

Annual Report to Tenants 2018 / 2019



Homes & Enterprise

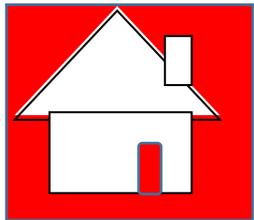
Supporting BME Communities
and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods



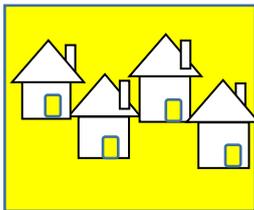
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A message from our CEO and Chair of the Board

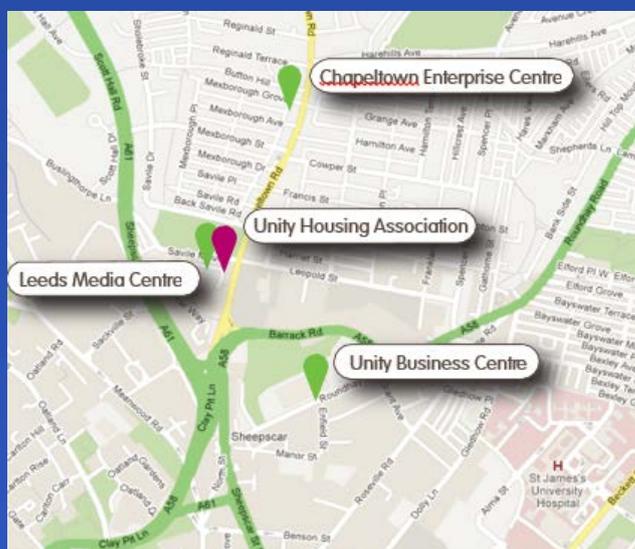


Twelve months ago saw the the 100th anniversary of the armistice and the end of the First World War. We wanted to recognise the remarkable and often overlooked contribution that soldiers from the Caribbean and Indian sub-continent made to the allied war effort. At our annual general meeting we were delighted to welcome Colonel Karl Harris (Chairman Of the Army Black and minority network ethnic network) who described the vital roles played by Black, Asian and other minority troops in the modern British Army.



We achieved a 'Compliance plus' Customer Excellence Award – a well-earned reflection on the hard work of our housing service team, and were proud to report that we had our 'Investors in people accreditation re-awarded too.

Over the past 12 months, like the soldiers in the trenches, We have rolled up our sleeves and got on with the job. As a result Unity Housing Association and Enterprise has enjoyed another successful year. We have continued to grow our property portfolio and as a result are on course to deliver 220 new homes over the next 2 years as part of our business plan, whilst also Investing in our current property portfolio improving the homes of our tenants. A total of £888,000 was spent on improvements to bathrooms, kitchens boilers windows and doors.



Our new repairs and maintenance contractor GTD have been working for us over the past year and with our continued levels of customer satisfaction with the repairs service confirms that we – and the tenants who helped in the selection process made the right choice.

Our business arm Unity Enterprise has delivered a strong performance with high demand for quality affordable business space at our 3 sites totalling 145 units, we continue to grow and invest in our tenants who contribute to the Leeds business community.

Over the past year we have strengthened our governance team at Unity. That means seeking out new board members who bring fresh perspective, ideas and scrutiny. Our efforts have paid off.



In January 2019 under review the Regulator of Social Housing has upgraded Unity from G2V2 rating (G=Governance V= Viability to G1V1), this proves that we are financially strong and a trusted housing provider. this is a great endorsement for the organisation.

We have had changes to our working environment with the Introduction of universal credit now upon us. Our income management team has worked hard to ensure a smooth transition to this new system, yet has also delivered on reducing rent arrears.



On the political front in 2018 the government published its green paper on social housing, prompted by the many issues brought about by the Grenfell tower disaster. The paper promises a new deal for social housing the key themes being safe and decent homes, effective complaint resolution and strong tenant participation, these themes have always been a key part of Unity and we will continue to work with our tenants to ensure we listen and learn from their valuable feedback on the services we provide.

The National Housing Federation issued its own response known as 'Together with Tenants' in February 2019 which has introduced a charter whereby tenants can scrutinise specific standards and targets of a housing association in the areas that are relevant to them.



Looking ahead social purpose will be at the heart of everything we do. Unity sees itself as not just a housing provider – were a provider of homes. Our ethos is based on improving peoples lives, with our combination of quality housing, outstanding customer service, accountability and secure tenure we will continue to deliver sustainable communities.

Of course none of our achievements over the past year would be possible without the work of our staff, our board members and our key business partners: Leeds City Council, Kirklees Council and Homes England. Its a winning combination which will ensure Unity continues to thrive in the years ahead.

Ali Akbor
Shruti Bhargava

Chief Executive
Chair of UHA Board



4. Tenancy Standard



**101.01 %
INCOME
COLLECTED**

**0.4 %
RENT LOSS
FROM VOIDS**

**21.2 DAYS TO
LET A
PROPERTY**

**3.48%
STOCK
TURNOVER**

HIGHLIGHTS

Income collection has increased to 101.1% from 99.78% in the previous year despite the widespread introduction of Universal Credit.

