

Unity News

March 2024



Homes & Enterprise

Supporting BME Communities
and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods



See inside to find out how Unity is working with local organisations in the community

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Unity Stock Condition Survey

As part of the Unity's commitment to understanding the condition of your home. Unity have commissioned for a Stock Condition Survey to be carried out to a proportion of properties.

We have commissioned Michael Dyson Associates to complete the surveys which started in February and will be completed by April 2024.

The stock condition survey has the purpose:



- **To Review the condition of the main elements of your home** including (kitchen, bathroom, windows, doors, roofs, heating etc.) which will then feed into Unity's 30 business plan, and more importantly what works will be delivered over the coming years to your home.
- **To Assess the energy performance of your home**, which is commonly referred to as an Energy Performance Certificate or EPC. Again, this will help us identify properties where we need to invest to make homes more energy efficient and reduce fuel poverty.
- **To Identify any instances of damp and mould** which will be reported to Unity maintenance team to assess and action. The survey will also identify any health and safety risks within the property, known as the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

If your home is due to be surveyed, you will receive a letter offering you an appointment time. If you need any further information on the survey, please contact our Customer Services Team on 0113 2007700

3. Feel Good Factor

DO YOU WANT TO FEEL GOOD ? Feel Good Factor (FGF) supports people to improve their health and wellbeing. Based in Chapeltown they work with communities across Leeds providing activities, projects, and services to improve access to health opportunities for some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Each month there is a full range of activities on offer to get you feeling creative, meet other like-minded people and improve your well-being.

Listed below are just some of the activities that are available, but for a full list of what is going on in the future please see the website www.fgfleeds.org

<p>Book Club Every 2 weeks 1.15pm - 2.15pm at FGF</p> <p>Arts and Crafts Group Fridays 10am - 12.00noon at FGF</p> <p>FGF Choir Fridays 10.00am - 11.00am at FGF. All welcome.</p> <p>For information contact Shabana Kosar 07523 515267 shabana@fgfleeds.org</p>	  
<p>Company Of People Mondays 1.00pm - 3.00pm Roscoe Methodist Church Hall, Francis Street, LS7 4BY. Join a fun filled session of music, movement and creativity. No previous dance experience needed.</p> <p>Arts and Crafts Club Term time only From age 5+ Wednesdays 4.00pm - 5.00pm at FGF. We provide all the materials. Come along and join the fun! Tea and coffee available for parents whilst they wait.</p> <p>Multi Sport After School Club Term time 8+ Tuesdays 4.00pm - 5.00pm at Roscoe Church Hall, Francis Street Leeds LS7 4BY. Sport, fun and friendship enjoying team games. Learn how to play cricket with Yorkshire Cricket Foundation. Cost £1.00 per session. Fruit provided.</p> <p>For information contact Beverley Gilbert 07702 869457 beverley.gilbert@fgfleeds.org</p>	  
<p>Leeds Sensory Services at FGF Supporting Leeds residents 16+ who are deaf, hard of hearing, sight impaired, severely sight impaired or deaf blind. Have a 1-2-1 chat over a cuppa with Tracey about your eyes and ears. Lots of free stuff.</p> <p>Mindfulness Every 2 weeks on Monday mornings for people with sight or hearing loss, enjoy some chill out time.</p> <p>For information contact Tracey Nicholls 07523 515266 tracey@fgfleeds.org</p>	



Fancy a Day Out ! Unity Housing has partnered with the Feel-Good Factor to offer an amazing day out over the Easter holidays and as residents of Unity you are invited. A Bus trip will take place from Unity Housing Office to Ingleborough in the Yorkshire Dales on Wednesday 3rd of April. The cost is only £5.00 per person to include travel, lunch, tea, juice, and a nature trail. The deadline date for applying for this trip is 26th March. If you would like to know more about the event or want to confirm your attendance please contact Lorraine Charlton Lorraine.charlton@unityha.co.uk or call on 07714134531.

