



unipol housing
TENANT'S HANDBOOK






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Please read your Tenants Handbook carefully. Not only does it explain how Unipol manages its properties and how to deal with any problems that may occur, 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 practises in relation to the enforcement of these terms.

The logo for Unipol, featuring the word 'unipol' in a lowercase, rounded, sans-serif font. The letters are white with a subtle drop shadow, giving them a three-dimensional appearance as if they are floating or attached to a surface. The background is a plain, light color.A black and white photograph of two men standing in front of a brick wall. The man on the left is wearing a dark polo shirt and is pointing his right index finger upwards. The man on the right is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and is pointing both his right and left index fingers upwards. They appear to be in conversation or looking at something off-camera.

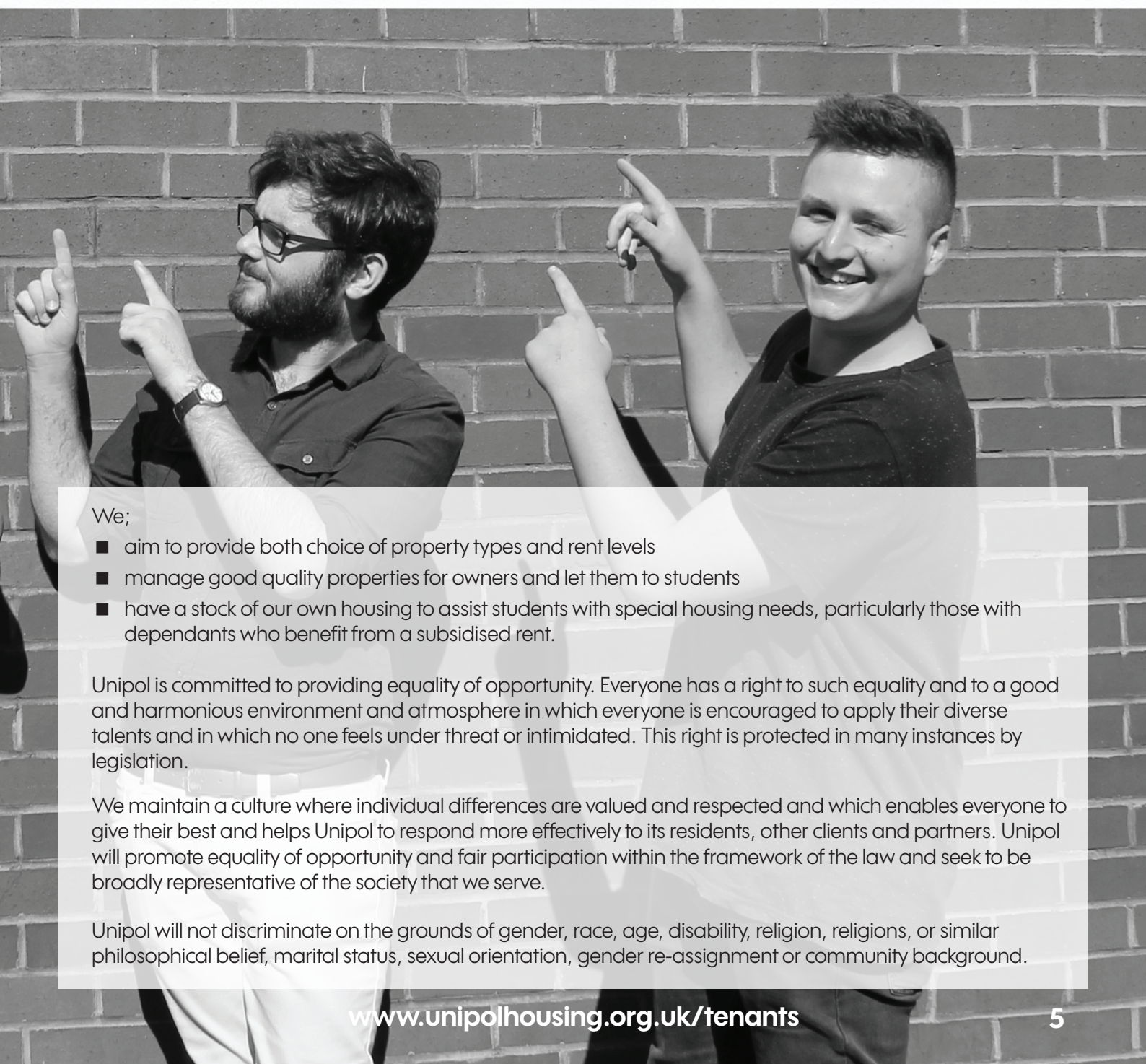
WELCOME TO UNIPOL

We really hope you enjoy living in a Unipol property and wish you to think of our accommodation as your home.

