

Unity News

Summer 2023

Unity

Homes & Enterprise

Supporting BME Communities
and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods

Leeds Media Centre refurbished



**See inside to see how the Leeds Media Centre has been transformed
and how this can benefit the local community.**

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GAS SAFETY INSPECTIONS

If your home has gas installed it is a legal requirement for Unity to complete an annual gas safety inspection of your home. This includes gas servicing; these works are required to ensure that your home remains safe.

Our gas contractor IDM will write to you when your service is due requesting you make an appointment.

A gas service is a legal requirement. If you do not book your appointment to have your gas serviced, we may have to take legal action to gain entry to your home. For further information contact our customer service team on 0113 2007700



Gas Safety Tips

Don't use any appliances that you think maybe, broken or faulty.

Never cover a gas appliance such as a boiler.

Make sure you know how to turn the gas supply off in the event of an emergency.

Don't block or cover outside flues.

Check your carbon monoxide detector is working.

If you smell gas call the gas emergency number on 0800 111 999

3. Unity Senior Management Team



Cedric Boston

Unity Chief Executive

Responsible for enabling the Board to realise their vision and strategic objectives for the company by managing the overall operations and resources of Unity, developing strategies and policies, and acting as the main point of communication between board and corporate operations. Inspiring and motivating employees to foster a positive work environment.



Katherine Proctor

Housing Operations Director

Responsible for leading Unity frontline services these being: Repairs and Maintenance, Housing Services, Customer Services, Income Management and Resident Involvement Teams.



Ann Marie Matson

Resources Director

Responsible for the Finance Team, Treasury Operations, Information Technology Team, Human Resources, Governance Support to the board including Company Secretary role.



Wayne Noteman

Regeneration & Development Director

Responsible for new homes development, including Development Support to other small organisations, Community Regeneration, Unity Enterprise, and the Employment Services Teams.

4. Top Tips for Being a Good Neighbour



We all want to get on with our neighbours but sometimes there are issues that can cause people to fall out such as parking, noise or visitors. If you do experience anti-social behaviour, you can report this to your housing officer, sometimes small changes in how we do things can ensure that we can be good neighbours, below is a list of top tips that might help:

When returning to your home late at night keep noise to a minimum and if you are in your car turn music off.

If you are planning a party, inform your neighbours in advance that there might be some extra noise.

Please ensure your visitors do not park in a way which obstructs your neighbours access to their property.

Please remember that you are responsible for the behaviour of any visitors you have to your home, if they cause a nuisance this could lead to you breaching your tenancy.

If you live in a flat with shared communal areas, do not leave items outside your flat door. This looks untidy and may be a nuisance to other residents.

If you live in a flat, laminate flooring can be particularly noisy. Choose a carpet instead or use rugs to reduce the sound for your neighbours.

Keep your garden maintained and ensure that rubbish does not accumulate.

If you have a dog, please ensure that it is not left alone in your property, ensure it is walked regularly, and train it not to bark. Keep your dog on a lead when walking it, including on your estate, and clear up any fouling immediately.

5. Finding Affordable Credit

Don't Get Bitten by a Loan Shark



Many people have been affected financially by the cost-of-living crisis and need to borrow money to afford new furniture, replace a broken goods such as TV or washer, as well as to pay for events such as holidays, birthdays, funerals and Christmas, or even to pay off debts and loans. It's important that you don't borrow money from Illegal Loan Sharks, these are criminals who lend money from community venues and the doorstep, at very high interest rates, but are not licenced to, and will use intimidation to recover money.

Affordable Credit Options

The most important thing is to think really carefully before borrowing money. If you can save up over time instead, or borrow less than you thought and use a responsible lender who will help you borrow less in the future, that will be much better for you. And of course don't skip your rent, Council Tax and other priorities because you may lose your home, or get a visit from the bailiffs if you do. If you need help with managing debt or budgeting to avoid debt we can refer you to local support from moneybuddies.org.uk or from national debt charity www.stepchange.org.

AFFORDABLE CREDIT options are available locally. Leeds City Credit Union 0113 2423323 www.leedscreditunion.co.uk/can loan to people in this circumstance, or they may recommend Your Loan Shop www.yourloanshop.co.uk their partner. Both are recognised responsible lenders.

They may be able to lend at lower or equal interest rates to the lenders above, and allow you to consolidate (put all the borrowing together in one loan) so you can repay all the others straight away and just repay Leeds city Credit Union over a sensible time period that suits you. They will also support you to start saving so that in time you do not need to borrow money again.

There are other affordable credit providers across the country that can lend locally in Yorkshire for example, White Rose Credit Union www.whiterosecu.com, Bradford District Credit Union www.bdcu.co.uk and Felix Credit Union. Or you may use www.findingfinance.org.uk to find a responsible affordable loan provider over the internet.

