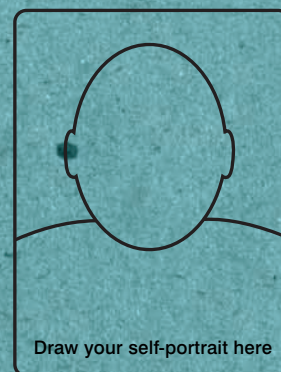


# TENANT'S HANDBOOK 2008



Name.....

Address.....

Favourite colour.....





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## Welcome to Unipol

We really hope you enjoy living in a Unipol property. We like you to think of our accommodation as your home, so we'll leave you to enjoy your property. Your safety and comfort are always our primary concern, so we will need to visit a few times a year to carry out inspections, maintenance and safety checks and see how you're looking after it. If you have any problems with the building or your fellow tenants, or think we can help in any way, then please get in touch. If we can't help you directly, we're sure to know someone who can.

Unipol is a non-profit making organisation run by full-time professional staff who report to a Board of Directors. As we're a charity, all the money we take from your rent is used to provide property and services that meet our charitable objectives. Unlike private companies or owners, we don't take a profit and any surplus we make is invested back into the organisation.

### Unipol

- aims to provide both choice of property types and rent levels
- manages good quality properties for owners and lets them to students
- has a stock of its own housing to assist students with special housing needs, particularly those with dependants who pay a subsidised rent

Here are some of the staff you are likely to come into contact with:

### Housing Management Officer

This is the member of staff with overall responsibility for your accommodation. You will be informed who they are when you collect your keys, and in larger developments, you will see their picture and details displayed as part of the Code of Standards for Larger Developments.

If there are aspects of your property that you are not happy with or something has gone wrong in your property, please contact your Housing Management Officer.

### Student Wardens

Some of the large developments have resident student wardens who are available for you to report repairs and discuss other tenancy related matters.

### The Tenancy Support Officer

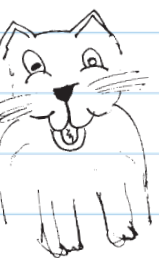
This member of staff is available for advice, mediation and to offer support to Unipol tenants who are experiencing problems with flat mates or with neighbours. We always advise that you try to speak to each other about any difficulties you are having first. This may sound a little daunting but quite often, once someone is made aware of how they are affecting others, they will change their behaviour.

You can contact the Tenancy Support Officer for copies of the following publications, 'How to deal with problems with other tenants and how we can help you' and 'Top tips for being a considerate flat mate'.

If you follow this advice and the situation is still not resolved, we will request some further details from you in writing. This enables the Tenancy Support Officer to identify the specific problems that you are experiencing and suggest options to resolve the dispute.

### Finance Staff

If you need to discuss rent charges, payment of rent or energy charges, or any other invoices that you have received, you should discuss this with the finance team. The finance team are also there to discuss your options if you are having problems paying your rent or if you need to leave your accommodation permanently.



### Information and Communications Technology ( ICT) Staff

Some of our larger developments are wired with internet connections and tenants pay a fee for unlimited access during the tenancy. If any problems occur during the year, then please contact our ICT staff who will help to fix any problems you may be experiencing.

Unipol also offer IT support to our smaller houses and you can collect further information about this service from Unipol.



Please read your Tenants Handbook carefully. Not only does it explain how Unipol manages its properties, how you can enjoy your accommodation and its amenities to their full potential and how to deal with any problems that may occur, but it could also save you time, money and trouble.

This handbook does not form part of your contract with Unipol, but it explains in detail some of the more important terms in your tenancy agreement and, where appropriate, sets out Unipol's policies in relation to enforcement of these terms.

Moving In

Collecting Keys

You will be provided with one set of keys, but only when:

- you have signed the tenancy agreement and all related documentation
- the tenancy agreement has begun (we will not hand out keys before the agreement has started)
- you have paid your deposit for the property

You can collect your key from the Unipol office during normal opening hours. At the beginning and end of the academic year the office is open for longer periods during the week and at weekends (visit [www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.unipol.leeds.ac.uk) for opening hours). When you come in to collect your key, you must show some form of personal identification to prove you are the person on the tenancy agreement. If someone is collecting the key on your behalf, then that person must have a letter of authorisation from you with a signature that matches your signature on the tenancy agreement. In the letter of authorisation you must name the collector, who must be able to demonstrate clearly that they are who they say they are.

Burglar Alarm

Check the burglar alarm instructions before you go into the house for the first time so you have the number to hand.

Condition of the Property When You Move in

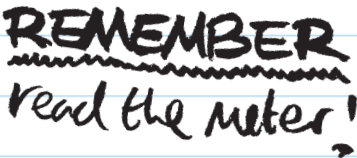
If you are not happy with the property, let us know straight away.

It is your responsibility to check the property and bring any problems to our attention straight away. If there is damage to the property or the property is not clean, please contact your Housing Management Officer who will visit and arrange to put things right.

It is important that you do this at the start of your tenancy, as disputes about damage at the end of the contract are much harder to solve. We are less likely to accept that the damage was there when you moved in if it wasn't reported to us at the time, and you could be charged for putting things right.

Register Your Details With Gas and Electric Companies

Remember to read the meters the day you move into your property. See Page 21 of this booklet for more information on suppliers and meter reading.



Inform Others of Your Change of Address

Including your University/College, the bank, friends and relatives.

Your Tenancy Agreement

In signing a contract with Unipol you are committing yourself legally to paying us an agreed rent over a fixed period, at the end of which you are expected to leave.

We will send you a Notice Requiring Possession two months before your tenancy is due to end.

If you want to stay on in the property you should visit our office to explain the situation.

You will be given a copy of your tenancy agreement. Please ensure you know whether this is a Joint or Individual Assured Shorthold Tenancy.

As a condition of your Tenancy Agreement you must:

- pay your rent to Unipol
- report all repairs to Unipol
- report any queries or problems with the property to Unipol

Living in the Property

Reporting Repairs to Unipol

Whilst we try to ensure that your property has nothing wrong with it, disrepair can happen at any time during your tenancy. You should always report repairs directly to Unipol and not through a third party.