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 are 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 are 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.

pool



We;

- aim to provide both choice of property types and rent levels
- manage good quality properties for owners and let them to students
- have a stock of our own housing to assist students with special housing needs, particularly those with dependants who benefit from a subsidised rent.

Unipol is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Everyone has a right to such equality and to a good and harmonious environment and atmosphere in which everyone is encouraged to apply their diverse talents and in which no one feels under threat or intimidated. This right is protected in many instances by legislation.

We maintain a culture where individual differences are valued and respected and which enables everyone to give their best and helps Unipol to respond more effectively to its residents, other clients and partners. Unipol will promote equality of opportunity and fair participation within the framework of the law and seek to be broadly representative of the society that we serve.

Unipol will not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, age, disability, religion, religions, or similar philosophical belief, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment or community background.

THE STAFF

These are some of the staff you are likely to come in to contact with;

HOUSING MANAGEMENT OFFICER

This is the member of staff with overall responsibility for your accommodation and tenancy. You will be informed who they are when you collect your keys and in large developments, their picture and details are displayed as part of the National Code for Large 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.

TENANCY SUPPORT OFFICER

They are 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 that you are having first and you can ask the Tenancy Support Officer for further information which may help you to deal with the problem you are experiencing.

RESIDENTS ASSISTANTS

At a number of large developments we have part-time student Residents Assistants who are available at set times to help with the running of the building. They often staff the on-site receptions and do valuable daily tasks inside and within the grounds of the building.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSISTANTS

A small team of part-time student Housing Management Assistants support the Housing team, including reading meters, carrying out minor repairs and helping with lettings and marketing.

FINANCE TEAM

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



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MOVING IN

COLLECTING KEYS

You will be provided with a set of keys (2 sets for a family) once you have;

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

You can collect your key from the Unipol office during normal office opening hours unless you have been given alternative arrangements.

At the beginning of the academic year the office is open for longer periods during the week and at weekends, and sometimes key collection happens on site at some of the large developments

visit www.unipolhousing.org.uk/moving-in for opening hours.

When you come in to collect your key you must bring photo ID to prove that you are the person on the tenancy agreement. If someone is collecting the key on your behalf, then we should have received something in advance giving your permission to release the keys.

Burglar alarm

Check the burglar alarm instructions before you go in to the house for the first time so you have the number to hand. It is normal to just tap in the code to unset and again to set as you leave the property.

Condition of the property when you move in

If you are not happy with the property let us know now. 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 via email to repairs@unipol.org.uk so they have something in writing from you. Your Housing Management Officer is likely to visit to see what the issue is and will arrange to put things right. If it is an emergency then phone Unipol.

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 resolve. We are less likely to accept that 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.

Check if you need to register your details with utility suppliers

Remember to read the meters the day you move into the property. See the energy section on page 20 for more information and advice regarding gas, electric and water bills.

Inform others of your change of address

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

LIVING IN THE PROPERTY



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 at least two months before your tenancy is due to end with information about how to leave the property. If you are staying for a further term and have already signed a new agreement, this notice simply moves you on to the new agreement.

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

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR

- Replacing normal light bulbs (Unipol replace fluorescent tubes or sealed light units)
- Unblocking sinks and drains (try a domestic drain unblocker commonly available from supermarkets before reporting the problem to Unipol)
- The cost of replacing broken windows (unless caused by vandalism that has been reported to the police)
- Resetting trip switches
- Re-lighting pilot lights and repressurising boilers
- Bleeding radiators
- Ensuring external drains are clear of debris



REPAIR TIMESCALES

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 to a third party.

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

The repairs categories are;

Priority 1 - Emergency Repairs

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

Example – gas leak, fire, flood, only toilet not working. 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. Example – no hot water, no heating, washing machine not working
Target 5 working days from becoming aware of the defect.

Priority 3 – Non urgent day to day

These are repairs which can wait a short time before they are dealt with. Example – broken drawer, vacuum cleaner not working, painting
Target twenty eight days from becoming aware of defect

Priority 4 – Planned programmes of work

Non urgent jobs in related trades are packaged together. Target 3 months from becoming aware of the programme of work being necessary and one year for large programmes of works.

HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

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

BY PHONE

Leeds: 0113 243 0169

Bradford: 01274 235 899

Nottingham: 0115 934 5020

AT THE UNIPOL OFFICE

Call in to the Housing Hub during normal office hours and fill in a repair request form. You will be given a copy of the repair report.

ONLINE

Visit our website www.unipolhousing.org.uk and fill in a repair report form or send an email message to repairs@unipol.leeds.ac.uk. This method should not be used for emergency repairs.