If you are worried about your finances or struggling to pay your rent, contact the Unity Income Team on 0113 2007700.

6. Coronation Celebrations



Unity Residents Celebrate the Coronation

On the 6th of May Unity residents of Stratford Court one of our over 55 schemes in Chapel Allerton Leeds gathered in the communal garden to celebrate the coronation of King Charles. Unity provided an afternoon tea and the residents of the Stratford Court scheme enjoyed, music, a raffle, bingo and a royal quiz. There were plenty of prizes on offer and it was great to see people coming together to celebrate this historic day.



Sue Pennock, the housing officer for Stratford Court was our bingo caller for the day Sue said: "The thing I most enjoy in my role as a housing officer is being on the estates and meeting people in the community, I hope that we can do more events in the future".



Want to do a community event for your neighbours?

Unity has a community fund which can be applied for by residents to provide for community events which could be of benefit to your neighbourhood. As well as events the fund can be used for purchasing items that could enhance the environment where you live.

For further details contact our Resident Involvement Officer on 0113 2007751 or email chris.whittaker@unityha.co.uk

7. Leeds Media Centre Refurbished



Building work has been successfully completed in a major redevelopment of Leeds Media Centre to create extra business space and new opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs in the city. Extensive internal works have also been undertaken to remodel the ground and lower ground floors to facilitate up to 12 new business units and a specially designed business hub with modern virtual facilities.

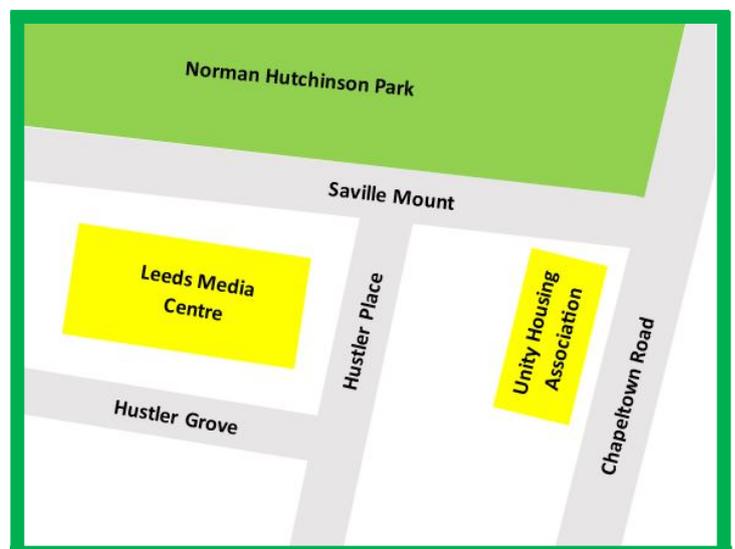
Cedric Boston Unity Chief Executive said “As a housing association rooted in the local community, Unity is passionately committed to helping individuals improve their life prospects by setting up their own business, finding employment or accessing training and education. The brand-new facilities at Leeds Media Centre will play a huge role in enabling us to achieve these goals.”



**Sanj Digwa Customer Services
Manager**

With the refurbishment it now gives us the space to create a community hub where you can access computers, meeting rooms and even a podcast room, It has also created a large space where our in-house business advisor will work to assist aspiring business entrepreneurs from the local area.”

Sanj Digwa manages the customer service team he explains his thoughts on the refurbished media centre “From September 2023 the customer services team will be moving into Leeds Media Centre. The reason for this is it will provide a modern space which is disabled compliant for our customers and staff.



8. Keeping a pet at your home



We understand that pets can be a positive attribute to any family home. Unity Housing Association may give you permission to keep pets in your home, but you will have to request permission in writing. Permission will only be given based on certain circumstances (you must agree to) and the type of home you live in (i.e. house bungalow or flat).

Responsible Pet Ownership

The types of animals you may be allowed to keep in your home with Unity's permission, provided it is suitable, may include:

- ✓ Dogs
- ✓ Cats
- ✓ Rabbits
- ✓ Rodents
- ✓ Fish
- ✓ Caged Birds
(such as parrots)
- ✓ Reptiles (such as
Lizards)

We do not allow:

- Any type of animal which is illegal.
- Any breed or cross breed of dangerous dog including pit bull terriers.
- Any dog which has attacked a person in public.
- Any wild or exotic animals
- Poisonous or dangerous reptiles and spiders
- Livestock and poultry
- Racing Pigeons without the permission of the Royal Racing Pigeon Society

Your Tenancy Agreement

In your tenancy agreement it states that:

“You must get our permission, in writing to keep any animal, bird, insect or reptile in your home”.