4. Unity Compliance Team



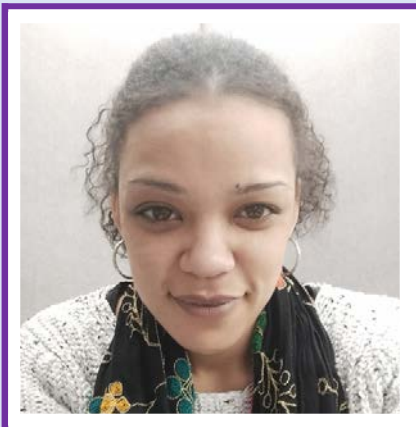
Richard Atkinson
Compliance Team Manager

Unity's compliance team is responsible for managing the 'big six' areas of compliance. These are:

1. Gas Servicing & Repair
2. Fire Safety
3. Electrical Safety
4. Asbestos Management
5. Lift Safety
6. Water Safety

In October 2023 a new Compliance Manager was appointed. Richard Atkinson has 10 plus years of experience working within the social housing sector being part of both maintenance & compliance teams. He is extremely excited about the opportunity to work on behalf of Unity's tenants to ensure their health and safety is a high priority.

Compliance Team Members



Elisha Gibson
Compliance Support Officer

Elisha is moving into the Compliance team after working in our Customer Service Team. Her responsibilities include arranging tenants gas services, raising job orders for compliance activities, and checking the validity of compliance certification. Elisha always aims for excellent customer service.



Duncan Mclean
Compliance Support Officer

Duncan was originally brought up in Harehills. He attended Roundhay High School and still has many connections to the local area and community. He has worked in the social housing sector for 10 plus years within a maintenance and compliance environment. He prides himself in going the extra mile for tenants.

5. Unity Compliance Team

We value your safety

Since July 2023 Unity have carried out a full review of all compliance activities and have targeted several areas for improvement.

Much of our focus has been on fire safety. As part of this we have carried out extensive fire safety surveys to all blocks and compiled a program of upgrade works which will be carried out during 2024. This work is key to ensuring the safety of all tenants living in blocks with shared communal areas.

We have implemented 6 new compliance policies which outline Unity's approach to managing and reporting on compliance activities. These were developed in consultation with customers, and we are currently in the process of re-writing all procedures linked to these policies. Tenants will once again be involved in the development of these through a consultation process.

Further development into software packages to help manage and monitor compliance has also been carried out. This helps to ensure the accuracy of the compliance information we manage and allows us to evidence that we are keeping tenants safe.

What this means for you



We have employed a company called Neo who will be upgrading and renewing fire doors in communal blocks.

We will ensure all lifts are compliant with current safety standards.

We will test all areas with a communal water source.

We will make sure all properties with gas are serviced every year.

We will identify any properties with asbestos and remove any hazards.

We will carry out electrical safety checks on all our properties every 5 years

6. Submitting A Complaint to Unity



Unity wants to deliver excellent services to our residents, but sometimes we get things wrong. If you submit a complaint to Unity, we will contact you and establish how you would like us to deal with your complaint. In some cases, it maybe that we can answer your complaint, by raising a work order or talking through your issue.

If your complaint requires an investigation by service manager then it will be logged as a formal complaint and you will receive a written response, the formal complaint process is explained below.

Unity operates a 2-stage formal complaint process which follows the guidance from the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code.

Stage 1 When we receive a complaint, it will be logged and acknowledged within 5 days. The complaint will be investigated by a manager from the relevant service area and a response provided within 10 working days of the complaint being logged.

When we deal with a complaint at Stage 1, we will:

- **Establish the detail of the complaint and the outcome the complainant is seeking**
- **Investigate impartially with an open mind • Consider information and evidence carefully**
- **Provide a full response that includes the decision, reason for the decision and details of any remedy offered**
- **Determine whether the complaint should be upheld**
- **Provide details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 of the complaints process**
- **Provide details of how to contact the Housing Ombudsman for advice and assistance.**

Stage 2 If a complaint cannot be resolved at Stage 1 the tenant or customer can request that the matter is escalated to Stage 2. The request to escalate must be made within 14 days of receiving the Stage 1 response. The request will be acknowledged within 5 days and the complaint reviewed by a service director and a response provided within 20 working days of the complaint being escalated.

When we deal with a complaint at Stage 2, we will:

- **Set out the issues outstanding and the outcome the complainant is seeking**
- **Review the handling of the complaint at stage 1**
- **Determine whether the complaint should be upheld**
- **Provide details of any outstanding actions and remedies offered**
- **Confirm that this is the final stage and how to escalate to the Ombudsman**

7. Submitting A Complaint to Unity

How do I complain?