Describe the damage or problem as fully as you can to help us make the repair as effective as possible. Please always describe the location as if you are standing 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 the 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, contact Unipol immediately in person or by telephone on 0113 2430169.

Emergencies outside of office hours 0113 2443799

If you report an emergency repair outside of office hours, you must report it again to us during the next normal office opening to ensure that the Housing Team are fully aware of what has happened.

Where the out-of-hours service is used improperly or without our knowledge we may charge you for the cost of this.

BURGLARY OR VANDALISM

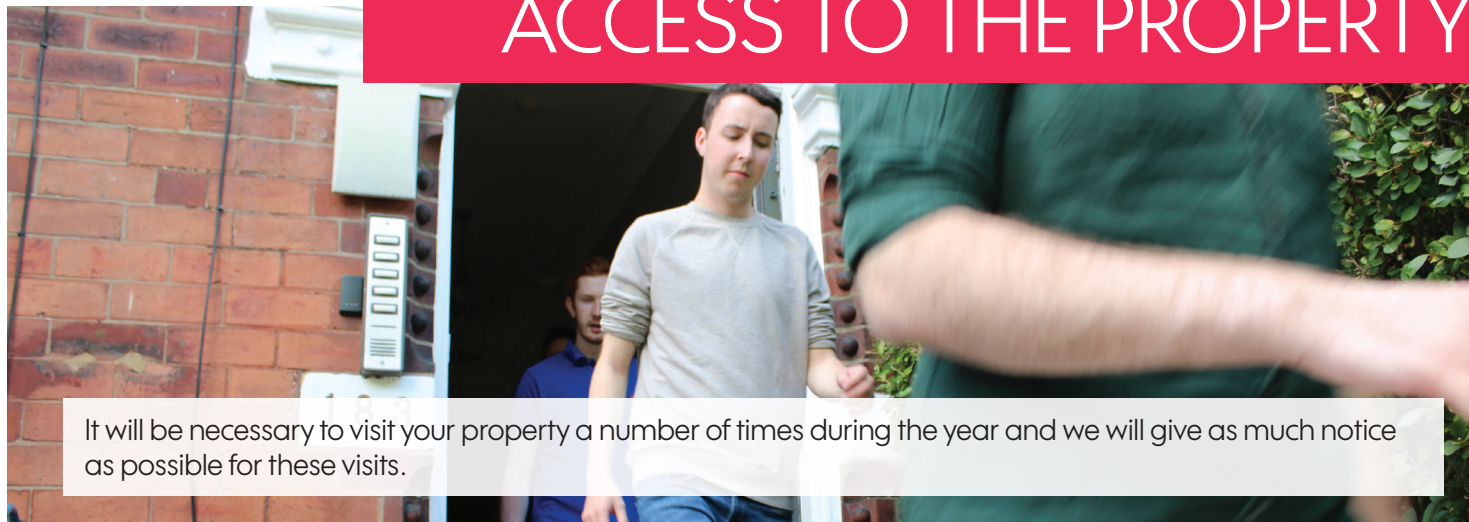
In the case of burglary or vandalism, this must be reported to the Police and an incident form filled in with the crime reference number, otherwise you will be charged for the work needed.

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 re-done, you will be charged for this as well.

EXTERNAL REPAIRS

If you notice any disrepair or damage in the grounds of your property, then this can also be reported to Unipol using repairs@unipol.org.uk. This could be anything from damaged guttering, slipped slates, poor planting or issues of security.

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.

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 can access your accommodation without notice.

VIEWINGS

If you do not plan to stay a further term after your tenancy ends, then Unipol will ask permission to do viewings on your property to secure future tenants.

PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

Unipol will inspect your property a few times a year (families annually), but if there are any problems it may be inspected 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.

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 may be charged to cover the cost of staff time.

If appropriate, the Housing Management Officer may ask for the property to be professionally cleaned and the cost of the clean to be passed on to the occupants.

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.



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 on their quality of life.

There are many ways you can help to become 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, 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.

If you live in a flat and need to wash a lot of clothing, make sure the machine is not used late at night or left on over night to avoid disturbing your neighbours. This is a common cause for complaint amongst tenants living in flats.

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 system works and use it well. If you have a garden or even just a yard, keep it tidy and clear of litter. Do your bit to keep the street clean and your bin tidy.

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 to the local council. 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 your Student Union.



SMOKING

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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. All public areas and Unipol's offices will be smoke free. Guests and visitors to your property must comply with the relevant policy.

