

Unity News

Summer 2024

Unity

Homes & Enterprise

Supporting BME Communities
and Multi-Cultural Neighbourhoods



Unity's Employment Services Team Win Team of The Year at The Northern Housing Awards

2024
WINNER

**N[®] NORTHERN
HOUSING AWARDS**

www.northernhousingawards.co.uk

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Are you receiving Universal Credit ?



Unity charges rent weekly, but Universal credit pays monthly for 52 weeks in the year. For 2024-25 there are 53 rent weeks in the year

with the 53rd week falling on 31 March 2025. If you're paying by Universal Credit, please make additional contributions towards your rent to cover this shortfall for this final week which Universal Credit will not pay.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

From 1st April 2023, the Regulator of Social Housing introduced a new set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's), to assess how well social housing landlords are doing at providing good quality homes and services.

The measures are aimed at helping improve standards for people living in social housing, by:

- Providing visibility, letting tenants see how well their landlord is doing and enabling tenants to hold their landlords to account.
- Giving the Regulator insight into which landlords might need to improve things for their tenants.

Unity has submitted its results for 2023-24 to The Housing Regulator, to see these results please click <https://www.unityha.co.uk/performance/how-were-performing>

3. New Consumer Standards

The Regulator of Social Housing has introduced four new consumer standards, which have come into effect from April 1st, 2024. The new standards, which Unity will be assessed on are:

Safety and Quality Standard – outcomes about the safety and quality of tenants’ homes that requires landlords to maintain an accurate and up to date understanding of the condition of their homes.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – outcomes about how landlords provide information, consult, and listen to tenants, and act on their views.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard – outcomes about how landlords work with other organisations and consult with tenants to help ensure tenants live in safe neighbourhoods.

Tenancy Standard – outcomes about how landlords allocate and let homes and manage tenancies in a fair transparent and efficient way.



Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM’S)

The Regulator of Social Housing created a system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. this involved a set of tenant satisfaction measures that social housing landlords must report on.

Unity has been collecting data on tenant satisfaction in 22 key services, some of these services have been evaluated through the monthly telephone perception survey which was carried out by Callerz. The full list of satisfaction measures are:

Tenant Satisfaction measure	How we have collected results
Gas safety, Water safety, Fire Risk, Asbestos Checks, Lift Checks, Complaints per landlord size, Anti-Social Behaviour cases, Decent Homes Standard, Repairs in timescale.	From our management record keeping
Overall tenant satisfaction Satisfaction with repairs service Satisfaction with repair times Satisfaction with Neighbourhood Satisfaction with complaint handling Satisfaction with ASB handling Satisfaction that your home is well maintained Satisfaction that your home is safe Satisfaction Unity listens to your views Satisfaction that Unity keeps you informed Satisfaction that Unity treats you with respect Satisfaction communal areas are well maintained	From Callerz telephone perception survey

Unity has now provided the Housing regulator with the results of the TSM’S, to see the full list of requirements please click here <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/transparency-influence-and-accountability-including-tenant-satisfaction-measures>

4. New Consumer Standards

Tenancy Standard

Allocations and Lettings

We will let our homes in a fair and transparent way which meets the needs of the local authority and our prospective tenants.

Tenancy Sustainment and Evictions

We will support our tenants by ensuring they can access support services to maintain their tenancies and prevent evictions.

Mutual Exchange

We will assist our tenants who are eligible for a mutual exchange and ensure we communicate how tenants can do this.

Transparency influence and accountancy Standard

Fairness Respect and Diverse needs

We ensure that we deliver fair and accessible services, which are designed to meet the diverse needs of all tenants and prospective tenants and that we provide guidance and support to those who access them.

Engagement with Tenants

We will ensure that tenants have a voice to influence and shape the services we deliver by offering varied opportunities for tenants to scrutinise what we do.

Information about Landlord services

We will communicate to our tenants the services we provide and highlight how they can access them setting out expectations for their delivery.

Performance Information

We will produce information on our service performance and tenants' satisfaction measures and support our tenants to scrutinise the results

Complaints

We will offer a fair and response complaint service which adheres to the guidelines of the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code

Safety and Quality Standard

Our Housing Stock

We will have an accurate record of the condition of our housing stock and provide quality, safe and well-maintained homes that meet government decency standards.