Unity accepts complaints in writing, over the phone, email or through social media, in some cases we would not accept a complaint, and these are when:

- Legal proceedings have started – by either Unity or the complainant.
- Previous complaints, the matter has been previously considered under the complaints policy.
- Insurance claims issues that would be covered by insurance claims Third parties.
- complaints about persons or bodies over which Unity has no control, including where Unity delivers services on behalf of another organisation.
- Unreasonable complainant behaviour – if a complainant behaves unreasonably or we consider a complainant to be unreasonable due to the manner in which they make a complaint, or the complaint is without substance. If we do not accept a complaint, we will explain to the complainant the reasons and the right to take that decision to the Ombudsman.

The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman can offer you assistance and advice with your complaint, if you are not happy about the decision made at stage 1 and 2 of our complaints process you can contact them. In some circumstances they will investigate how Unity handled your complaint and determine the actions needed to put thing right. The Ombudsman's contact details are:

The Housing Ombudsman Service Liverpool

Po Box 152 L33 7WQ

info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Tel: 0300 111 3000





Learning from Complaints

After you have received a complaint response from Unity you will be asked to complete a satisfaction survey. When we look at the circumstances of a complaint, we will consider whether anything needs to be put right in terms of our processes or systems for the benefit of residents. All formal complaints received at Unity are reported to the Unity Board to review. We will also be setting up a residents complaints focus group to give residents a say on how we manage complaints if you would like to be part of this please contact Chris.whittaker@unityha.co.uk or on 07712-320759

How is Unity Doing on Complaints?

Unity has a set target to answer 90% all stage 1 complaints within 10 working days, from April 2023 to January 2024 we answered 93% of stage 1 complaints in this time and answered 100% of stage 2 complaints in 20 working days.

Complaints By Category of Service (April 23 -Jan 24)

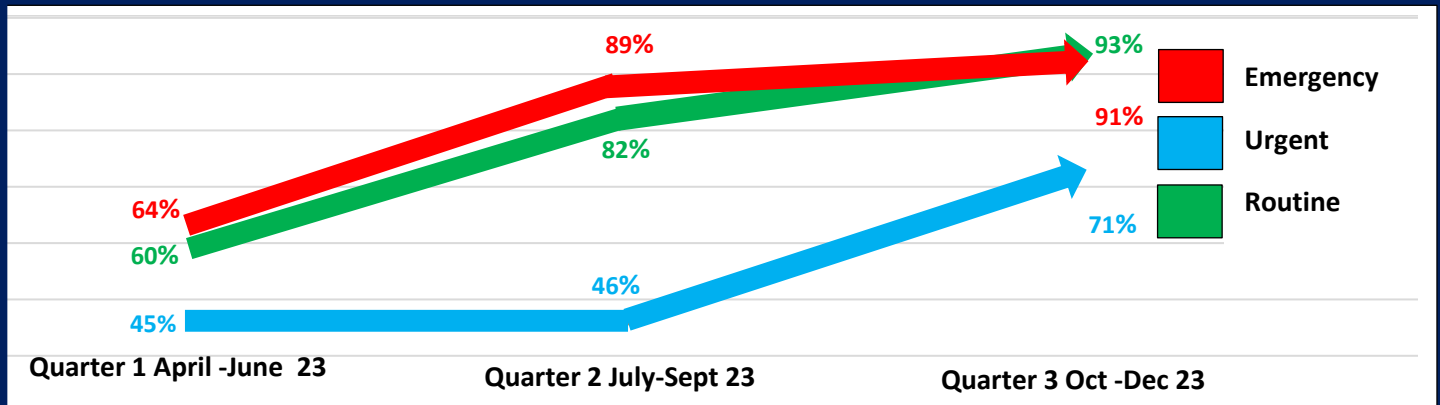
Repairs Service		18
Housing Management		6
Customer Services		1
Compliance		2

8. Unity's Repairs Update

We have been making changes to improve our repairs service over the last 6 months. As a result, we have seen an improvement in the service delivered by our main repairs contractor GTD. We know there is room for further improvements and so we continue to listen and act on your feedback.

With input from our Tenant's Scrutiny group, we have agreed to pilot some changes to our Repairs Policy. These include providing more information on repair responsibilities and how we will respond to repairs (details below). The changes are being made to ensure we prioritise our repairs correctly and keep the appointments that we make with you to complete your repairs. This pilot will start in April and will be reviewed in July.