SMOKING IN UNIPOL PROPERTIES

- Tenants who are allocated rooms by a university or college are not permitted to smoke anywhere within their property.
- Certain flats can be designated as 'smoking flats' by the Tenancy Support Officer as part of Unipol's enforcement action, to assist smokers and non-smokers to live apart. In designated 'smoking flats', smoking is only permitted in bedrooms with the door closed. Smoking is not permitted in kitchens/living rooms, corridors or shared toilets or bath/shower rooms ie Smoking is not permitted in any shared communal areas
- Tenants who were not allocated their room by a University or College but who have signed up to an individually let dwelling, and their guests, will only be permitted to smoke in bedrooms with the door closed. Smoking is not permitted in kitchens/living rooms, corridors or shared toilets or bath/shower rooms in individually let dwellings.
- Where tenants have signed a joint contract with others for a property, or who live in a self-contained property, the law does not apply and smoking is permitted.

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 result in eviction.
- If you know that Unipol staff or contractors are to visit your property we politely ask that you stop smoking at least an hour before they come and for the entirety of their visit so they are not exposed to secondary smoke.

E-CIGARETTES

Out of consideration for others, smokers of e-cigarettes are requested to restrict their use in public areas (as defined under the smoke free policy).

TROUBLE SHOOTING COMMON PROBLEMS

INSTRUCTION MANUALS

If you are unsure how the appliances in your property work, you can find out more in the Unipol Tenants Services and Appliances section of our website www.unipolhousing.org.uk If you have an appliance that is not featured in this section, please inform your Housing Management Officer and we will endeavour to find the instruction manual for you.

REPLACEMENT KEYS

If you lose a key, Unipol charge £30 for a replacement and £15 for an electronic fob. This is to cover the cost of replacing suited and security keys and for ordering more stock. If we need to replace the actual lock the cost is considerably higher. If you temporarily misplace your key/fob, you may borrow one from Unipol for up to one week. If they are not returned to Unipol within this time, the full replacement charge will be made. No refunds can be given if the original key/fob is found after one week. If your key is stolen you must report it to the Police and let us have the crime reference number

LOSS OF ELECTRICITY

Most Unipol properties are fitted with 'trip switches' that will automatically turn off the electricity if there is a fault. This could be if a light bulb blows or if there is a faulty appliance in use. These devices are very safe and sensitive. Quite often it can be a faulty appliance like a kettle, hairdryer or washing machine and sometimes you will find lights working but the sockets are not (or vice versa).

It is often a process of elimination to find the cause of the tripped electricity and you should unplug or turn off all your appliances or remove any 'popped' light bulb before trying to reset the tripped switch.

You will need to find the consumer unit (trip switches) Before trying to put the tripped switch back in the 'on' position, turn off the main switch for the whole supply. Once done, you should switch the tripped switch back on (you may have to push it down to the off position

first before pushing it back to on) Finally turn on the main switch. If this doesn't work or the supply keeps going off, please contact Unipol.

If all the electricity to your house has gone then it may be a supply problem and you should contact your provider to report the fault.

CONDENSATION

Condensation is caused when excess moisture in the air meets a cold surface (i.e. window or external wall) or a surface that gets little air behind furniture. 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 reduce the build up of condensation and mould as well as saving energy by following these simple tips;

- Cover pans when boiling
- Close the kitchen door when cooking and always use the extractor fan
- Dry your washing outside or in tumble dryer. Try not to use a radiator to dry your clothes
- Regularly ventilate the house by opening the windows slightly when you are in.
- Use the extractor fan in the bathroom every time you bath/shower and open the window if there is one.
- Close the bathroom door during and after bathing/showering
- Move furniture slightly away from the walls which are affected
- Do not block air vents as they are there for a good reason.

These tips will prevent any cold areas where condensation is more likely to form and will reduce the moisture in the air which leads to mould. If you think you have mould or damp in your property which is not caused by condensation i.e. leaking roof, damaged guttering or old damp proofing then contact your Housing Management Officer.

SMOKE DETECTORS, FIRE ALARMS & FIRE DOORS

If your property has a mains operated fire alarm system 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.

A fire blanket is fitted in your property for your safety. The fire equipment in your property will be checked regularly. If you have a fire in your property and you use the fire equipment, please tell Unipol immediately about the incident.

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.

Tampering with any fire alarm equipment 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.

BLOCKED DRAINS

The most common causes of blocked drains are food being washed down the kitchen sink rather than cleared off plates in to the bin, or hair and soap residue collecting in baths/sink 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 un-blocker (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 or soap residue, we may pass the costs on to you.

