1 of rent was spent in 2014/15

Unity Housing Association



How each £1 of rent was spent in 2014/15

Housing Association H



Ratio of Routine v Cyclical & Planned Repairs 2015/16 – 2019/20

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Routine Repairs %	40.5%	43.6%	48.1%	49.8%	53.1%
Cyclical & Planned %	59.5%	56.4%	56.4%	51.2%	46.9%

Tendering Benefits

	Savings over contract life	
Office and commercial cleaning	5.45%	£11,600
Responsive and planned maintenance	6.74%	£350,000
Gas servicing	11.5%	£18,000
Commercial and domestic life maintenance and servicing	21%	£9,500
Communal gardening (partnering with Leeds Fed)	5.1%	£5,000
Domestic fire alarm servicing and maintenance	38%	£74,000

We analyse our financial results to produce more accessible charts, derived from standard ratios. The following charts usefully illustrate how our income is spent as well as the fact that we are controlling costs, delivering steady and positive improvement in our financial results, many of which compare favourably with the results of our peers and indeed of the sector as a whole.

Void costs – this relates to the cost of works to homes that are vacated and require work, to bring them up to a lettable standard, before they are allocated to new tenants

Routine repairs – This covers the responsive repairs that are reported by tenants

Planned repairs – This covers planned and cyclical maintenance such as roofing and new window programmes

Loan interest – This refers to the money that Unity has to pay on loans that it has taken out to build new homes

Service charges – This includes items such as ground maintenance, care alarms and communal areas











Management costs – This includes the costs of staff and offices and other related costs

Other costs – This covers other items such as insurance and Information Technology

Re-invested – The proportion of rent money that is left over after all the other items have been paid for from the rental income is kept for future investment in existing and new homes as well as new services.

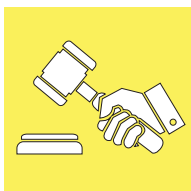
Having fund left over after all the other items have been paid for provides an important degree of financial stability which is both prudent and important in times of national changing policy.

Value for Money Log

Area	Description	Saving
	We tendered new suppliers for our utilities at our offices and business centres. Opus Energy became our new supplier on 1st April 2015.	£7,500 over the lifespan of the contract
	Keepmoat carried out external wall insulation on our properties in Carlton Grove. Keepmoat were carrying out work in the area and delivered a value for money saving against our regular contractors.	£2,400 on this particular job
	We negotiated a 5% discount on our Internet monitoring software by taking out a 3 year contract	£1,248 over the lifespan of the contract
	We negotiated a new insurance policy which covered some of the items we were charged separately for in the past	£6,588 against expected cost
	Due to late billing from our solicitor, we negotiated a discount of 50% for some items	£1,292 one-off discount
	Instead of printing and posting the Annual Report to Tenants, we uploaded it our website and included instructions of how to download it in our newsletter.	£1,128 one-off saving
	We were advised that we could reclaim VAT on fees related to the cash machine outside our office.	£275 one-off saving
	We utilised the design skills of our in-house staff to create signage which we would usually outsource	£236 one-off saving
	We achieved loan interest savings	£3,075 one-off saving
	Insurance rates remained the same. The only increment was due to the increased value of our properties.	£2,971 against expected cost

Total Savings:

£26,713



Governance & Viability Standard

Business Planning Objectives

Objective 7 - Be a progressive and expanding business with a sound resource base

Objective	Our performance	Objective met?
7.1 Comply with the Regulatory Standards and ensure high standards of governance	Unity's activity and performance continue to be monitored by our Board, which has two subsidiary committees; our Operations Committee and our Audit & Risk Committee. A new chair of the Board was appointed in September 2014. Unity tenants have the opportunity to monitor and scrutinise our performance through our Scrutiny Panel.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.2 Update and regularly review our risk management strategy	Our 'Risk Map' is updated quarterly and reviewed by the Board.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.3 Ensure budget control and adhere to our financial plan and lender covenants	Budgets are influenced by our business plan. Full budget reports are produced and considered by the Board every quarter. In addition there are quarterly Financial Surveys and comprehensive annual returns are submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.4 Introduce an updated and improved value for money programme	We employed a consultant to help us deliver our Value for Money programme. We continue to maintain a log of Value for Money savings and publish it in our Annual Report to Tenants.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.5 Review our asset base and the return on our assets	We reviewed our Asset Management Strategy in 2014/15 to ensure that the Association's housing stock meets the needs of residents.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.6 Continue to improve our management and staff development programmes and comply with relevant performance standards, eg IIP, ISO	Each member of staff has a 'Personal Development Plan' aimed at enhancing their opportunities for improvement and progression. Our Investors in People Silver Standard is up will be reassessed in September 2015. Our Customer Service Excellence Standard will be reassessed in October 2015.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.7 Maintain an up to date and reliable ICT structure	We produced a IT Strategy which was passed by the Board in May 2015, aimed at ensuring that our IT infrastructure is robust and secure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7.8 Update and regularly monitor the organisations 'Self-Assessment' and Operational Plan	We continue to reflect on our performance each year through our 'Self-Assessment' which takes into consideration whether or not we have met our business planning objectives.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>



Plans for 2015/16



Home

Where possible we will fit properties with SMART meters when they become void in order to reduce costs in respect of meter readings and verifications.



Home

We will carry out a stock condition survey to check that the planned maintenance schedule is accurate and viable from a financial point of view.



Home

We will use the results of the stock condition survey to identify underperforming stock, in terms of rent yield, and will deal with it accordingly.



Home

We will review current voids repairs operations to assess whether any of these could be undertaken cheaper via our in-house handy person scheme. Work such as void clearance, gardening, lock changes and decoration will be included.



Tenancy

We will identify tenants likely to be affected by changes to the welfare system as outline in the Government's 2015 Budget with a view to offering them additional advice and support to help them adjust.



Tenancy

We will appoint another Income Support Officer as part of our drive to reduce rent arrears. We have set a target to reduce our arrears to 5.75% by the end of 2015/16.



Neighbourhood & Community

We have raised our targets for helping people to access work, training and volunteering opportunities through our Employment Services Team.



Neighbourhood & Community

We will be jointly running ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) classes for the first time at our Employment Hub to improve the employability of our tenants and the wider community.



Tenant Involvement

We will be developing the Scrutiny Panel to play a lead role in challenging the performance and priorities of our organisations. We will focus our efforts in recruiting new members and offer them training as necessary.



Tenant Involvement

We will be carrying out joint inspections of our neighbourhoods with our Tenant Panel in order to identify estates which could do with more attention from Unity and from the tenants living there.