We have increased the number of checks on works carried out by our contractors to monitor the quality of the repairs they do. We are using this information to further improve the service provided to you. Please keep telling us how we are doing in relation to repairs. It helps us with making the improvements that matter most to you.



We have seen increases in the number of repair appointments attended on time by GTD for Emergency, Urgent and Routine repairs, we will continue to strive for better contractor performance

Repair Satisfaction We will directly contact 20% of residents who have recently had a repair completed to see how we are doing and what we can do better. We will ask you whether your repair appointment was kept if the repair was completed on the first visit. Was your property left tidy and how Unity staff managed your repair.

Getting Feedback on Repairs – we want you to have a say in creating and approving our new updated policy and shaping our repairs service for the future. If you would like to be involved in our scrutiny group / in the policy review, or would just like to share your general feedback on repairs please get in touch on 0113 2007751 or email chris.whittaker@unityha.co.uk

Repairs Pilot from April - July 2024

The Emergency Response Time (24 hours) – No change

Non emergencies – We will arrange appointments that are convenient for you and ensure that we prioritise our repairs in relation to the urgency of the repair and your individual needs. The maximum time for completion of these repairs is 28 days (most repairs will be completed much sooner than this).

Programmed repair – Within 90 days

- Non-emergency roofing/ guttering works. - Non-emergency fencing works.
- Larger non-emergency groundworks/ brickwork/ plastering works.
- Non-emergency works that require scaffolding, large plant to complete.

9. Leeds Black Elders Association



The Leeds Black Elders Association is a Neighbourhood Network Scheme that was commissioned by Leeds City Council to deliver appropriate services that meets the needs of the elderly who live in parts of Leeds.

Their main aim is to address the many issues affecting all elders in the community. This is particularly important as there will be an inevitable increase in the elderly population over the next 10-20 years, The Leeds Black Elders are well equipped to provide services, facilities, and activities to meet the current and projected social, cultural, health and economic needs.

Completing an assessment form for applicants ensures that Leeds Black Elders can identify the support needs of individuals and deliver the appropriate support packages that are required.



Providing Support in the Community

Would you know where to turn if you could no longer climb your stairs properly?

Would you know where to turn if you wanted to socialise more?

If you need help completing a form, would you know where to turn to?

Leeds Black Elders Association can help you with all of the above and so much more.

If you or someone you know is 55+ and live in the Leeds 7 and 8 area of Leeds, they are waiting to help you.

LBEA is a locally based charity which has been working to make older people's lives easier, happier, wealthier, and healthier for over 30 years. If you feel you or someone you know could benefit from their support, please them a call on 0113 237 4332

LBEA have worked closely with Unity for almost 10 years now and have rehoused many people and relieved the stress and worry of many tenants. It's a partnership that works well to provide you with support when you need it most.

LBEA are based at 3 Reginald Terrace Leeds LS7 3EZ opposite the Reginald Centre and you can pop in at any time. If it's easier for you, you can ask one of the Unity staff to refer you us and we'll give you a call.

10. Make Things Right

The UK government has launched A new campaign called “Makes things Right” to make social housing residents more aware of how they can complain to their landlord and get support for their complaint. With the aim of empowering residents in making their voices heard when they have problems with their homes.

At Unity we value the introduction of the Makes Things Right campaign, and we are committed to providing all our residents with quality services. We review the complaints we have received, and this gives us insight on how our services can be improved.

Social housing issue?



Scan the QR code with your phone to see the campaign

AWAABS LAW

The government is conducting a consultation on timescales to be used in Awaab’s Law, the law was introduced following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak who died in December 2020 due to exposure to mould.

As the Coroner’s ruling into Awaab’s death makes plain, landlord’s must take residents’ concerns about health and safety seriously. The government’s new guidance on the health risks of damp and mould for landlords states that residents should not be blamed for its presence in their homes, and mould in homes must not be pinned on ‘lifestyle choices’ – cooking a meal, having a hot shower and putting clothes out to dry are not discretionary activities but part and parcel of living in your home. It is therefore rightly the responsibility of landlords to identify and address underlying causes, such as structural issues or inadequate ventilation.

Abwaab’s law will mean landlords will have to investigate and fix dangerous health and safety hazards within strict timescales.

The government will set out the timescales in which landlords need to respond based on the outcome of the consultation.

