



How ready are you for Universal Credit? Turn to page 8 for more information

Easter Egg Extravaganza!

Spring arrived on Unity's estates with a series of Easter egg hunts and springtime arts and crafts workshops aimed at children. After the excitement of the Easter egg hunt, the children were able to craft their own springtime creatures, greetings cards and other creations. The children entered their best work into a competition and the winners received a golden chocolate bunny!

The Easter bunny visited both the Kimberleys & Kitcheners estate in Harehills and the Stonegates

estate in Meanwood this year. Both events boasted a good turnout, which was helped by the sunny weather. Such was the success of the events that more have been planned for later on in the year.

Children often complain that they have nothing to do in the school holidays. Holidays and days out can be expensive, meaning that children are all too often stuck at home, driving mum and dad mad! We'd like to help you keep the kids occupied by providing free activities such as this. Maybe your estate will benefit from pumpkin-carving at Halloween or a Christmas crafts fayre! (Story continues overleaf).

Green-fingered residents get free fruit and veg!

(story continued from overleaf) Meanwhile on the Leicester Close estate in Little London and the Briarsdales estate in Gipton, children and adults alike have been provided with free seeds, pots and soils to enable them to grow a variety of fruit, vegetables, flowers and herbs at home.

Green-fingered staff and volunteers were also on hand to offer free advice on how to get the best out of your plants.

It is hoped that by encouraging tenants to grow their own fruit and vegetables at home it will help to save them money and help them lead healthy lifestyles. Another aim of the gardening workshops is to encourage tenants to take pride in their gardens and outdoor spaces and as a result improve the appearance of their estates.

We have provided some guides for growing your own fruit and vegetables in this newsletter. Turn to page 6 for more information, or ask us for a leaflet.



How does Unity decide where to do activities?

Unity has used your comments from the 2014 Tenant Satisfaction Survey to help us decide what type of activities to do and where. For instance in Gipton, residents complained about:

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

which is why we took the gardening workshop here. You can influence the Resident Involvement Plan by returning your Tenant Satisfaction Survey next time you receive one.

I live in a miscellaneous property.
Can I attend events?

Many of Unity's properties do not belong to an estate. Your house might be the only Unity property on the street which makes it impractical to bring events to you. If this is the case, we will try to let you know where the nearest events are and you will be welcome to attend them.

Your best bet is to check the 'News & Events' page of our website unityha.co.uk which is updated regularly.



- ④ Find out how Unity has been backing the **'Homes for Britain'** campaign.
- ⑤ It's your last chance to enter your garden into the **Unity in Bloom** competition. More details about how to enter and what you can win.
- ⑥ For those who didn't get the chance to attend a free gardening workshop, read our handy guide on **'Growing Your Own'** fruit and vegetables at home.
- ⑧ An update on **Universal Credit**. Find out if you will be affected and what you can do to prepare for the changes it will bring.
- ⑨ **NEW: Trinity Court**. Find out about Unity's latest development in Huddersfield. We still have some properties to let. If you, or someone you know is over 55 – don't miss out on this opportunity!
- ⑩ Do you suspect your friend or relative is a victim of **Domestic Violence**? Find out how you can help them and where they can go for help.
- ⑫ **Tony's Top Tips:** Find out how you can diagnose problems in your property so you don't have to book a repair. This could save you a great deal of time and money...
- ⑬ New legislation means that Unity will have more power to take action against those who cause a disturbance to their neighbours. For more information on **'fair play'** make sure you read this.
- ⑭ Help us fill our walls at **Stratford Court!** Information about our art competition and how you can we can help you promote volunteering opportunities.



Unity says 'Yes' to more Homes for Britain!

On March 11th Unity staff, tenants, service users and partners walked 11 miles from Leeds to Dewsbury as part of the 'Homes for Britain' campaign – in order to raise awareness of the national housing crisis in the run up to the election.

Some people did the entire walk, some joined in for a few miles and some met us at the end when the Homes for Britain key was handed over to Incommunities and Sadeh Lok Housing Associations.