Unipol aim to undertake repairs within the following targets which are in accordance with the recommendations made by the National Housing Federation in its Standards for Housing Management. The repair categories are;

- Priority 1 –

Emergency Repairs.

Required to avoid danger to health, a risk to the safety of residents or serious damage to buildings.

For example gas leak, fire, flood.

Target 24 hours from becoming aware of the defect.
- Priority 2 –

Urgent Repairs.

Repairs which materially affect the comfort or convenience of the tenant/s.

For example, no hot water, heating, washing machine not working.

Target five working days from becoming aware of the defect.
- Priority 3 –

Non Urgent day to day repairs.

These are repairs which can wait a short time before they are dealt with.

For example broken door handles, vacuum cleaner not working, painting.

Target twenty eight working days from becoming aware of the defect.
- Priority 4 –

Planned programmes of works.

Non urgent jobs in related trades are packaged together.

Target three months from becoming aware of the programme of work being necessary, one year for large programmes of work.

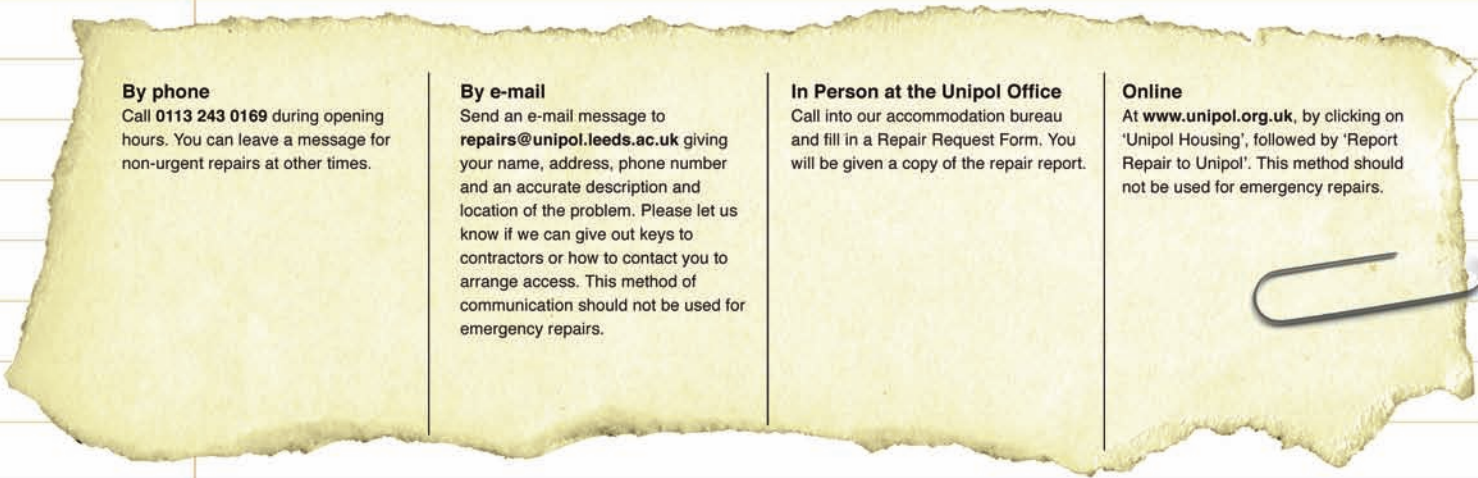
Who is Responsible?

- You are responsible for:
- replacing normal light bulbs (Unipol replace fluorescent tubes or sealed light fittings)

- unblocking sinks and drains
- resetting “trip” switches
- re-lighting pilot lights and repressurising boilers
- bleeding radiators
- ensuring external drains are clear of debris

Unipol is responsible for other repairs.

If a repair is needed, you must report it to Unipol as soon as possible using one of the following methods:



Whichever method you choose to contact us, always describe the damage or problem as fully as you can to help us make the repair as effectively as possible.

For example: “The central heating is broken” would not be as helpful as:  
“The boiler in the kitchen is not warming the radiators, although the hot water still works. The pilot light is lit and we have checked the time switch and the thermostat.”

If you report the problem in detail, the necessary repair can be done much more quickly.

Please describe the location of a problem according to this scheme: Cellar/basement; ground floor; first floor; second floor; attic floor. Always describe the location as if you are standing in the street outside the front of the property. For example, first floor front left bedroom.

If you report a problem inaccurately or inadequately, or if a repair is unnecessary, then you may be charged a call-out fee.



Emergency Repairs

“Emergency repairs” are repairs required to avoid a danger to health, a risk to safety or serious damage to buildings and which need immediate attention.

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY AT ANY TIME CONTACT UNIPOL IMMEDIATELY

IN PERSON OR BY TELEPHONE ON: 0113 243 0169

IF YOU PHONE OUTSIDE OF OFFICE HOURS, HAVE A PEN AND PAPER READY AS

YOU WILL BE GIVEN ANOTHER NUMBER TO CALL.

If you report an emergency repair to a contractor outside office hours, you must report it again to us the following working day using one of the above methods. Where the emergency service is used improperly or without our knowledge, we may charge you for the cost of this. In the case of burglary or vandalism this must be reported to the police and a incident report form filled in, otherwise you will be charged for the work needed.

ALWAYS KEEP YOUR COPY OF THE REPAIR REPORT. WE WILL NOT RESPOND TO ANY THIRD-PARTY

REPRESENTATION WHEN A REPAIR HAS NOT BEEN CORRECTLY REPORTED,

OTHER THAN TO REITERATE THIS PROCEDURE.

If you arrange to do the repairs yourself Unipol will not cover the cost. If the repair is not done to Unipol specifications and has to be redone, you will be charged for this as well.

Access to the Property

It will be necessary to visit your property a number of times during the year and we will give as much notice as possible for these visits.

Repairs

When reporting a problem that needs a repair, you will be asked for your consent for a contractor to enter your property to do the necessary works (they usually collect a key from our office for your property). If you would like for someone to call you to arrange a mutually convenient time during normal opening hours, then please specify this when reporting the repair. You will be billed for missed visits if you arrange an appointment and you are then not in.