Health and Safety

We will ensure that our homes and communal areas are compliant with the current safety standards.

Repairs and Planned Improvements

We will provide an efficient and effective maintenance service delivering planned improvements to our homes and keeping our customers informed.

Adaptations

We will provide a service to assist our tenants who need to adapt their homes.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

Safety of Shared Spaces

We shall ensure our communal spaces are safe and well maintained.

Local Co-Operation

We will work with our relevant partners such as the Council to promote, social, economic, and environmental wellbeing.

Anti-Social Behaviour

We will support our customers who experience ASB and work with the police and support agencies to deter ASB and improve our neighbourhoods.

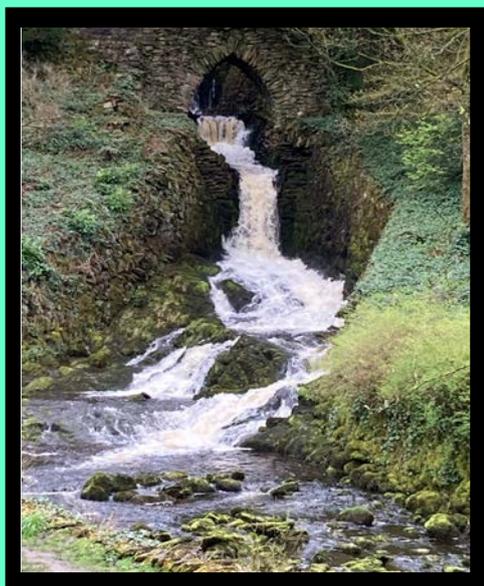
Domestic Abuse

We will set out how we work with other organisations to tackle domestic abuse and promote how our customers can receive support

5. Bus Trip to Clapham



On 3rd April Feel Good Factor and Unity organised a bus trip to Clapham in the Yorkshire Dales, for Unity residents and Feel Good Factor members. The group arrived for a full lunch buffet and in the afternoon were given the option of completing the Ingelbrough trail, despite heavy rain some valient people from the group set out and completed the walk and were treated to the marvelous scenery that the Ingelbrough trail had to offer.



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. Interested? Contact them on www.fgfleeds.org or 0113 350 4200.

6. Harehills Community Matters

In May school holidays the Harehills Community Matters outdoor event took place at Banstead Park in Leeds.

The purpose of the event was to provide residents from Harehills access to social housing providers as well as local support organisations all in one place. Despite the rather challenging weather over a 1000 people attended on the day.



Fun activities were provided for children and adults alike with bouncy castles, an on-site DJ, and a Caribbean steel band. Stall holders included, Places for People, Connect Housing, Yorkshire Water, Leeds Credit Union, Leeds Animation Forum, Leeds City Council private landlord team, Hamara and Thackery Museum to name but a few. There was also free food and refreshments provided.



Unity were co-founders of the event, and our housing and employment services team were busy on our stall throughout the busy day promoting our services to the community. It was great to see people learning about how they could improve their job training skills and listening to the good work that takes place at the Leeds Media Centre.



7. Unity Property Allocations



Unity currently manages over 1350 homes in Leeds and Kirklees, and in each year a number of these properties becomes empty, and we need to allocate them to a new resident. We are committed to allocating our homes in ways that will enable neighbourhoods to flourish socially and economically. We want our homes to be places where people are proud to live.

Property Type	Number Allocated
1 Bedroom home	24
2 Bedroom home	25
3 Bedroom home	12
3 Bedroom home	6

We participate in allocations systems that provides choice and considers individual needs. In Leeds, we are a partner in the Leeds Homes Register (LHR), in Kirklees we are partners in the Choose 'n' Move Scheme. Vacancies will usually be advertised through these schemes. Our aims are to:

- Create successful communities
- To provide homes that meet customers' needs



Housing Services Manager Temo Elbakidze explains: We're excited to share an update on our property allocations for the year 2023-24! Throughout the year, we've successfully placed families and individuals in a total of 67 homes. This included 10 properties were filled through mutual exchanges, allowing existing tenants to find homes that better suit their needs. 7 Properties were allocated to applicants from local community organisations, Leeds Black Elders and Leeds Women's Aid, as well as 2 properties allocated to Turning Lives Around an organisation preventing homelessness.