Unity would like to thank everybody who got involved, not least our colleagues at Connect who have done a great deal to promote the campaign and have as such attracted much attention.

The Homes for Britain rally was followed by a demonstration in Westminster the following week which 15 people from the rally also attended.

Mrs Long, a Unity tenant who feels passionately about the need to build more homes, joined the march for not only the longest stretch, but also the most uphill stretch. Unity would like to thank her for her involvement and to say 'well done!'



Election Newsflash! Bedroom tax is here to stay

Notification of Changes

- Bedroom tax is here to stay
- Universal Credit will replace other benefits (see page 8 for more details)

As the Government continues its austerity measures, it's more important than ever to keep Unity updated with any changes to your household composition, as well as your contact details. This way, we can keep you up to date with benefit changes and help you to prepare for them.

You will soon receive a census form. This will help us get a better idea of your situation so we can offer you tailored advice for your individual needs. Please complete it and return it to us at your earliest convenience.

Last call for Unity in Bloom Gardening Competition!

If you'd like to take part in the Unity in Bloom gardening competition, you have until **5th June** to let us know!

What is involved?

£300 worth of B&Q vouchers are up for grabs for those who have taken the most pride in their outdoor space; whether this is a garden, patio or balcony. For the first time, there will be prizes available for the best Fruit & Vegetable garden too.

The Judging Panel

The Judging Panel will be Unity's own independent Tenant Panel. You could be on the Judging Panel too, call **Lewis on 0113 200 7751** for more info.

How to Enter

If you wish to enter the competition, please contact **Lewis on 0113 200 7751**. We will arrange with you a time when our Judging Panel can visit your property.

We will also need to take some photographs – as we'd like to publicise the event in 'Unity News' and on our website. Names and addresses of the winners will not be published, unless you ask us to.

Terms & Conditions

Sadly you will not be able to enter if you pay a service charge to have your garden maintained.

You cannot enter both categories.

No cash alternative will be offered.

You will be visited by our Judging Panel on either the **15th or 24th June**. You do not have to be in, if you are entering your front garden only.

Prizes

1st: £75 voucher
2nd: £50 voucher
3rd: £25 voucher

(same prizes for fruit and veg category.)



Grow Your Own Fruit & Vegetables

See how much you could save!

A packet of seeds could cost as little as £1 and if nurtured properly, could reward you with a bumper crop of fruit or vegetables in late summer and early autumn. You can even harvest the seeds from your fruit or vegetables and plant them again next year!

Growing your own fruit and vegetables at home needn't be tricky or expensive – although it can take up a little bit of time. We have produced a handy guide on growing some of the most popular fruit and vegetables at home. For some, you do not even need a garden; just a small outdoor space.

Top tips for growing fruit at home

- 1 Water plants when soil is dry to the touch
- 2 Make sure that your containers have drainage to avoid waterlogging
- 3 When stalks become too tall, tie them to a cane with twine to support them
- 4 Protect plants from frost, and only move them outside after the last frost of the year
- 5 Protect your plants from pests (always follow manufacturer's instructions)
- 6 Remove weeds as they will compete with your plants for nutrients in the soil
- 7 When fruits start to appear, stop the plants from growing any taller by 'pinching out' growing tips.
- 8 Pick fruit regularly to encourage new growth
- 9 Keep seeds from your fruit and vegetables to plant next year
- 10 Exchange seeds with friends and neighbours to get the best variety

In 2015, we found the cheapest places to buy gardening equipment were:

Multi-purpose compost: Aldi, Lidl
Small/medium plant pots: Asda
Plant trays: Poundland
Seed trays: Poundland
Plastic tools: Poundland
Seeds (type may vary): Poundland
Cane and twine: Poundland
Liquid feed: Poundland

Cheapest!