If you have any issues of damp or mould in your home please contact Unity on 0113 2007700 so that we can book an appointment with you to survey your home and order any necessary repairs.

11. Puzzle Corner



Test your knowledge by completing these puzzles. For the wordsearch there are 6 months of the year hidden in the box, for the crossword just answer the clues to enter, just click this link <https://forms.office.com/e/yZ13tuSBEb> to submit your answers. Closing date for entries is 30th April a correct entry to be picked out at random the winner receiving £50.00 in vouchers

Wordsearch Clues

Find the 6 months in the table



J	A	N	U	A	R	Y	P	T
I	B	X	J	D	R	P	S	G
A	T	G	F	U	X	E	B	N
U	M	B	R	W	L	H	K	M
G	I	A	B	I	F	Y	G	L
U	D	H	R	Z	B	N	C	E
S	B	P	T	C	F	G	L	Y
T	A	M	S	E	H	L	A	L
E	C	R	N	L	L	M	K	O

1.			2.		3.
			4.		5.
6.					
7.					
			8.		

Crossword Clues

Across

- 1. Short message sent by a mobile phone (4)
- 4. You can boil, fry or poach them (3)
- 7. 26-mile race (8)
- 8. Leeds - - - - - football team (6)

Down

- 2. (4) You sleep in this when camping (4)
- 3. Islamic month of fasting (7)
- 5. In football you score a - - - - (4)
- 6. Farm animal born in Spring (4)

Congratulations to Ms L of Stainbeck Avenue who won the Autumn competition

Contacting Unity

Telephone: 0113 200 7700

Email: uha@unityha.co.uk

Website: www.unityha.co.uk

Publications

You can access any of Unity's publications including leaflets, newsletters and reports for free on our website:

www.unityha.co.uk/publications

Office Hours:

Monday: 9am -- 5pm

Tuesday: 9am – 5pm

Wednesday: 10.30am – 5pm

Thursday: 9am – 5pm

Friday: 9am – 5pm

If you have an emergency repair when the Office is shut, please call our office number on **0113 200 7700** you will receive a number of options. Press 1 for **heating repairs**, press 2 for general **repairs**. This will connect you to our contractors GTD Maintenance call centre.

Emergency Gas Repairs 0113 200 7700

E.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unity's office is closed the next day.

National Grid (gas leaks) 0800 111 999

Repairs by email Repairs@unity.co.uk

For more information, visit our website at www.unity.co.uk for leaflets, latest news and community information.

For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact **Chris Whittaker** on **0113 2007751** or email chris.whittaker@unityha.co.uk

Leeds City Council Services

Adult Social Care	0113 2224401
Anti-Social Behaviour	0113 222 4402 onestop@leeds.gov.uk
Child Social Care	0113 222 4403
Council Housing	0800 188 4000
Council Tax	0113 222 4404
Environmental Health	0113 222 4406 refugecollections@leeds.gov.uk
Housing Advice	0113 222 4412
Roads and Pavements	0113 222 4407 highways@leeds.gov.uk
Universal Credit	0800 328 5644

Kirklees Council Services

Adult Social Care	01484 414933 gatewaytocare@kirklees.gov.uk
Anti-Social Behaviour	01484 221000 safer@kirklees.gov.uk
Child Protection	01484 414950
Council Tax and Benefits	01484 414950 Council.benefits@kirklees.gov.uk
Customer Service Centre	01484 221000 Customer.enquiries@kirklees.gov.uk
Housing Advice	01484 221350 Housing.solutions@kirklees.gov.uk

Problems Understanding?

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 this.



ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2024

EMPLOYMENT

YOUR CAREER IS WAITING

NEWSLETTER

Unity Employment Services

MEET THE TEAM



Get to know the team!

Get in touch with one of the employment services team to find out more about our services!

Lorraine Charlton – Mob: 07714134531 / Email: Lorraine.charlton@unityha.co.uk (Left)

Kelly Jennings – Mob: 07730870810 / Email: Kelly.jennings@unityha.co.uk (Right)

Ben Coultas – Mob: 07593561613 / Email: Ben.coultas@unityha.co.uk (Middle)

Kelly has over 10 years of experience, working with and for our communities and the people living within them. Kelly has worked different roles for Unity but is now 1 of our amazing Employment Outreach Officers, supporting people with finding the right jobs and training!