Hard work by our letting and void management teams have seen re-let times reduce to 21.2 days from 27.8 days in 2017-18.

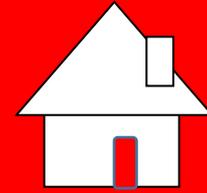
Our rent loss due to empty properties at 0.4% has decreased from the previous year this is below the national average of 1%.

We let 122 Properties in the year but stock turnover was low at 3.48% this shows us that we have sustainable communities.

We have reduced rent arrears to 4.12% this is the 6th year in a row that arrears have come down.

We have achieved 71.6% of lettings to Bme applicants up from 65.8% in 2017-18

5. Home Standard



Highlights

**99.2 % of
emergency
repairs done**

**96.7%
Appointments
Kept**

**100% gas
service
completed**

**92.4% repairs
completed 1st
time**

**Total £888.000 invested in kitchens
bathrooms boilers windows and doors**

**Gtd contractors managed a
satisfaction rate of 97% for repairs**

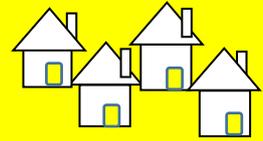
360 Electrical safety checks completed

**179 homes were re painted
externally**

21 Communal areas painted

**98.4% of new tenants were happy
with their home.**

6. Neighbourhood and Community Standard



Highlights

23 New Homes acquired

71.6 % Lettings to BME Applicants

119 people helped into employment

179 people Trained for employment

New homes were acquired in Leeds and Huddesfield.

Local MP Rachel Reeves visited our new development at Armley.

Staff members attended the Beeston Festival and Holbeck Gala.

24 people were assisted into vountary work

7. Tenant Involvement and Empowerment



Highlights

A key Unity strategy is to involve our customers in helping shape the services we deliver, through attending regular meetings, mystery shopping, reviewing contractor performance, estate walkabouts and property inspections. Our customers have the opportunity to scrutinise the services that we provide and evaluate their effectiveness. In this year our tenant scrutiny group reviewed how Unity manages anti-social behaviour and made recommendations for improvements.

Members of our tenant panel visited our new developments

there was a total of 15 tenant group meetings in the year

Our tenant panel helped on the selection of our gas contractors

A mystery shopping exercise was carried out on customer satisfaction

Our tenant panel were provided feedback on the government green paper for social housing

New Unity Homes

Completed Developments



Ancestor Close Armley

We took handover of 8 flats and 6 houses in February 2019, built by Esh construction the properties offer good quality sustainable homes at an affordable price.

Quarmby Road Huddersfield

These high quality 2 and 3 bedroom houses built by Jack Lunn contractors have added to our housing portfolio in Kirklees



Upcoming Developments

Beckhill Grove Meanwood

Adding to our existing stock in Meanwood there will be 30 new 2 and 3 bedroom homes that will be ready to let in Spring 2020.



Leopold Street

within a mile of Unitys Housing Office the up and coming development on Leopold street Leeds, available in 2020 will consist of 30, 1 and 2 bedroom homes for people aged over 55, The scheme is being developed in partnership with Chapeltown Co Housing who will have 34 homes at the same site.

Chipesch Way

Built on the site of a former primary school in Kippax Leeds these 11 2 and 3 bedroom family houses and 12, 1 and 2 bedroom flats for over 55 year olds will bring much needed affordable homes to the area they are subject to completion at the end of 2019.

Northgate Cleakheaton - 7 New family homes will be ready to let in December 2019.

Unity Enterprise

Unity Employment Services

First set up in 2011 and operating from the unity business centre unity employment services has a 3 person team, with the purpose of assisting local people develop skills and find employment. in 2018 - 2019 it helped 119 people into work. As well as getting people back into work, the employment team have assisted people with careers guidance, using computers, interview techniques, CV writing and support finding training and apprenticeship opportunities.



ESOL English for speakers of other languages courses has continued to be a popular at the Unity Business centre in 2018 - 2019 a total of 90 people attended the course.

Unity Business Centre

The business centre offers low cost accommodation for local companies with flexible short term lets. The recently established business incubator has proved popular, it is a package to help small scale business get off the ground, it offers shared office space, networking events, meeting room and computer hire. as well as specialist support.

Chapeltown Enterprise Centre

provides a range of units. the current occupiers include a kitchenware outlet, florist and cafe. The rent levels set are very competitive that start at £99 per month and has seen 80 tenants and 100% occupancy during the year, we continue to seek work with our partners to see small business grow.

Leeds Media Centre

The media centre offers a low cost accommodation alternative to city centre sites and continues to grow. Our main tenant is Made in Leeds Tv and the brand has centralised its operations and employs 60 people in a variety of roles. a recording studio is available for use by the local community.



Unity enterprise delivered an operating surplus of £49K in 2018 / 2019

How we performed

	16/17	17/18	18/19	Total
Employment	95	110	119	324
Training	149	177	179	505
Voluntary work	26	30	24	80

Anti- Social Behaviour Review

Unity's Scrutiny Panel was re-established in August 2017 to allow tenants to have more strategic involvement in assessing Unity's performance and procedures. The panel was made up of six members of the tenant panel who were selected due to their engagement and enthusiasm for service improvement at Unity. The panel were then given the opportunity to select a particular area of Unity's services that they wanted to conduct a review of, based on the performance statistics.