Broad Bean



Sow:
From March
Grow:
In containers
Harvest:
Late Summer

- 1 Fill small pots with compost up to 4cm from the top
- 2 From March, sow one seed per pot and cover with 2cm of compost
- 3 When plants are too tall to stand upright on their own, tie them to a cane with twine
- 4 When roots begin to show at the bottom of the pot, transplant the plants into larger pots
- 5 Move outside in early summer
- 6 When beans begin to appear, pinch off the growing tips to encourage the plant to use all of its energy producing beans
- 7 When beans are a finger width, harvest them from the bottom up. Keep picking beans to encourage new growth

Tomato



Sow: From January
Grow:
In containers, or in a growing bag
Harvest:
Late Summer

- 1 Fill small pots or a seed tray with compost up to 2cm from the top.
- 2 Sow seeds and cover with 1cm of compost
- 3 When plants are about 8 weeks old, separate them into new pots. Ensure roots are covered with compost and give the plants plenty of water
- 4 When flowers appear, transplant into a growing bag You will need to prepare the growing bag by puncturing some holes in it and kneading it to break up any clumps of compacted compost
- 5 When plants become too tall to stand upright tie the plant to a cane with twine.
- 6 Encourage growth of fruit by cutting any side shoots
- 7 If tomatoes do not redden on the plant, try picking them when they are green and placing them in a draw with a ripe banana

Pepper



Sow:
From January
Grow:
In containers
Harvest:
From July

- 1 Fill a pot with compost and scatter seeds thinly on the top
- 2 Put the pot into a propagator or place a clear plastic bag over the top and secure with an elastic band
- 3 Remove the propagator or plastic bag after one week when the shoots have started to appear. Place pot on a window sill
- 4 When seedlings are 2cm tall, separate them into their own pots
- 5 When roots begin to show through the bottom of the pot, move the plants into bigger pots
- 6 When plants are too tall to stand upright on their own, tie them to a cane with twine
- 7 Place pots outside at the beginning of summer. Water every day and feed weekly with liquid tomato feed
- 8 Harvest fruit between July and September. Pick regularly to encourage new growth



Universal Credit

How ready are you?

Who will be affected?



Firstly, new claims from single people.



The Government will then phase in new claims for couples and then families



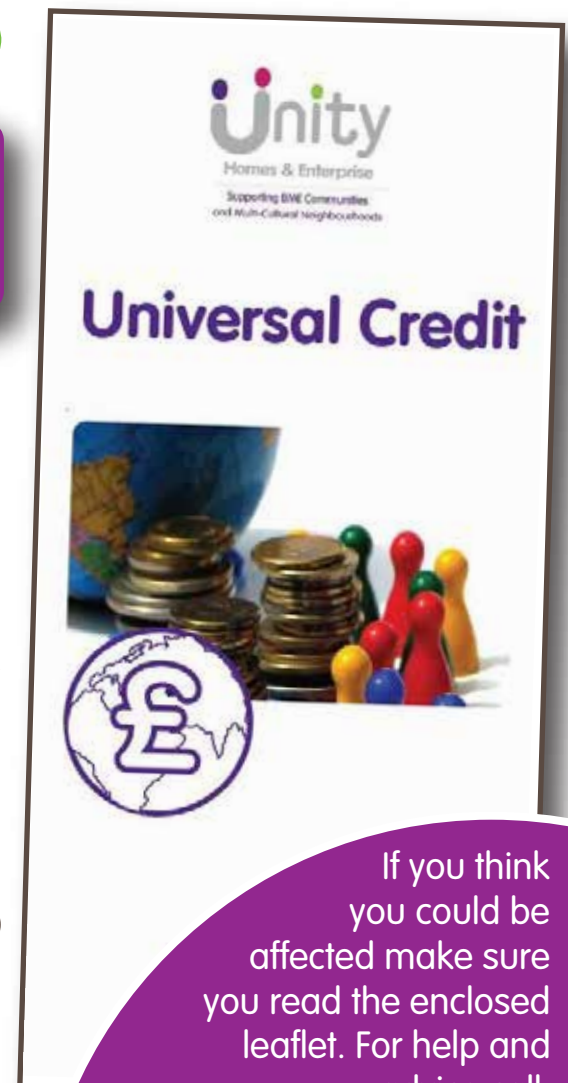
In 2016 they will start all other new claims for example for those who cannot work

When will it start?