BURGLARY

If you are burgled you should take the following action;

- Report the matter to the Police – it is vital that you get a crime reference number and pass it to Unipol. Without a crime reference number it will be impossible to get insurance companies to pay out on any damage for which you may be liable.
- Out of office hours, phone Unipol on 0113 244 3799 and report the burglary. Let us know if the property needs securing.
- Fill in a Unipol incident form during normal office hours.

GAS LEAKS

In the event of a Gas leak (smell of gas or suspect Carbon Monoxide leak) Report immediately to Unipol during office hours on **0113 243 0169** or out of hours **0113 244 3799**

You are advised to;

- Open doors and windows
- Turn the gas off at the meter/main stop tap
- Avoid using any naked flames or electrical switches

The National Gas Emergency Service can be called to attend on 0800 111 999 to turn off the gas. They aim to attend within 2 hours. Their engineers will always 'make safe' when called to a suspected gas leak. However, the emergency service provided by them doesn't cover repairs to appliances or installation pipework so you still need to report the incident to Unipol so we can deploy a Gas Safe registered engineer.

DURING OFFICE HOURS YOU CAN PHONE;

Leeds 0113 243 0169

Bradford 01274 235 899

Nottingham 0115 934 5020

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES



CLEANING

A PROPERTY MUST BE CLEANED REGULARLY AND 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 then check all the pipes for blockages before reporting it to us as a fault. Bottle tops and coins are commonly the cause for loss of suction.

COOKER

You must clean the cooker regularly as negligence in this area can be very costly to rectify. A heavy build up of grease and burnt on food can cause fires as well as be difficult to clean.

FRIDGE & FREEZER

You need to defrost the freezer regularly to prevent damage to it. You will be charged for a replacement product if you let ice build up badly which in turn stops the machine from working. You must leave the fridge door open if you switch it off for any reason, otherwise the inside will rapidly go mouldy and this leaves a very unpleasant smell.

BATHROOM AND KITCHEN WORK SURFACES

Must be kept clean as these are the areas where germs spread easily. In shared living it is especially important

as people have differing tolerances to bacteria and it is not uncommon for students to suffer from illnesses because of poor living standards. Toilets need to be cleaned with toilet cleaner and work surfaces and sinks need cleaning with household cleaning products.

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 will not chemically clean up, then it may need replacing and this is an expensive option.

PAINTWORK

You must wipe down all the gloss paintwork if not during the tenancy, then at the end.

CELLARS

If you have a cellar in your property you do not pay rent to use it unless it is specially converted. Cellars in all houses are damp if they have not been converted and therefore anything you store in it will get mouldy. Unipol have the right to dispose of any items left in a cellar and the right to charge you for the cost of removal if items

BATHROOM AND SHOWERS

The most common cause of structural damage to 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 rectify this sort of damage. You can avoid the trouble and cost by following a couple of simple precautions

- Never use a shower apparatus which fits directly on to bath taps - these spray water on to the floor or nearby un-tiled walls
- Never use a shower without a shower curtain and make sure that when you do use a curtain you tuck it in to the shower base or bath. If the shower is fitted with a shower door keep it closed when in the shower.
- 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.

HEATING SYSTEMS

Most Unipol 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. Whenever possible we will provide instructions on how to use these appliances. Follow the instructions carefully particularly when starting up the pilot light and turning the system on.

You should not report the appliance as broken just because you do not know how to work it. There are a number of things you can check which include timer clock, hot water only, pressure gauge and thermostat to see if the problem with operation is here. 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. You must not change any lock or use a lock 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 they do not impair your 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. Any locks fitted inexpertly will weaken or damage a door and this usually means that the door will have to be replaced at your expense.

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 a cellar or garage. 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. This usually applies to all soft furnishing. You must not fix shelves or make any other alterations to the property.

PAINTING AND DECORATING

You are not allowed to redecorate. You may put up posters on walls with blu tac or some similar adhesive. However, you must remove all posters and traces of blue tac at the end of the letting. If any grease marks are left you must make sure that these are eradicated by cleaning.

FIRE EQUIPMENT

Fire fighting equipment is fitted in your property for your safety. Extinguishers or blankets that have been discharged or tampered with will be replaced or repaired and any cost incurred will be passed on to tenants immediately.

CCTV

A number of Unipol developments are fitted with CCTV cameras for the safety of tenants and also to help with the day to day management of the building. When CCTV is present on site, a sign will be displayed clearly.

SATELLITES

In some of the developments we have installed satellite television systems which will distribute digital satellite signals to your flat. You are not permitted to install any other aerials or satellite dishes to the property. This includes radio masts and television aerials. If you report a repair with the satellite equipment which turns out to be caused by your receiving equipment the cost of the callout will be passed on to you.