Health and safety

At certain times of the year, contractors may call to carry out servicing and safety checks on

appliances. It is not always possible to let you know exactly when they will be making their visit but you will be informed when the servicing will start,

Emergencies

In emergencies we may have to access your accommodation without notice.

Viewings

During the letting period we will ask permission to do viewings on your property for future tenants.

Trouble Shooting

Instruction Manual

Your property should have an instruction manual that tells you how to work all the equipment in your property. Please familiarise yourself with the contents. If you do not have an instruction manual, please contact your Housing Management Officer.

Replacement Keys

If you lose a key, Unipol charge £25 for a replacement and £10 for a fob. This is to cover the cost of replacing suited and security keys and also for ordering more stock. If we need to replace the actual locks, the cost can be considerably higher.

If you find your original key, we will only refund £15.00 within the first month after purchase.

If your key is stolen you must report it to the Police and let us have the Crime reference number.

You should speak to us about whether you think there is a security risk.

Trip switches

Most Unipol properties are fitted with trip switches that will automatically turn off the electricity if there is a fault. This could be if sockets are overloaded, a light ‘blows’ or if a faulty appliance is used. These devices are very safe and sensitive.

For example, if a light bulbs blows it can trip the circuit and all the



lights will go out.You need to find the ‘fuse box’ and reset the trip. Generally the ‘fuse box’ is located either in the cellar in terraced houses or in the hallway and kitchens in flats.

It is best to turn off all the trip switches including the main switch first. Then turn the main switch back on, proceeded by all the smaller trip switches.

If the tripped switch is for sockets and will not go back up, you need to check that a faulty appliance is not still plugged in. This could include hairdryers, kettles, toaster, washing machine or even your fridge freezer. Eliminate and isolate your appliances until you find the items which have caused the electricity to trip off.

If this doesn’t work, or the supply keeps going off, please contact Unipol.

Condensation

Condensation is caused when excess moisture in the air meets a cold surface (i.e. a window) or a surface that gets little air (i.e. behind a wardrobe). Tiny droplets of water form, which can cause damage to walls and window frames, with the common indication of a problem being black mould patches.

You can help to reduce the build-up of condensation and mould as well as saving energy by following these simple steps:

- Cover pans when boiling
- Close the kitchen door when cooking and always use the extractor fan
- Dry your washing outside or in a tumble dryer. Try not to dry clothes using the radiators in your bedroom
- Regularly ventilate the house, by opening the windows slightly when you are in
- Use the extractor fan in the bathroom every time you use the bath/shower, and open the window (if there is one) for a while after you have finished. Closing the bathroom door will also stop the excess moisture spreading throughout the property
- Move furniture, especially larger items such as wardrobes and beds, slightly away from the walls, to allow air to flow behind them
- Try to keep the central heating on a low temperature and only turn it up as you need to.



This will prevent any ‘cold areas’ where condensation is more likely to form

- Do not block any air vents that have been fitted in your house, or switch off any extractor fans.
- They are there for good reason

If you think you may have damp or mould in your property that is not caused by condensation, then contact your Housing Management Officer who can advise you further.

Smoke Detectors, Fire Alarms & Fire Doors

Your property is fitted with a mains operated fire alarm system, and it is your responsibility to inform us of any problems or faults.

Please do not remove batteries or disable smoke detection in any way – fire systems are installed to protect you if there is a fire. If you would like further information about how the fire safety precautions in the property operate, please contact your Housing Management Officer.

Tampering with fire alarm systems is a criminal offence and the fire authorities may decide to prosecute you. Any abuse of the fire equipment will be taken seriously both by Unipol and your educational institution.

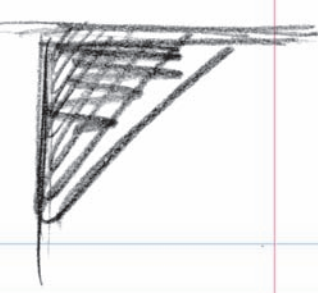


Fire doors are installed to protect your route of escape or prevent a fire from entering a room for a certain period of time. The doors have self-closers and fit the door frame flush so that the smoke seals around the door work in the event of a fire. Do not leave fire doors propped open, as this is the means of protection in the event of a fire.

Blocked drains

The most common causes of blocked drains are food being washed down the kitchen sink rather than cleared off plates into the bin, or hair and soap residue collecting in baths/sinks waste pipes.

If you notice your drains are blocked, or the sinks are taking a long time to empty, this could be



the reason. We would expect you to try a domestic drain-unblocker (widely available in supermarkets) before reporting it to us as a repair. If we call out a plumber to unblock a drain and the cause is traced back to food waste, we may pass the costs on to you.

## Burglary

If you are burgled, you should take the following action:

1. Report the matter to the police – it is vital that you get a crime reference number and pass it on to us as soon as you can. Without one it will be impossible to get insurance companies to pay out on any damage, for which you may then be liable
2. Phone us and report the burglary
3. Fill in an incident form

### If you are burgled outside our office hours:

Phone the emergency number **(0113) 243 0169** and a builder will come out to secure your property.

Report the incident to us as soon as possible.

## Your Responsibilities

As a tenant you are required and expected to look after your home properly

## Cleaning

A property must be cleaned regularly. This includes:

### Vacuuming

You must empty the vacuum cleaner from time to time to prevent damage to it. If the vacuum is not picking up, please empty the dust bucket and check all the pipes for blockages before reporting it to us as faulty. Bottle tops and coins stuck in the pipes commonly cause loss of suction in vacuum cleaners.

### The Cooker

You must clean the cooker regularly. Negligence in this area



constitutes the biggest single cause for us billing ex-tenants. A heavy build-up of grease and burnt-on food can cause fires as well as being difficult to clean.

### The Fridge or Fridge Freezer

You must leave the fridge door open if you switch it off for any reason. Otherwise, the inside will rapidly go mouldy. Be warned, when this happens it is very difficult and unpleasant to clean off. You should defrost the freezer or ice compartment frequently to prevent damage to the appliance.