Why was anti-social behaviour selected?

Anti-social behaviour was discussed amongst the panel and they were in agreement that it is an important aspect of housing management because tenants want to feel safe in their homes. How Unity manages Anti-Social Behaviour was looked at, from how a tenant can report this, to how it is recorded and the follow up feedback given to the victim of the behaviour.

Methodology

During the entirety of this review the panel committed to six meetings over a number of weeks to analyse the service, which included interviewing key members of staff who are involved in anti-social behaviour.



Recommendations

The panel organised their findings into four different categories: communications and publicity, training, performance management and service delivery. The main recommendations made were:

- ✓ More regular workshops for staff on Unity's procedures provided by all areas of the organisation
- ✓ Conduct monthly progress meetings with the Housing Manager, reviewing a variety of open & closed cases, looking at the feedback
- ✓ Log all cases, included those solved on site, to show how many reports are made in the quarter
- ✓ A follow up call/home visit after a case has closed and better efforts to get feedback from service users
- ✓ Ensure that ASB reported out on an estate or in the office is logged correctly and a case opened
- ✓ Better publicise the 'good news stories' of ASB cases, such as enforcement, in the tenant newsletter and on the website.

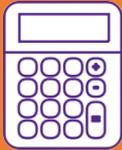


11. Governance & Viability Standard

Unity as a registered provider has to ensure it complies with all the requirements of the Homes & Communities Agency.

- ✓ Ensuring effective governance arrangements are in place
- ✓ Effective risk management, ensuring all assets are protected
- ✓ Being accountable to tenants, regulator and stakeholders

In January 2019 the regulator of social housing upgraded our viability rating from G2V2 rating (G=Governance V=Viability to G1V1 demonstrating that we are meeting government standards.



11. Rent Standard

Unity charges its rents in accordance to the governments direction to the regulator



11. Value for Money Standard

Financial Performance

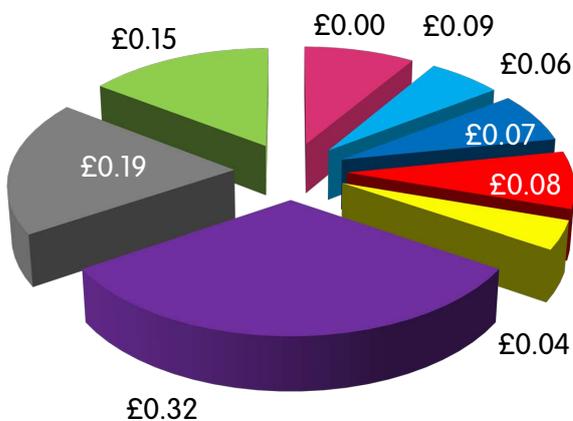
GROSS TURNOVER	2018/19 Target	2018/19 Actual
Unity Housing	£6,653k	£6,693k
Unity Enterprise	£630k	£580k

REINVESTED INTO THE COMPANY

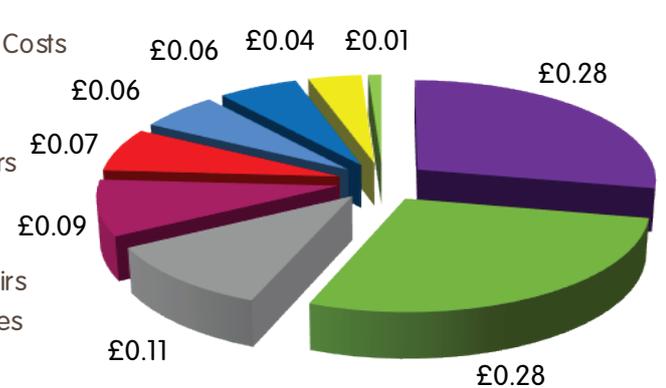
Unity Housing	£815k	£1,019k
Unity Enterprise	£47k	£49k
Rent Arrears	3.91%	4.12%
Unity Voids	1%	0.25%
Enterprise Voids	9.9%	5.11%

As a not-for-profit organisation, any money that Unity has left over at the end of the year is reinvested back into the company. we have delivered strong performance in both Unity housing and Enterprise with a surplus of revenue that has exceeded the forecasted targets for 2018/19. This revenue will go towards improving services and building new homes.

How each £1 of rent was spent in 2018/19



How each £1 of rent was spent in 2017/18



Your suggestions for value for money

If you have any ideas about how Unity could save money, we'd be very keen to hear from you. One of the ways you can tell us your ideas is by joining the Tenants' Group. The tenant's group are very good at keeping an eye on how Unity spends its money and have already come up with some great suggestions. Call **Chris on 0113 200 7751** for more information.

Want more detail?

If you require any more information or clarification on anything in this report, or would like a hard copy to be sent to you, please call Chris on **0113 200 7751**. Alternatively, you can download this report from unityha.co.uk