PLAYGROUNDS (Family Developments only)

Family tenants should report any damage or disrepair that you notice in the same way you would report a repair in your property. Where a playground is provided, an annual safety check is carried out.

VACATIONS

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

- Make sure all door and windows are securely shut and all locks are used
- Leave a light on in a room to deter burglars. Lights on timer switches give the impression that the property is occupied.
- Use your burglar alarm if you have one
- Take valuables home with you, or make sure they cannot easily be seen through windows
- Empty the fridge and clean it out (leave the door open if turned off)
- Empty the bin
- If cold weather is expected, leave on the heating but turn the thermostat down to around 10 degrees to prevent frozen pipes.

MONEY MATTERS

DEPOSIT PAYMENTS

Unipol will protect your deposit payment in a government approved scheme known as the Tenancy Deposit Scheme (TDS). This means that your deposit payment is secure and will be returned promptly at the end of your tenancy (less any necessary deductions) TDS will assist if there are any disputes between Unipol and yourself in relation to deductions from your deposit. You will receive full details about the scheme and how Unipol use it to protect your deposit when you sign your tenancy agreement.

RENT PAYMENTS

Your contract states the dates that you must pay your rent, together with the amounts due on those days. Unipol expects its tenants to pay their rent on time. Always check your bank account to ensure a rent payment has been made correctly.

IF YOU PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT

Direct Debit is Unipol's preferred method of payment. It is an instruction from you the tenant to your bank to pay Unipol a specified amount on specific days. The amount is then sent from your bank to Unipol for the agreed amount.

Please ensure that you have sufficient funds available on the due dates. If a payment needs cancelling for any reason, then you need to contact Unipol no less than 5 working days before the payment date. If there is not enough money in your account on the payment date,

LATE PAYMENT FEES

Your Tenancy is in danger if you do not pay your rent on time and Unipol reserve the right to evict anyone owing a significant amount of rent to us. Eviction from our property may affect your ability to rent property in the future. 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 are experiencing financial hardship then you should also contact the relevant organisation at your Higher Institution for further help as a matter of urgency.



then your bank may decide not to forward the payments to Unipol. If this happens, you will have to contact Unipol to ask us to process the payment again or pay the amount due by alternative method.

IF YOU PAY BY DEBIT CARD OR CREDIT CARD VIA WORLDPAY

Please ensure that you have set up the payment correctly and that you have sufficient money in your account. If a payment needs cancelling for any reason then you need to instruct WorldPay not to make the payment before the payment date.

If you are aware that your bank has not made a payment then you need to check with your bank and find out why. You then need to contact the finance team at Unipol to arrange payment by an alternative method. If a payment is made in error to Unipol, due to banking time delays a refund will take 7 to 10 working days to action.

- A charge of £30.00 will be made if your rent is not paid on the due date
- A charge of £15 for each letter we write to you chasing any arrears o your account
- A charge of £10 for each payment that is rejected by your bank (ie bounced cheques)
- If you remain in arrears, Unipol will send a solicitors letter and a further charge to cover the cost of this will be passed on.
- Ultimately Unipol will obtain a County Court judgement against you. This can affect your credit rating and cause you difficulties in the future when you want to obtain credit cards, bank loans and mortgages.

INSURANCE

Unipol has arranged Tenants Personal Possessions Insurance through Endsleigh, a widely recognised provider of student insurance. The structure of the property is insured either by Unipol or by the owner of the property.

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

You must check that the insurance provided by Unipol is adequate for your personal belongings especially if you have something of particular value. You have the option of upgrading the level of cover to ensure your possessions are insured.

www.endsleigh.co.uk/reviewcover

PAYING UTILITY BILLS

If your energy bills are not included in the money you pay to Unipol, you must contact the gas, electricity and water supply companies to put the bills in to your name and to provide up to date meter readings when you move in.

Read the meters at the start of your tenancy and at regular intervals during your tenancy to avoid problems with supply and bill payment. If you see a bill addressed to 'The Occupier' open it and follow the instructions below. If the bill is addressed to the previous occupants, you still need to do the following, Unipol will not do this for you.

1. Ring the company directly
2. Tell them you are the new occupier/s
3. Register the bill into your name/s (In a shared house, avoid putting the bills in one person's name as only this tenant will be liable for the full cost. Bills should always be split equally amongst the number of tenants in the property)
4. Give the meter reading you have taken for that day and 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 and electric providers they may 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 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 and 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 and each property will have separate meters for gas and electricity so you do need to take 2 readings. You may be receiving both gas and electricity from one company or have separate supplier for each. If your meters are located outside your property you may need to buy a meter key (from a hardware store) to gain access.