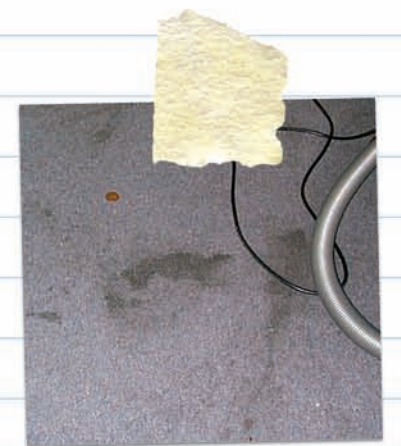


### Bathroom and Kitchen Work Surfaces

You must make sure that bathroom and kitchen work surfaces are kept clean. WC's should be regularly cleaned using bleach or toilet cleaner.

### Carpets, Upholstery and Curtains

You must remove any stains before the end of your tenancy, preferably when accidents happen as they are much easier to clean up. If a carpet is so badly stained that it won't come clean, it may need to be replaced. This is a very expensive option.



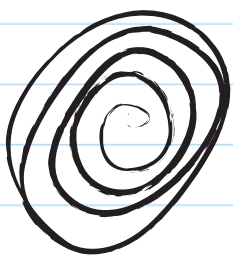
### Paintwork

You must wipe all paintwork down, if not during your tenancy then certainly at the end of it.

### Cellars

If you have a cellar in your property you do not pay rent to use it unless it is specially converted. The cellars of most houses are damp if they have not been specially converted. You must not use the cellar area as a store.





**Bathrooms and Showers**

The most common cause of structural damage to our properties is water damage from an overflowing bath or shower. If a bath or shower is allowed to overflow, or if there is a leak, water will build up in the floorboards and soak down into the ceiling of the room below. This goes mouldy and the ceiling begins to cave in. It costs at least £500 to put this sort of damage right. You can avoid the trouble, and cost, by following a couple of simple precautions:

- 1. Never use a shower apparatus which fits directly onto bath taps – these spray water onto the floor or nearby untiled walls
- 2. Never use a shower without a shower curtain, and make sure that when you do use a curtain you tuck it into the shower base or bath. If the shower is fitted with a shower door, keep it closed when in the shower
- 3. If a shower starts leaking to a floor below, or you have any problems with tiling, stop using the shower and report the matter to us.

You will find that most showers have their own quirks, so please try out the settings on yours before you report it to us as being faulty.

**Heating Systems**

Most of Unipol's properties have central heating systems and/or “Multipoint” water heaters. These give instant hot water when you turn the tap on and are very economical. Wherever possible, we will provide instructions on how to use these appliances. Follow these instructions carefully, particularly when starting up the pilot light and turning the system on. You should not report appliances as “broken” just because none of you knows how to start the system up. If you need a demonstration of how the system works, just let us know. If you have a condenser boiler it is normal for it to emit vapour but this steam is not hot and does not present any danger to you.

**Internal Locks**

You are not permitted to fit locks or padlocks on internal doors. Some properties have room locks fitted and, if relevant, Unipol will have given you a key for the room. You must not change any lock or use a lock (even if fitted) on internal doors unless Unipol has given you a key.

Properties where Unipol have fitted internal door locks have all been checked for fire safety to ensure that they do not impair your (or any other tenant's) ability to leave in the event of a fire. By using an unsuitable door lock you will be placing the lives of other occupants in danger. Note also that any lock fitted inexpertly will weaken or damage a door: this normally means that the door will have to be replaced – at your expense.

Fitting and using a lock to your room is a requirement of very few student insurance policies.

**Furniture**

You are allowed to move furniture about within the property and use any of your own, but you must never remove our furniture from the property or store it in the cellar. You must not bring any furniture into the property that does not conform to the standards set out in the 1988 Furniture and Furnishings (Fire)(Safety) regulations. If you need clarification on which items of furniture these regulations apply to then please contact your Housing Management Officer.

**Fitting Shelves or Other Fixtures**

You must not fit shelves or make other alterations to the property.

**Posters**

You may put posters on walls with Blu-tack or some similar adhesive. However, you must remove all posters and traces of Blu-tack at the end of the letting. If any grease marks are left, you must make sure that these are eradicated by cleaning. It is very expensive for us to have Blu-tac removed and this cost will be taken from your deposit.

**Painting and Decorating**

You are not allowed to redecorate.

**Communal Responsibilities**

As some areas in properties are held communally, you are all responsible for caring for communal areas, both inside and outside of the property.



## Fire Equipment

Fire fighting equipment is fitted in your property for your safety. The fire equipment in your property will be serviced annually, and will be checked by your Housing Management Officer several times a year. Extinguishers that have been discharged or tampered with will be replaced or repaired and any cost incurred will be passed onto the tenants immediately.

If you have a fire in your property and need to use the fire equipment, please tell your Housing Management Officer within 24 hours of the incident.

## CCTV

If your property has a CCTV feed on your aerial system (usually only in our larger developments) then you can use this to look at the areas covered. You should not record this or use it for any other purposes.

## Leaving the Property Over the Vacations

If all tenants are away from the property for a while:

- Make sure all doors and windows are securely shut and, where locks are fitted, locked
- Leave a light on (in a room, not in the hallway or landing) to deter burglars. Lights on time switches give the impression that a property is occupied
- Use your burglar alarm if you have one
- Take valuables home with you or at least make sure they cannot easily be seen through windows
- Empty the fridge and clean it out – if you do this, leave the door open or else the fridge will go mouldy.

## If Cold Weather is Expected:

Leave on the heating but turn the thermostat down to around 10° C.



## Energy-saving

Unipol actively encourage the use of low energy light bulbs in our properties. Many large developments are already fitted with a low energy lighting system, and tenants are encouraged to select low energy light bulbs wherever possible.

## Property Inspections

Unipol will inspect your property about three times a year, but if there are problems it may be inspected much more frequently. You will be contacted when we plan to carry out an inspection and we will arrange a date with you – please be there if you can.

In larger developments we may also carry out additional kitchen and communal area inspections. The inspection covers a range of checks and you will be notified of these in writing when informed of the inspection itself. On the day of the inspection we will fill in a form and give you a copy. This provides a record of the review. At the end of the visit you will be notified of any faults or problems.

If the state of the property is found to be unsatisfactory it will be re-inspected. An administrative charge of £20 per tenant will be made for this. The condition of the property for the inspection can also have a bearing on whether or not Unipol will allow you to remain in the property for a further tenancy.