If you get permission, you have to agree to:

- ✓ Take responsibility for the animal's health and welfare.
- ✓ Take responsibility for any damage caused to your home by your pet.
- ✓ Controlling your pet within your neighbourhood and local community.
- ✓ Do not leave your pet alone in your home when you are away for a long time (i.e., holidays)
- ✓ If you or visitors to your home have a dog, make sure it is on a lead and does not cause a nuisance.

If you do not follow these rules, you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement. This means we may withdraw permission to keep your pet.

9. Resident Estate Inspections

How Unity residents inspect their estates?

Unity's housing officers inspect the estates and shared communal buildings where you live on a regular basis. There are a minimum of 2 inspections of all of our estates and shared communal buildings each year. At these inspections the housing officers are looking to identify if there are any issues with maintenance, safety concerns, environmental concerns, the standard of cleaning and gardening and any other factor which may reduce your satisfaction of living in your Unity home.

In May 2023 Unity decided to expand how we inspect our estates and shared communal areas by forming a group of resident inspectors. The residents have received training from Unity on how to complete the inspections and will provide an independent review of our estates and communal areas. The resident inspector recommendations for improvements will then be given to our housing team for action.



Sandra Swanston
Unity Scrutiny Chairperson

Sandra is a resident of Unity and also chairs our Scrutiny Group, which is a group of Unity residents who evaluate the services that are provided by Unity. Sandra States:

“The inspections of estates by residents are a great opportunity for people to have a positive impact on where they live. We can work in partnership with Unity to make them understand the things that matter most to residents. I would encourage anybody who has ideas on how they can make their estate better to contact Unity and become an estate inspector”.

10. Gardening Season Tips and Tricks

Growing season is in full swing and with benefits for fitness, well-being and the environment gardening offers a great opportunity for families to learn, grow and most importantly have fun together. Whether you're a green fingered guru or you are yet to dig in to the delights of growing I hope you find these tips and tricks a useful tool to help your garden grow!



- **Failing to plan is planning to fail** - Save a lot of hard work as the season progresses by taking time to get to know your garden. Do you have a sun trap? Light, dark, or dappled shade? Is your soil heavy, well drained or somewhere in between?
- **Snap up discounts** - often times those sad looking plants in and outside supermarkets discounted for their shabby appearance bounce back after a very small amount of TLC namely a decent amount of water and soil.
- **Tap into the local community** - sharing tips tools and plants with neighbour's and the wider community can be an invaluable source of gains for the garden and gardeners alike.
- **Check out tech tools** – from identifying plants that catch your eye on your travels to keeping a record of what you're growing and when to water there are 100s of free and paid for apps to help keep your garden growing. One of my favorites is an app called picture this which allows me to identify and record plants I want but don't have yet have.

- **Little and Often** – by their nature weeds will always thrive if left to do so, however weeding little and often can make a massive impact long term. Avoid herbicides as these can and do have a huge impact on wildlife and also your garden's ability to grow anything at all.
- **Recycle Water** – save costs on watering by making use of bath water, dish water, pasta water etc. As a rule of thumb use cleaner water for younger plants and edible plants, more mature plants and shrubs can handle water with a little more grease and dirt. However, be sure to avoid recycling water which has been mixed with harsh detergents such as bleach or has been heavily salted as these will contaminate your soil and kill your plants.

11. Puzzle Corner

Test your knowledge by completing the wordsearch. Send completed page back to Unity 117 Chapeltown Road Leeds Freepost NEA2498 LS7 3HY by 31st August or send photo of completed page to chris.whittaker@unityha.co.uk all correct entries will be entered into a draw to win £50 in vouchers, please remember to enclose your name and address.

Hidden Words

DANDELION	PETALS	SHRUB
LAWN	BLUEBELLS	DAISIES
BRAMBLES	BUSH	MARIGOLD
FLOWERS	TREE	WORMS
BUTTERCUPS	LEAVES	SOIL



H	M	L	O	U	H	T	W	R	I	M	S	R	E
E	W	B	U	T	T	E	R	C	U	P	S	E	R
D	O	L	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	W	I	T	B
A	R	M	S	I	V	D	W	L	S	N	O	I	R
I	M	D	S	L	H	A	E	C	E	S	S	S	S
S	S	L	B	A	H	N	M	I	G	A	N	L	U
I	L	O	R	W	S	D	E	L	O	A	V	L	U
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S	L	I	M	S	B	L	R	B	L	T	T	B	S
R	N	R	B	P	L	I	I	U	A	L	R	E	S
S	B	A	L	L	L	O	L	R	T	M	E	U	T
O	E	M	E	S	R	N	O	H	E	U	E	L	L
I	E	O	S	S	O	I	L	S	P	R	T	B	S
S	B	D	S	C	R	H	E	O	S	D	B	W	L

Congratulations to Mr T of Holborn Court who won the Spring 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: 10am – 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.