It will arrive in Leeds in **DECEMBER 2015**. If you are going to be affected, **NOW** is the time to prepare for the changes.

What can I do to prepare?

- 1** Get a **BASIC BANK ACCOUNT** if you don't already have one, as you can't be paid Universal Credit without one.
- 2** If you have any outstanding **DEBTS**, **GET HELP NOW** and **REDUCE OR CLEAR ANY RENT ARREARS** as soon as you can.
- 3** **SAVE FOR EMERGENCIES**. Universal Credit is first paid five weeks after you apply, and you don't want to have no money at that time.
- 4** Get an **EMAIL ADDRESS** and familiarise yourself with using the **INTERNET**. Contact Unity's Employment Team on 0113 200 7738 if you could benefit from some free training.
- 5** Can you **BUDGET MONTHLY**? Your benefits will come all at once, each month, and you don't want to run out of money halfway through the month.
- 6** Pay your rent and bills by **STANDING ORDER** or **DIRECT DEBIT** as long as you can avoid going overdrawn. This will help if you are the type of person who forgets which bills to pay and when.



If you think you could be affected make sure you read the enclosed leaflet. For help and advice call:

Sam: 0113 200 7737

Matt: 0113 200 7733

Clive: 0113 200 7753

NEW - Trinity Court, Huddersfield

Properties for over 55s

Are you over the age of 55 with recognised support needs?



**Rents from
£70 p/week**
plus service
charges

Unity is pleased to introduce our first development in Huddersfield.

We currently have 1 and 2 bedroom properties to let at our modern and attractive new development in Fartown, Huddersfield. Ground and first floor flats are available.

Trinity Court benefits from modern features including double-glazing and an energy efficient heating system, communal parking and gardens and an emergency warden-call system.

Rents are fully Housing Benefit eligible and start from just £70 per week.

The properties are close to local amenities. You will be living in a quiet, residential area with a mix of different people and families. For this reason, if your support needs are likely to cause a disturbance to others, this opportunity may not be for you.

If you, or a friend or family member, would like to be considered for a property, please call **0113 200 7700** for more information.



Domestic Violence

Where to turn for help



What is the definition of domestic violence?

The Government defines domestic violence as 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members.

This includes issues of concern to black and minority ethnic (BME) communities such as 'honour based violence'.

What if you suspect someone is suffering from domestic violence?

If you know or suspect a family member, friend, or work colleague is experiencing domestic violence, your first instinct may be that you want to protect your friend or family member, but intervening can be dangerous for both you and them.

If your friend is open with you and acknowledging the violence, this is a positive sign and an indication that they trust you. Try to keep in touch with them so that they don't become more isolated.

Don't ask them to leave their partner, nor criticise them for staying with their partner - this could put them in more danger.

Encourage your friend or family member to seek professional help and to prioritise their safety at all times. You will become a lifeline to your friend or family member.

However, if your case is an emergency, or if you witness an assault, please call the police.

West Yorkshire Police

They will treat all reports seriously and will do whatever they can to help prevent further incidents.

 **0113 385 9590**

Positive results

Recently, two Tenant Panel members attended a conference on Domestic Violence & Abuse in Leeds. It is thanks to our Tenant Panel that we have been able to put together this article. Our Tenant Panel will also be helping us to review our safeguarding policies and procedures.

One Tenant Panel member is hoping to benefit from some training to help her to support victims of Domestic Violence in her community.

If you feel strongly about a particular cause, we may be able to help you achieve your aim. Joining the Tenant Panel is a good place to start.

Useful contacts

Leeds Womens Aid

A women's organisation, whose aim is to protect women and children from the damage that domestic violence can inflict.