## Smoking in Unipol properties

It is illegal to smoke or allow smoking in enclosed public areas of properties. Unipol has an obligation to take action to implement the ban to protect employees, tenants, customers and visitors from exposure to second hand smoke and to comply with the Health Act 2006. It is a criminal offence to ignore or break the law.

## What you need to know

### In Unipol Developments

- All public areas and Unipol's offices will be smoke free.





- Smoking is permitted in bedrooms by tenants and their guests with the door closed.
  - Smoking is not permitted in lobbies, corridors, shared toilets or bath/shower rooms.
  - Smoking is only permitted in kitchens/living rooms with the consent of all tenants of the dwelling.
- If any one tenant requests in writing that the kitchen/living room become smokefree the Housing Management Officer will write to all tenants informing them that this area is now smokefree.

**In Smaller Properties**

- If you have a joint tenancy the law does not apply in your case – if you have any issues you need to discuss in confidence contact the Tenancy Support Officer.
- If you let your property on an individual room then smoking outside of bedrooms is only permitted with the consent of all tenants of the dwelling. If any one tenant requests that other areas are smokefree the Housing Management Officer will write to all tenants informing them of this.

**In All Properties**

- Staff and tenants who wish to smoke outside of buildings should not smoke in areas where they will cause others to walk through their smoke or cause smoke to enter the building through windows;
- Smokers transgressing the policy should be dealt with using Unipol’s Anti Social Behaviour procedures and in the last resort this may lead to eviction.
- If you know that Unipol staff or contractors are to visit your property we politely ask that you stop smoking at least half an hour before they come so they are not exposed to secondary smoke.

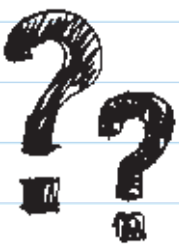
For more details and advice on stopping smoking:  
call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0 169 or visit <http://www.gosmokefree.co.uk/>

**Money Matters**

**Rent Payments**

You must pay your rent in advance and the first payment is no later than the first date of the tenancy agreement.

Allocated students are required to pay the first instalment of rent by cheque, debit or credit card.  
The next two payments are made by standing order.



Non allocated students are required to pay the rent by standing order in four quarterly instalments. Once set up, the standing order will automatically pay your rent out of your account every three months. You will receive a copy of the standing order and the payment dates when you sign the tenancy agreement.

Family tenants/couples are required to pay monthly by standing order, but a double payment of rent is required at the start of the contract (i.e. you will pay for the first month and the last month of your contract at the start).

It is your responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient funds in your bank account to make the payment. If you do not pay your rent on time, Unipol will impose late payment and administration charges

- A charge of £15.00 for each letter we write to you chasing any arrears on your account
- A charge of £10.00 for each cheque which your bank does not honour (ie bounced cheques)
- If you remain in arrears, Unipol will send a solicitor’s letter and a further charge to cover the cost of this will be passed on.

If you have difficulty paying because of financial hardship, or you wish to discuss any special arrangements because of financial problems, please contact the Finance staff who will do their very best to help you. If you seek assistance from Hardship funds administered by your University or College, Unipol can provide you with documentary support for your application.

**Leaving Your Property Before the End of Your Contract Period**

Your contract with Unipol is for a fixed period and we are under no obligation to release you from your contract. However, Unipol recognises that there are special circumstances when it may be appropriate to exercise some discretion. There are two ways in which you can terminate your contract with us:

**1. Find a Replacement Tenant to Take Over Your Contract**

You will need to find someone willing to take over the remainder of your contract. Your liability for the rent on the property ends on the date the new tenant signs their contract. Unipol can

DON'T FORGET  
Setup  
Rent  
standing order

advertise your property on the Unipol website – just ask your Housing Management Officer.

Placing posters on student union boards can generate some interest. Unipol’s website also contains a Student to Student Notice Board where you can place messages and respond to others looking for rooms. It is advisable to let your co-tenants know that you want to move out, since they may know someone who wants to rent.

Once you have found a replacement tenant, you will need to contact your Housing Management Officer to make an appointment for the new tenant to sign a contract. If you signed a joint tenancy agreement your co-tenants will also need to sign documentation.

Please be aware that you are liable for the rent on your property until this process has been completed and Unipol will charge a £50 administration fee for dealing with the extra paperwork involved.

**2. Released from your contract because you are leaving your course at University**

If you have made the decision to drop off your course at University, you may be eligible to be released from your contract with 2 months notice. This does not apply if you are simply finishing your course or if you are remaining in Leeds.

You need to contact Unipol and discuss your situation with someone in the Finance team. If Unipol does agree in principle to release you, ensure that you read the notes which will be sent with the release form and return it to Unipol without delay. Once all the conditions have been satisfied and all the relevant paperwork has been received by Unipol, your release form will be signed on behalf of Unipol stating the effective date of your release and you will be given a copy.

No application for release will be considered during the last 3 months of a tenancy under any circumstances.

**3. Special circumstances**

If you feel you have special circumstances, you should contact the Financial Controller who will consider your application. A senior member of staff will notify you in writing whether you are



eligible for release from your contract within 14 days of your application.

Please be aware that only very extenuating circumstances can be considered and again, no application for release will be considered during the last 3 months of a tenancy under any circumstances.

If you are unhappy in your accommodation, you may think that moving out is the only option available to you. We would like to help where we can, and would encourage you to discuss your situation with the Tenancy Support Officer, who may be able to offer alternatives, such as relocation to another Unipol property or help with resolving the issue that is making you unhappy in your property.

You cannot simply walk away from your contract with Unipol. A delay in contacting Unipol to discuss your situation will result in you having to pay rent.

**Insurance**

The structure of any property is insured either by Unipol or by the owner of the property. Insurance of personal possessions within the property is the responsibility of the tenants.

Unipol has arranged insurance cover for some properties. If your rent includes any insurance for your possessions you will be given separate information about this.

Remember, you may be able to claim on your insurance policy for any accidental damage such as burns on carpets. Tell us about it so we can get it repaired and you can put in a claim to the insurance company.