You can find out your gas and electricity supply by calling;

- **Gas:** National Grid - 0870 608 1524
- **Electricity (Yorkshire):** Northern Powergrid - 0800 375 877
- **Electricity (East Midlands):** Western Power Distribution - 0845 603 0618

ENERGY SUPPLEMENTS AND FULLY INCLUSIVE TENANCIES

In some accommodation, Unipol charges tenants directly in the form of an energy supplement. Where this applies it will be indicated in the tenancy agreement. We carry out the meter readings at the beginning and end of the tenancy and at the end of

INCLUSIVES AND ENERGY BILLS

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, you will be invoiced for the outstanding amount. Similarly, if you use less energy than you have paid for you will receive a refund at the end of the tenancy.

HEATING YOUR PROPERTY

Bear in mind that gas and electricity charges are rapidly increasing and you should take this into account when budgeting for 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. Shop around with energy supplies to find yourself a good deal.

WATER CHARGES

Some tenants are required to pay water charges direct to the supplier; others are not. Your obligation to pay a water charge 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 the local water company and they have a standard charge for your property. You normally do not have to read a meter for this supply. A small number of properties are fitted with water meters. Your Housing Management Officer can advise you if you need to take meter readings

1. Ring the local water company directly
2. Tell them that you are the new occupier/s
3. Register the bill in to your name/s

WIFI & LANDLINE TELEPHONE

If internet/wifi is not included in your tenancy, it is important to sign up to a contract to get a service using the telephone point in the property. It is not

possible to install wifi using a cable company if the wiring is not already pre-existing in the property.

COUNCIL TAX

Council tax is the charge made by the local authority 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 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.

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 degree could cut your heating bills by 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 waste 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 dryers and dishwashers always aim for a full load if you can't use a half load program 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 in to a tumble dryer will save you money and they dry faster.



LEAVING YOUR PROPERTY EARLY

Your contract with Unipol is for a fixed period. You have signed a legally binding Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement and made a commitment to pay rent to Unipol for that fixed period. Unipol is under no obligation to release you from your tenancy agreement early.

If you decide you want to leave your tenancy before the end of your contract period, 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.

If you have made the decision to drop off your course at University and are leaving the city, Unipol are under no obligation to release you from your contract. Your tenancy agreement remains in place and the information about finding a replacement still applies.

If you are not happy with your accommodation you may think that moving out is the only option. We would like to help where we can and would encourage you to discuss your situation with 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. You simply cannot walk away from your contract with Unipol. A delay in contacting Unipol to discuss your situation will result in you having to pay more rent.

FINDING A REPLACEMENT

Unipol can advertise your property on the Unipol website - just ask your Housing Management Officer. Our website also contains a student to student notice board where you can place messages and respond to others looking for rooms and social media can be useful in promoting the vacancy. If you live in shared accommodation, 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 £50.00 administrative fee for dealing with the extra paperwork involved.

Family tenants - if your circumstances change and you wish to leave your property, contact your Housing Management Officer for more information as we may be able to find a new family to take over the tenancy.



TENANCY RELEASE

You may be severely affected by a life event that means you have to leave University and your accommodation. In a situation of this nature you may ask that you be released from your tenancy agreement and this will be considered by the Tenancy Release Group. They will make a decision about whether Unipol will release you from the agreement and future rent payments. You should remember that neither Unipol nor the group are obliged to release you from your tenancy agreement regardless of your circumstances and for that reason the decision of the tenancy release group is final. There is no appeal beyond this group.

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION

- Death of a tenant - the tenancy would cease on the date of death.
- Tenant involved in an incident which resulted in the tenant being in a coma.
- Illness of a tenant which necessitated the tenant leaving their University course and leaving the city to undergo a course of treatment.
- Pregnancy of tenant where accommodation of the tenant was not suitable and where there was no other appropriate accommodation available from Unipol.
- Illness of a close family member where there was no-one else in the family able to look after that family member or other dependants which resulted in the tenant having to give up their course.

APPLYING TO THE TENANCY RELEASE GROUP

The request for release must be in writing, addressed to Christina Rygalska (Director of Finance) at Unipol and must clearly state;

- Your name
- The full address at which you are the tenant
- A correspondence address if different from the tenancy address
- A contact telephone number
- Your University/College and year of study
- Your reasons for wanting to be released from your tenancy
- Any supporting evidence from doctors, the university or other professional parties to verify your circumstances.

HOW THE RELEASE GROUP WORKS

The Tenancy Release Group consists of representative nominated by the Unipol Board including members from The University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University and their respective Student Unions.

The Tenancy Release Group meets every month during term time and any decision taken by the group will be conveyed to all concerned parties in

writing within 5 working days of the meeting taking place. More details about the tenancy release group can be found on the Unipol website

Release will not normally be granted on a joint tenancy.