 **0113 246 0401** (24 hour)

 **Text: 07825 156087**
(9.30am - 5.00pm)

www.leedwomensaid.co.uk

Support After Rape & Sexual Violence Leeds

An organisation that exists to support all women and girls who have been affected by sexual violence.

 **0808 802 3344**

 **Text: 07797 803211**

National Helpline

Immediate information and support for women experiencing domestic violence

 **0808 2000 247**

Karma Nirvana

Supporting all experiencing honour-based violence and forced marriages

 **08005 999 247**

Stonham Home Group

Leeds Women's Refuge offers 24 hour temporary emergency accommodation to women experiencing domestic abuse.

 **0113 386 3520**

National helpline for men wanting to change

A confidential and anonymous helpline for anyone concerned about their violence towards a partner or ex-partner.

 **0808 802 4040**

Behind Closed Doors

Aim to support women, men and children in the Metropolitan District of Leeds, whose lives are affected by domestic abuse.

 **0113 246 0401**

Remember to erase your Internet browser history and your call records!



Tony's Top Tips

To save yourself a bob or two...

A few pointers to help you fix problems without having to book a repair, keep you safe and save yourself a bit of money too...

1. Keep your contact details up to date!

If you have changed your mobile number or other contact details let us know! We send contractors to carry out repairs but they can't get access to your property as they are unable to get hold of you!

7. Get involved!

Unity will be tendering the day to day repairs contract. We use Tenant Panel members to assist in selecting a company, however you can be involved too. Please let us know if you wish to be considered.

2. Arrange your gas safety inspection

You will soon get a letter to ask you to arrange your gas-servicing. Please call IDM immediately, or if you cannot get through, call Unity.

Gas-servicing is not just a legal requirement; it could save your life.

3. Ants, Wasps, Pests

With summer coming up we anticipate a lot of tenants reporting trouble with wasps, bee's nests and ants. Unfortunately Unity is not able to treat infestations and pests – this is something you need to arrange and pay for yourself. You could try Axial Pest Control - Call Terry on 07957 911030 and ask for a quote.

4. Loss of power? Or a faulty appliance?

If you have lost power to your property, it could be a faulty electrical appliance causing the fuse box to trip. You can test which appliance is causing the problem by unplugging everything, flipping the fuse switch back on and then plugging your appliances back in one at a time. If you do not lose power, it may have been a power surge. If you cannot flip the fuse switch back on, you will need to log a repair.

5. Beeping smoke alarm?

Check your battery. Even hard-wired smoke detectors have a battery which serves as a back-up if the mains power fails. If you report a faulty alarm, and we send a repair person, you will have to pay if the only fault is that the battery needs replacing.

6. Locate your stop tap!

If you ever suffer a leak, it is important that you know where the stop tap is in your property to cease the flow of water. If you are able to do this, it will hopefully minimise any damage to your property and belongings.



Tony Allen,
Maintenance
Officer

An apology...

It has come to light that some of the information in communal area notice boards in our flats is out of date. Please be assured that we are in the process of updating them.

In the meantime the correct numbers for the out of hours repairs services are:

Emergency Repairs ☎ **0845 634 2766**

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

Emergency Gas Repairs ☎ **01757 244510**

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



Congratulations!

to Mr & Mrs A, Moortown who are the winners of the **£50** repairs satisfaction survey prize draw!

Ball Games - New Legislation

Play fair, and don't fall foul of the law!

As the nice weather is coming Housing Officers would like to inform residents about the new legislation regarding ball games on our estates.

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014

As well as taking action against you for a breach of tenancy, Unity as a social landlord has now been given new powers to apply for injunctions to prevent individuals from causing a nuisance and annoyance. This power includes action against any young person over the age of 10 years old.



We do not want to have to seek an injunction order against a young person, which is why we are asking all parents to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children.

We would ask that you to take seriously the **'No Ball Games'** signs and ensure that your children are not playing on the estate in such a way that results in a nuisance or annoyance to others.