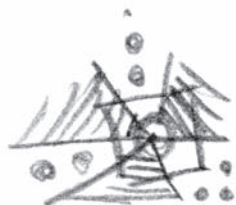
**Energy (Gas and Electricity)**

When you move into the property, you must contact the electricity and gas supply companies to put the bills into your name and to provide up-to-date meter readings.

Read the meters at the start of your tenancy. Unless stated on your contract, you are responsible for utility bills including gas and electricity. If you see a bill addressed to ‘The Occupier’, open it







and follow the instructions below. If the bill is addressed to previous occupants, you still need to do the following:

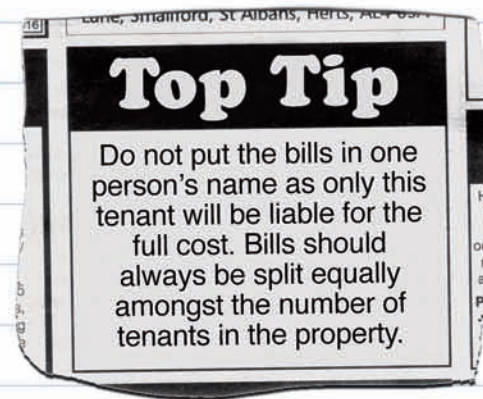
1. Ring the company directly – the number will be on the bill
2. Tell them that you are the new occupier/s
3. Register the bill into your name/s
4. Give the meter reading you have taken for that day. (You will be billed from this reading onwards)
5. Keep a record of the first meter reading

If you do not register with the gas/electric companies, they may call and disconnect your supply, particularly if the previous tenants have not paid their bills. This may happen with little warning.

Reconnection can be difficult to organise and the companies can insist on large deposits being paid first.

You could be without heating or a power supply for a long time.

If you cannot access your meters (for example if they are in a locked cupboard) please contact Unipol to arrange a meter reading.



## Meters

If you are unsure where your meters are located, contact your Housing Management Officer.

The meter reading usually consists of a 5 digit number. Each property will have separate meters for gas and electricity, so you need to take 2 readings. You may be receiving both gas and electricity from one company or have a separate supplier for each. If your meters are located outside your property you may need to buy a meter key (from hardware stores) to gain access.

**You can find out your gas or electricity supplier by calling;**

**Gas supplier – contact National Grid UK Meter Helpline on 0870 608 1524**

**Electricity supplier – contact the CA Electric UK Helpline on: 0845 601 3268**

At some larger developments, Unipol charges tenants directly for gas and electricity via an energy supplement. Where this applies, it will be indicated on the tenancy agreement. We will carry out

meter readings at the beginning and end of the tenancy, and at the end of each term, and calculate the cost of the energy you have used. If your energy use is higher than your payments, we will write offering practical advice on how you can reduce your consumption. If, at the end of the tenancy, you have used more energy than you have paid for, the outstanding amount will be deducted from your deposit. Similarly, if you use less energy than you have paid for, you will receive a refund at the end of the tenancy.

Unipol use this method of charging for gas and electricity so that you pay for what you use and can control to a large extent how much energy you use and therefore pay for. Try to conserve the energy you use both for the sake of the environment and your wallet.

## Energy Conservation

You can save a substantial amount of money in fuel cost savings by a few small changes to your behaviour:-

Is your heating on too high? The most important thing is to keep warm in winter, but turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10%.

Closing your curtains at dusk will reduce heat escaping through windows.

Leaving hot water running straight down the drain really is throwing money away.

Turn the lights off when you leave a room and adjust your curtains or blinds to let in as much light as possible during the day.

To cut down on wasted energy, avoid leaving appliances on standby and remember not to leave them on charge unnecessarily. But please check the user manual first.

Only fill the kettle with the amount of water you need. You'll get your drink quicker and you'll save energy too!

For washing machines, tumble driers and dishwashers always aim for a full load if you can't use a half-load or economy programme. Use the low temperature programme bearing in mind that modern washing powders will be just as effective at lower temperatures. Wring out or spin-dry really wet clothes before putting them into a tumble dryer will save you money, and they dry faster.

**Unipol is helping you to save energy by fitting energy saving light bulbs where ever possible.**

**The Cost of Heating Your Property**

British Gas has produced the following figures to give customers an indication of how much it costs to heat different types of properties. Although this is only an indication it should help you to budget your energy costs. Remember, in cold weather it is usually best to leave some heating on all the time you are in a property as it costs more to heat up a property from cold than to keep a warm property warm.

|                              | Small House<br>(1-2 bedrooms) | Medium House<br>(3 bedroom terrace or flat) | Larger House<br>(4 bed semi-detached) |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Condensing Boiler            | £36.75 (£441pa)               | £46.50 (£558pa)                             | £63.91 (£767pa)                       |
| Conventional Central Heating | £43.50 (£522pa)               | £55.41 (£665pa)                             | £76.75 (£921 pa)                      |
| Prices correct Oct 2005      |                               |                                             |                                       |

**Water Charges**

Some tenants are required to pay water charges direct to the supplier; others are not. Your obligation to pay water charges is clearly stated in your tenancy agreement. If you are in any doubt about this, ask your Housing Management Officer.

Your water is supplied by Yorkshire Water and they have a standard charge for your property. You do not have to read a meter for this supply.

- 1. Ring the company directly – the telephone number is 0845 124 2424
- 2. Tell them that you are the new occupier/s
- 3. Register the bill into your name/s



A small number of properties are fitted with water meters. Your Housing management Officer will advise you if you need to take meter readings.

**Telephone**

If you want to reconnect a phone or have one put in, you should get in touch with BT. You will need Unipol's permission to install wiring for the first time.

If you have a telephone, then it is much easier for Unipol to let you know when builders or decorators are calling, or to get in contact with you about any administrative matters. Please let us know your telephone number if you have one.

**Council Tax**

Council Tax is the charge the local authority makes for the services it provides. Full-time students are disregarded for Council Tax purposes. If there are only students in your property, you should not have to pay Council Tax. If you receive a bill, contact the council tax office to claim exemption. If a property has a mixture of students and non-students then the non-student will be liable to pay the Council Tax.