Lorraine has been at Unity for 2 years now as an Employment Outreach Officer and has brought a wide range of knowledge and experience to the role. Lorraine is here to support you with your training and employment needs!

Ben is our Regeneration Administrator and the newest member of our employment services team who has now been with Unity 2 years. Ben joined Unity through the kickstart programme, then progressed onto a Level 3 Business Administration Apprenticeship, which he has completed and has stayed with us on a permanent basis. Ben has also started supporting people with training opportunities and finding jobs, alongside Kelly and Lorraine.

HAVING TROUBLE FINDING THE RIGHT JOB?



Support with finding work

Unity Employment Services can help you with, finding your first job, career progression & 'moving up the ranks', improving your CV & cover letter, searching, and applying for work. We will also support you with identifying training needs and improve your skills through training courses and work experience.

We support clients with employability advice and guidance through 1-2-1 sessions and we will soon be re-introducing our job club drop in, where anyone can come in and access the support they need to find the ideal job for them. Providing training courses, such as ESOL and IT skills, is also part of our offer and we plan to build on these to continue improving the skills and chances of finding employment of those in our communities.

Improve your C.V, work on your transferrable skills and experience with volunteering and training opportunities. Build your network attending events, jobs, and careers fairs to increase the chances of success with job applications. Mock interviews will help you feel more confident and prepared to smash your interview!

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

Client A is a single parent who came to us for support, with no previous work experience. Once we had an initial meeting to identify the gaps we needed to bridge, so Client A would have a much better chance at securing an interview and finding a job. We got Client A to complete the free training on the BICSc website to improve their knowledge in the cleaning industry and to gain certificates we could add to their C.V. Since completing the training Client A has secured their first interview and has started training for a potential new job.

CASE STUDY 2

Client B accessed our services to improve their IT skills and confidence through attending our Learn My Way IT class. After the 4 weeks, Client B was really happy with the class and the skills they had learned. Client B is wanting to build and add to these new skills, so they have registered onto our next upcoming IT skills course to continue with their progression. Attending our course had also made Client B aware of our sim card offer (see page 6). We have now issued client B with a sim card so they can now access the internet anywhere and save some money on phone bills!





JOB CLUB DROP-IN

**FIND THE JOB TO
KICKSTART YOUR CAREER!**

**Every Thursday
1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Unity Business Centre, 26
Roundhay Road, LS7 1AB**

For more information, please contact:
EmploymentOutreach@unityha.co.uk

Improve your digital skills

Unity employment services are working together with the DWP to provide a basic IT skills course to help the customers on their health journey. The first 4-week course has been a massive success with positive feedback from the learners, such as; "I am very happy with this course" & "Confident to use a computer" with 5/5 stars satisfaction with the course.

WHAT IS LEARN MY WAY?

Learn My Way is a website that anyone can access for free, with learning resources on; Using your device, starting to use the internet, safety, and security online, working with office programs, employment and work and managing your money online to name some. All you need to get signed up to learn my way is an email address or mobile number and a device with internet access.

WHY IS IMPROVING YOUR IT SKILLS IMPORTANT?

The world is constantly changing and introducing new technologies, staying up-to-date and knowing your way around a computer and being safe online is becoming increasingly important. The working environment is more digital now than ever and as the trend is showing will continue to do so. You don't need to be a tech expert but know the basics is a must!



FREE SIM CARDS! NO CONTRACT!



Unity employment services have partnered with National Databank to provide FREE sim cards with data, to help those who are disadvantaged and enable our communities to stay connected. The sim cards come with no cost or contract, and will last for 6 months. If this would benefit you, your family or friends, then please get in touch with one of the team! Terms and conditions apply.





Career with a qualification

Apprenticeships and traineeships are a fantastic way to start your journey, on the path to your career. They allow you to gain the knowledge, skills and experience to thrive and succeed in the workplace while working towards and gaining a qualification. There's plenty of opportunities in Leeds! Here is a link that shows some local employers offering apprenticeships:

<https://www.inclusivegrowthleeds.com/employers-offering-apprenticeships>





Websites that help

Find useful information, guidance and support into the world of work on these website:

[Leeds Careers Fair Tickets, Thu 14 Mar 2024 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)

[Employment and Skills | Inclusive Growth Leeds](#)

[Skills and careers - LEP | Business support and finance \(the-lep.com\)](#)

[School | what job suits me | LifeSkills \(barclayslifeskills.com\)](#)