To check when your estate is due a visit from your Housing Officer, please check unityha.co.uk.

We don't want to stop your children having fun over the holidays ...
So please take all ball games into a park or green area.



Art & Photography Competition

Help us fill our walls at Stratford Court

Unity currently has a large amount of corridor space at our latest development, Stratford Court, which could do with some artwork to brighten it up! If you're a budding artist or photographer we could really use your help!

We are looking for A3 pieces of artwork which will display in the corridors. The category winners could have their work enlarged to fill an A1 frame which will be displayed in the larger 'breakout' area.

There are four floors in this development, so we are looking for artwork which reflects the four themes:

**Spring, Summer,
Autumn, Winter**

For more information about the categories and what you could win, please contact **Lewis on 0113 200 7751**.
Deadline: 30th June

**Fantastic
opportunity to have
your work on
display!**



Make it happen! Volunteering opportunities



One of the most frequently complained about problems in our 2014 Tenant Satisfaction Survey was litter.

Your tenancy agreement states that 'you must not cause any disturbance or acts likely to annoy your neighbours or others living nearby'. This includes dropping litter and Unity will take action against any tenants found to be doing this. Sadly, without evidence, there is very little Unity can do to stop other people from dropping litter and unfortunately this means from time to time communities have to take matters into their own hands!

Unity would like to help you organise litter-picking and other community events. If you'd like to start something in your area, please let us know. We will help you to recruit volunteers, provide tools and we may be able to provide incentives for a decent job. Call **Lewis on 0113 200 7751** and we'll help you to make it happen!

Mutual Exchange Event

Find your perfect home through a swap shop!

Do you have spare bedrooms in your house ?

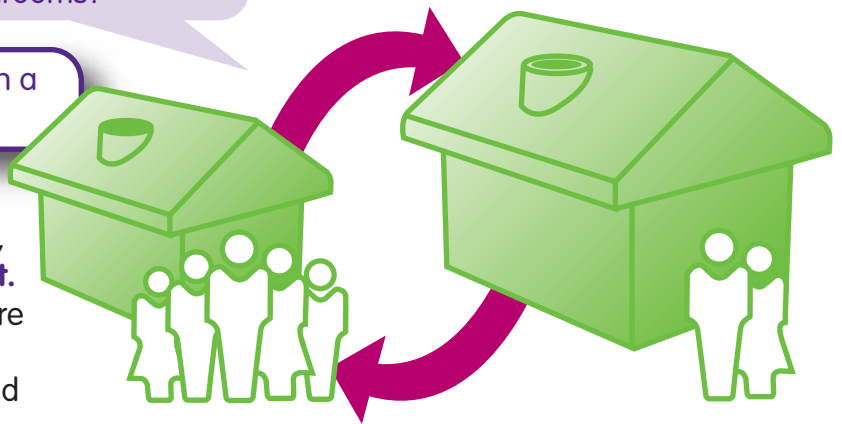
Are you struggling to afford the 'bedroom-tax'?

Are you struggling to look after a property that is too big for you?

Is your family overcrowded in your homes and do you need more bedrooms?

Would you like to live in a different area or in a different type of property?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, why not attend a **FREE House Exchange Event**. Come and see a selection of properties that are available for mutual exchange. Staff will be available to guide you through the process and answer any questions you might have.