**Being a Good Neighbour**

You have an opportunity to support, enhance and benefit the neighbourhood into which you have moved. Not everyone around you will be a student. Your neighbours may have young children, may be elderly or work night shifts and it is sometimes easy to forget that your lifestyle may impact upon their quality of life.

There are many ways that you can help to become a part of your new community.

**Say Hello!**

Get to know your neighbours, even if it's just saying 'hello' over the fence. If they know you, they are likely to be helpful in time of need. And nothing increases security more than neighbours looking out for each other. An area only becomes a community when the people living there share the neighbourhood.



Keep the Peace

Noise causes more distress than any other issue – whether it’s in the home, the garden or the street. Whilst everyone understands that students like to celebrate and enjoy themselves it is important to remember the impact this may have on your neighbours. Tell neighbours if you are having a party and agree a time to turn the music down. Know how to use your burglar alarm correctly and don't set it off by mistake!

Clean Up

A neglected environment and excessive rubbish can make an area look extremely run down. For household rubbish, find out how the local refuse collection system works, and use it well. In particular, make good use of the local recycling system. If you have a garden, or even just a yard, keep it tidy and clear of litter. And do your bit to keep the street clean.

Getting Involved

There are many ways you can become active in your local community. If you notice fly-tipping or vandalism, for instance, report it – ring the Neighbourhood Helpline. To find out more about local services, activities and events and to become an active part of your local area in which you live, contact:

University of Leeds (City and Regional Office):

Amanda Jackson  
Email: a.m.jackson@adm.leeds.ac.uk  
Tel: 0113 343 4073

Leeds University Union (Action):

Chloé Telford  
Email: action@luu.leeds.ac.uk  
Tel: 0113 380 1325

Leeds Metropolitan University:

Chloë Hudson



Email: c.hudson@leedsmet.ac.uk

Tel: 0113 283 3039

Leeds Met Students Union (CALM):

Anna Wallace  
Email: a.wallace@leedsmet.ac.uk  
Tel: 0113 209 8415

The End of Your Tenancy

In the last few weeks of your tenancy we will write to you setting out the arrangements for leaving the property and returning the keys.

Handing Back Keys at the End of Your Tenancy

You can return keys in person or by post and we must receive them on or before the last day of your tenancy. If you send them by post, ensure you use a padded envelope and that they are sent via recorded delivery. If your keys get lost in the post or Unipol receive an empty envelope, you will be charged for a replacement key.

Your property will be inspected once you have left the property. Unipol staff will keep notes of the inspection and it may be necessary to take photographs if the property has not been left in a fit state.

Deposits

When you signed your tenancy agreement, you paid a deposit to cover any damage to the property and/or any other breaches of the contract. As part of the implementation of the Housing Act, deposits levied on Assured Shorthold Tenancies must be protected.

This means your deposit will be protected by an insurance scheme (where Unipol keep your money until the end of your tenancy but if it is not returned you can claim it back from an insurance company).



The deadline by which your deposit must be returned or we must tell you why we are withholding it, is 14 days after the end of your tenancy.

The protection schemes will have a deadline by which your deposit must be returned.

**Deductions and Disputes – Courts v ADR**

What happens if money is deducted from your deposit? In theory, tenants should leave the property in good order and no deductions will then be necessary. Remember, a landlord has a right to charge you for damage in excess of fair wear and tear. Under the new scheme the landlord can suggest a deduction to your deposit but you must **agree** to this. If you agree, then you will get the remainder of your money back within the 10 day to 28 day timescale.

If you disagree then landlords and tenants can agree to take advantage of an independent **alternative dispute resolution (ADR) service** who will accept evidence from both the student and the landlord and then decide and that ruling will be binding and any monies due will be returned. This new system should be quick and easy and should mean that deposit deductions have to be fully justified.

If either the landlord or tenant wants to use the slower and more cumbersome Court system (this will almost always apply if the landlord is threatening court action for unpaid rent) then that is an option, but then the ADR cannot be used (because its decision has to be binding on both parties which is cannot be if a court is being asked to decide).

**Deposit Deductions**

Deductions will be made from your deposit if:

- you fail to return all keys, or fail to return them on time at the end of your tenancy
- you or your guests are responsible for damage to the property
- the property is not clean
- you have left rubbish
- there is any amount still owing on energy charges (in some developments)
- you owe any money to Unipol (including administration charges made if you have paid your rent late or charges that have been made for damage during the tenancy)

You will be charged if the amounts owed to Unipol is more than the deposit we are holding.

Where a joint tenancy has been signed, no tenants will receive their deposits back if any money is due on the property. Deposits will be returned only when such debts have been fully cleared.

**Damage**

Sometimes we have to charge large amounts to make good any damage that has been caused.

This is because we use professional contractors using superior quality materials than domestic to withstand heavy wear and tear. For example, if you damage your carpet you will be charged for the full cost of replacing it as it is not possible to ‘patch carpets’. The carpet will be replaced with quality carpet that has to withstand more than domestic wear and tear will therefore be more expensive than domestic versions.

**Communal Areas**

As some areas in properties are held communally, vandalism or damage may occur where it is not clear which individual is responsible. Wherever possible, we will always try and find out who has caused the damage so they can be billed directly. Sometimes, we may need help from other residents to discover who has caused damage.

In some circumstances it may not be possible to identify who has caused the damage and in these cases we will have to re-charge the costs of repair or replacement to all the tenants who have access to the communal facilities. Where communal areas are left in an unsanitary or unhygienic condition, we will employ professional cleaners and re-charge the cost to the tenants in the same way.

When a dispute arises over responsibility for communal areas, Unipol can help, but don’t leave it until the end of the tenancy before asking our advice. At that stage it will be too late for us to intervene and all tenants will be charged equally.