We understand the importance of getting people into homes quickly. In 2023-24, we achieved an average void property turnaround time of just 21.71 days (including repairs, advertising, assessments, allocations, and sign-up). This is well below the national average for top-performing organisations. We're proud of our work in connecting people with homes and look forward to continuing to serve the community!

8. New Business Hub in Media Centre



On 17th May VIP guests including the city's Lord Mayor joined project partners and community members at Leeds Media Centre in Chapeltown to celebrate the opening of its new hi-tech business hub. The scheme was delivered by Unity Enterprise – a not-for-profit subsidiary of BME Housing Association Unity Homes and Enterprise – in partnership with Leeds City Council and the European Regional Development Fund.

Leeds City Council, which owns the building, also provided £80,000 from the Innovation@Leeds capital fund to equip the new business hub with furniture, video conferencing facilities and computer hardware.

Speaking at a special ceremony to mark the completion of the hub kit-out, Unity Enterprise Chair Sharon Jandu OBE paid warm tribute to Unity Homes and Enterprise Chief Executive Cedric Boston, Unity Enterprise Manager Adrian Green and Leeds City Council Head of Business Support Phil Cole and their teams for successfully completing the building refurbishment and business hub.

Looking for help with your business needs? contact the Leeds Media Centre Team on 0113 2007700



9. Unity Homes and Enterprise Award Winners



Congratulations go to the Employment and Enterprise Teams for winning

Northern Housing Team of the Year



In the last financial year, the team helped 198 people to find jobs, 256 people to improve their skills and employability through training and 15 people enter voluntary work. Since being established in 2011, it has supported 3131 people into employment and training.

They have engaged with candidates in several different ways, including through job fairs delivered in collaboration with schools and community groups. The team helped with job applications and preparation of CV, job search training and interview role play exercises.

The new facilities in the media centre have facilitated for the team to hold workshops on helping woman and girls establish sustainable business. In recent weeks it has hosted the first meeting of West Yorkshire Ethnic Minority women in Tech, bringing together woman from professional backgrounds to network and share good practise. The Team continues to champion the opportunities for positive development for the people of Leeds and their award is well deserved.

If you need help with employment contact the team at employmentoutreach@unityha.co.uk

10. Formal Complaints to Unity 2023-24



At Unity we want to provide an excellent service to our residents, however sometimes we get things wrong, and this can result in a Formal Complaint. We thought it was important that you are aware of how Unity has managed complaints in 2023-24 and the service areas that have been complained about.

The table below shows how many complaints were received at stage 1 and stage 2 of our formal complaint procedure, the number of complaints for each housing service, whether the complaint was upheld and whether Unity answered on time.

Why Complaints are Important to Unity?

- We can get an understanding of resident's views
- We can identify where we need to improve
- We learn where we need to do things differently
- We can improve resident satisfaction

Formal Complaints to Unity 2023-24

	Housing Complaints in 23-24	Maintenance Complaints in 23-24	Compliance Complaints in 23-24	Customer Services Complaints in 23-24	Total in Year
Complaints at Stage 1	8	22	3	1	34
Answered in Timescale	100%	91%	100%	100%	94.1%
Upheld	3	19	1	1	24
Complaints at Stage 2	3	3	2	0	8
Answered in Timescale	100%	66.6%	100%	n/a	87.5%
Upheld	2	2	0	0	4

- . Complaints at stage 1 means that a complaint has been answered by a service manager
- . Complaints at Stage 2 means that a complaint has been managed by a service director
- . Upheld means the has been a service failure of some type
- . The Housing Ombudsman determines the timescales in which Unity has to answer formal complaints, for stage 1 complaints a response must be made by Unity within 10 Working days of logging a formal complaint.
- . For stage 2 complaints a response must be made by Unity within 20 Working days of logging a stage 2 complaint.

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@unityha.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.