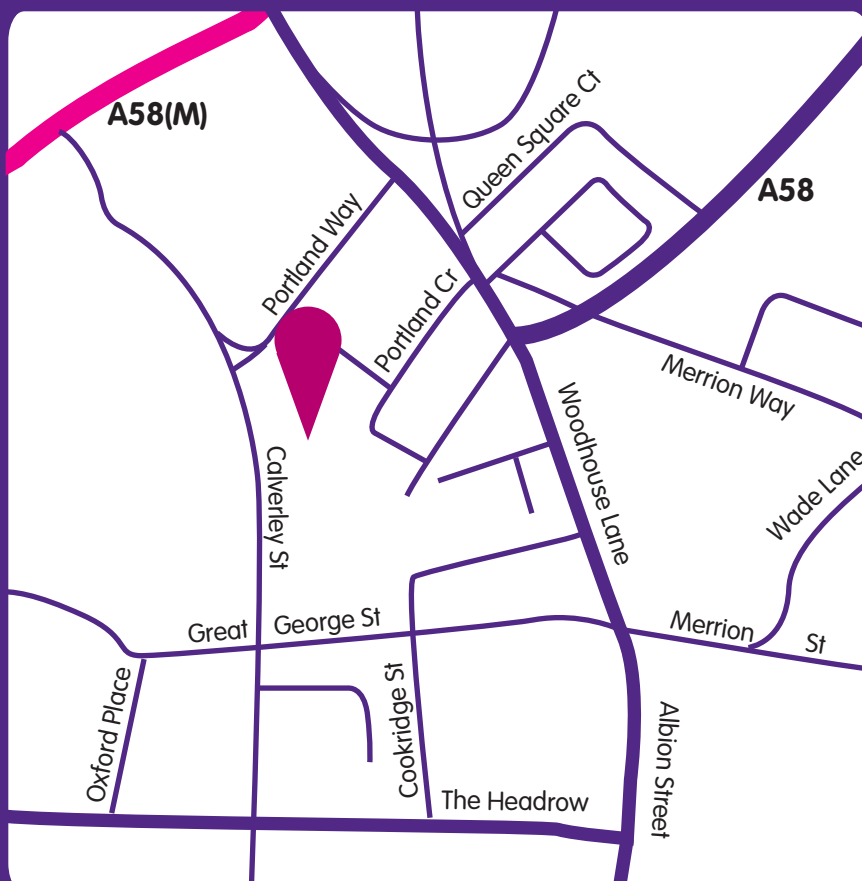


Time: 10am - 2pm

Date: Tuesday 14th July

Where: Leeds Civic Hall,
Banqueting Suite

Free refreshments will be provided



You can now swap your home online...

The Government have set up a national mutual exchange scheme called 'Homeswap Direct' which means you can look for families to swap with not only in Leeds, but in any part of the country. Visit www.houseexchange.org.uk

You will need to complete the online registration form to receive your ID number and password. Within a few days of registering you will be able to:

- Advertise your home online
- Get in touch with other tenants wanting to swap their homes, locally, regionally and nationally.

Contacting Unity

T: 0113 200 7700

E: uha@unityha.co.uk

W: www.unityha.co.uk

Office Hours:

Monday: 9am - 5pm

Tuesday: 9am - 5pm

Wednesday: 10am - 5pm

Thursday: 9am - 5pm

Friday: 9am - 5pm

If you have an emergency repair when the office is shut, please ring our emergency repairs number (see below). If we have to change our emergency repairs number for any reason you can get the new one by phoning 0113 200 7700 and listening to the message.

Emergency Repairs  0845 634 2766

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

Emergency Gas Repairs  01757 244510

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

Transco (gas leaks)  0800 111 999

Repairs by email: repairs@unityha.uk

For information at your fingertips, visit our website at www.unityha.co.uk for leaflets, latest news and community information.

For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact Lewis Holloway on **0113 200 7751** or email lewis.holloway@unityha.co.uk

Leeds City Council Services

Adult Social Care

 0113 222 4401

Anti-Social Behaviour

 0113 222 4402

 onestop@leeds.gov.uk

Children Social Care

 0113 222 4403

Council tax and housing benefit

 0113 222 4404

 lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk

Complaints and compliments

 0113 222 4405

Environmental services

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

 0113 222 4406

 refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk

Highways

 0113 222 4407

 highways@leeds.gov.uk

Registrars

 0113 222 4408

Planning

 0113 222 4409

Minicom

 0113 222 4410

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 us to.



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INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Silver



business for neighbourhoods