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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <h3>Cleaning</h3> <p>If the property was not clean when you moved in and you did not tell us so that we could put it right, you cannot leave it dirty. We will still expect you to leave it clean and will charge you if it is not.</p> <p>If you are the last tenant in the property and everyone has left the cleaning to you, we can sympathise but we cannot become involved in this. Always try to sort out who will do what before everyone moves out. Remember, you may be able to claim on your insurance policy for any accidental damage.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                               | <h3>Meters</h3> <p>Don't forget to take final meter readings and contact your energy suppliers to close your accounts. You may need to give them a forwarding address so they can send you the final bill.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                                               | <h3>Waste Disposal</h3> <p>If you have a lot of rubbish at the end of your tenancy the usual refuse collectors may refuse to take it.</p> <p>The nearest Household Waste Sorting Site to student accommodation is located on <b>Meanwood Road, LS7 2LP</b>, close to Sugarwell Halls. The site is open 7 days a week from 9am to 4pm.</p> <p>You can call them on <b>0113 262 1106</b>.</p> <p>Where possible, rubbish should be sorted into the usual categories for recycling – paper, cardboard, glass, plastics, wood or metal.</p> <p>Useful information can also be found via the Leeds City Council website, 'www.leeds.gov.uk'.</p> <p>The section under 'living' has links to the 'bulky items collection form' and to a list of charity shops.</p> <p>Sometimes your students' union will make special arrangements for skips around the time of the end of tenancy – keep an eye out for any information about this.</p> | <h3>Complaints</h3> <p>Unipol is responsive to the needs of users of our service and welcomes comments and complaints as a means of improving services. We won't necessarily be able to change the things in the way that you would like or always meet your needs but we will always be able to give you an explanation of why we do what we do. Unipol will always be professional and courteous in dealing with complaints and we will try to be as quick as we can in responding to you.</p> <h4>First</h4> <p>If you have a complaint, in the first instance please discuss this with the member of staff who is working with you to try and resolve the matter. In this instance the complaint can either be verbal (but polite) or written.</p> <h4>Second</h4> <p>If you are unhappy about a response you receive, or the complaint is actually about the member of staff involved or if you feel that the complaint warrants further investigation then you must complain in writing to the member of staff who has managerial responsibility for the area or service that you are complaining about.</p> <p>These staff are:</p> <p><b>Accommodation Bureau Operations</b></p> <p><b>Ms Nicola Brown, Accommodation Bureau Services Team Leader</b></p> <p><b>Housing Management Operations (excepting deposits)</b></p> <p><b>Mrs Geneve Smith, Housing Services Manager</b></p> |
|                                                                               | <h3>Post</h3> <p>Unipol takes no responsibility for forwarding or redirecting mail in any circumstances. The Royal Mail offers a service for redirecting mail (details are available from any Post Office). If you do choose to make use of this service we advise you to let the Royal Mail know your new address as</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>Housing Management Operations: Deposits Only</b></p> <p><b>Ms Liz Hodgen, Assistant Chief Executive – Operations</b></p> <p><b>Code of Standards and the Large Student Developments Codes</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Mr Simon Kemp, Code of Standards Administrator and National Code Administrator

IT Services

Mr Mark Knott, Information and Communications Technology Officer

Finance

Ms Fiona Barry, Financial Controller



Hopefully they will be able to resolve the issue at that level.

Your letter should contain a clear statement of your concerns, including any supporting documentation and should explain how you think your complaint could be best resolved.

If you are unsure who you should write to you can send the complaint to:  
The Delivery Officer for the Chief Executive, who will ensure that it is given to the correct member of staff for action.

Third

If you feel that the complaint has not been resolved by the above managers, or if your complaint is about them, then you can complain to Mr Martin J Blakey, Chief Executive. Your complaint must be in writing. There is no further complaints mechanism. If your complaint is specifically about the Chief Executive, then you can complain to, The Chair, Unipol Student Homes, and this should be sent c/o the Chief Executive who will ensure that it is passed to the Chair.

Timescales

Unipol aims to provide a response to your complaint within 14 days of receiving your letter although in complex cases this may take longer and we will endeavour to keep you notified of progress and reasons for delay.

Where a complaint is received a long while after an incident has taken place, Unipol will aim to resolve this in less time than it took you to complain.

If you write to the Chair, there are no time limits for responses.

Who Can Complain

- Those who are directly using the Unipol service:
- Current students
- Tenants and ex-tenants
- Registered landlords (within the last three years)

Parents/Guardians of tenants if they have written permission from the tenant which must be supplied at the time of raising the complaint.

Neighbours who live within 200 metres of a Unipol complex.

Writing to Us

Write to the relevant member of staff at:

Unipol Student Homes  
155/157 Woodhouse Lane  
Leeds LS2 3ED

If the complaint is about a member of staff the envelope should be marked "**Private and Confidential**" to avoid the envelope being opened by the general mail operative.

- E-Mail addresses of managerial staff:
- n.brown@unipol.org.uk
  - g.smith@unipol.org.uk
  - l.hodgen@unipol.org.uk
  - s.kemp@unipol.org.uk
  - m.knott@unipol.org.uk
  - f.barry@unipol.org.uk





E-Mail address of the Delivery Officer to the Chief Executive:

**anne-marie.watkinson@unipol.org.uk**

E-Mail address of the Chief Executive

**m.blakey@unipol.org.uk**

**What Happens Next**

In dealing with a complaint the following action can be taken:

To uphold the complaint (and take action accordingly)

To dismiss the complaint where it is judged there is no action that Unipol can take to resolve the matter or where there is deemed to be no case to answer or that the complaint is trivial, malicious or vexatious.

**The Complaints Procedure Cannot Be Used For:**

Matters where the courts have already become involved

Matters where police action is pending or a criminal charge has been laid.

**Policy Against Discrimination**

Unipol operates an active policy against discrimination and takes action against anyone who attempts to discriminate against students or fellow tenants on grounds of sex, sexuality, race, creed or colour.

Registered in England and Wales No. 3401440. Registered Charity No. 1063492.





THE END. #



# USEFUL NUMBERS

Unipol 0113 243 0169  
Police 0845 606 0606  
Leeds City Council Refuse Collection 0845 124 0113  
Leeds City Council Noise Nuisance Hotline 0113 240 7361  
TV Licensing 0870 241 6468  
Neighbourhood Dispute Service 0113 242 4110  
British Telecom 0800 800 123  
Yorkshire Water 0845 124 2424  
National Grid UK Meter helpline 0870 608 1524  
Energywatch 0845 906 0708  
Council Tax 0113 398 4730

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In the event of an emergency at any time contact Unipol immediately in person or by calling (0113) 243 0169

During out of office hours, please have a pen ready as you will be given another number to call.