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

MOVING OUT

In the last 2 months of your tenancy we will write to you setting out the arrangement 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 £30.00 for a replacement key and £15.00 for a fob

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

DEPOSITS

When you sign your tenancy agreement you pay 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 will 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 where practicable, 10 working days after the end of your tenancy. You will be charged if the amount owed to Unipol is more than the deposit we are holding.

If you are not happy with the deduction made you can write to Unipol within 20 working days (further details will be provided at the end of your tenancy about this). Please note that we can respond to queries about your deposit from third parties only if you provide written permission.

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 has not been cleaned
- You have left rubbish
- There is any amount still owing on energy charges
- You owe any money to Unipol (including administrative charges made if you have paid your rent late or charges that have been made for damage during the tenancy)

If any deduction is made from your deposit Unipol will levy an administration fee of £10.00

Where a joint tenancy has been signed, no tenants will receive their deposit 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 a carpet you will be charged for the full cost of replacing it as it is not possible to patch sections of 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's not clear which individual is responsible. Wherever possible we will try to find out who has caused the damages they can be billed directly. Sometimes we may need help from other residents to discover who caused the 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 cost 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 someway. When a dispute arises over responsibility for communal areas, Unipol can help but do not leave it to the end of the tenancy before asking our advice. At the stage it will be too late for us to intervene and all tenants will be charged.

CLEANING

If the property was not found to be clean when you moved in and you did not inform us straight away so we could put it right, you cannot leave it dirty. We will still expect you will leave it clean and will charge you if it is not. 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.

METERS

Don't forget to take final meter readings and contact your energy supplier to close your accounts. You may need to give them a forwarding address so they can send you the final bill.

WASTE DISPOSAL

If you have a lot of rubbish at the end of your tenancy the usual refuse collectors may refuse to take it. Visit your local authority website to find out your nearest Household waste sorting site. 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.

POST

Unipol takes no responsibility for forwarding or redirecting mail in any circumstances. The Royal Mail offers a service redirecting mail (details are available from the Post Office or re-direction can be done on line). If you do choose to make use of this service we advise you to let the Royal Mail know your new address as early as possible. On no account will we allow ex-tenants to enter their old property to collect mail once their tenancy has expired.

STAYING WITH UNIPOL

If you are happy in your Unipol property, why not consider renewing your tenancy agreement for your second/third year? Unipol have a large range of properties, from rooms in large developments, through small self contained flats, to larger shared houses. We will write to you before house hunting starts to give you some advice about looking for your next house. If you have been happy in your current property and want to remain with Unipol we always give our tenants the opportunity to stay with us.

COMPLAINTS

Unipol is responsive to the needs of users of our service and welcomes comments and complaint as a means of improving services. We won't necessarily be able to change 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.

1

If you have a complaint, in the first instance please discuss 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

2

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

Full contact details of the managerial staff to contact can be found here;
www.unipol.org.uk/contact/make-a-complaint

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

3

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 unless you are a non-student tenant at the time of signing your tenancy agreement or you wish to challenge a deposit deduction. In both these circumstances you can complain to an external organisation (see below). 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.

4

RIGHT OF REDRESS NON STUDENT TENANTS

If you were not a student when you signed a tenancy with Unipol and your complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved by Unipol's Complaints procedure, you are able to raise the complaint with The Property Ombudsman who would carry out their own investigation. This complaint must be made within 6 months of the final response being given by Unipol. As part of The Property Ombudsman Code of Practice, Unipol are to comply with any award or direction made by the Ombudsman, if deemed appropriate following their investigation.

The contact details for the Ombudsman are: **The Property Ombudsman, Milford House, 43-55 Milford Street, Salisbury, SP1 2BP**



TIMESCALES

Unipol will acknowledge your complaint within 3 working days and aims to provide a response to your complaint within 14 working 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.

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.

DEPOSIT DISPUTES

If after exhausting the Unipol complaints procedure in relation to your Deposit you feel that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved then you can lodge a dispute with the Dispute Service. Information about the service and the procedure and online form to lodge a dispute can be found at www.thedisputeservice.co.uk/ You will need to quote your Tenancy Deposit Scheme tenant reference number.

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.

LEEDS

155 / 157 Woodhouse
Lane
LS2 3ED
0113 205 3414
info@unipol.org.uk

BRADFORD

Richmond Building
University of Bradford
BD7 1DP
01274 235 899
info@unipol.bradford.ac.uk

NOTTINGHAM

28 Shakespeare Street
NG1 4FQ
0115 934 5020
info@nottingham.unipol.org.uk