



## Making The Onward Difference.

Our environmental and social impact.  
2022-23

# Introduction.



Bronwen Rapley, Chief Executive of Onward.

Welcome to our second report on Onward's Environmental, Social and Governance performance.

We reported against the Sustainability Reporting Standards (SRS) for the first time in 2021/22. Reporting through the SRS framework has enabled us to understand our strengths as an organisation, as well as the areas where we need to do more. It also shone a light on what makes us different. Against the backdrop of the cost-of-living crisis, our focus in the past twelve months has been supporting customers through these challenging times, whilst continuing to invest in our homes and services.

This ESG report provides examples of where we are making a positive difference, whether that's retrofitting our homes to make them warmer and more comfortable for customers, providing new homes to help people put down roots in their communities, or providing training so that our colleagues are equipped to provide an excellent service to our customers.

Whilst this report demonstrates significant progress in many areas, we know that there is more work to be done. Having started reporting on our ESG performance last year, our attention has shifted towards demonstrating year on year improvement. We are determined to accelerate our journey to becoming a *leading environmentally friendly landlord*, a key objective of our Corporate Plan. We will continue to invest in our communities and our people and strive to deliver excellent customer service.

We will be guided in this work by our core social purpose which is to make The Onward Difference. The Onward Difference is about enabling people to be their best, in homes they love and places they are proud of. This commitment underpins everything we do as a social impact business.

Structured around the SRS themes, this report sets out the progress that we have made during the last 12 months and looks ahead to what comes next. Please read on to find out more about how we are making The Onward Difference.

# Our performance at a glance.



Rents below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in **100%** of our homes\*\*



**£75.7 million** invested into improvements and repairs in our existing homes



**£6.8 million** for energy efficiency improvements to our homes



**132 homes retrofitted**, funding secured for another **828**



EPC B in **100%** of our new builds  
EPC C or above in **73.7%** of our existing homes\*



Invested over **£800k** into our communities through our Social Investment Programme



Built **308** new homes



We pay the **Real Living Wage**



**99.92%** of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard



**300** hours of volunteer time donated through Match My Project

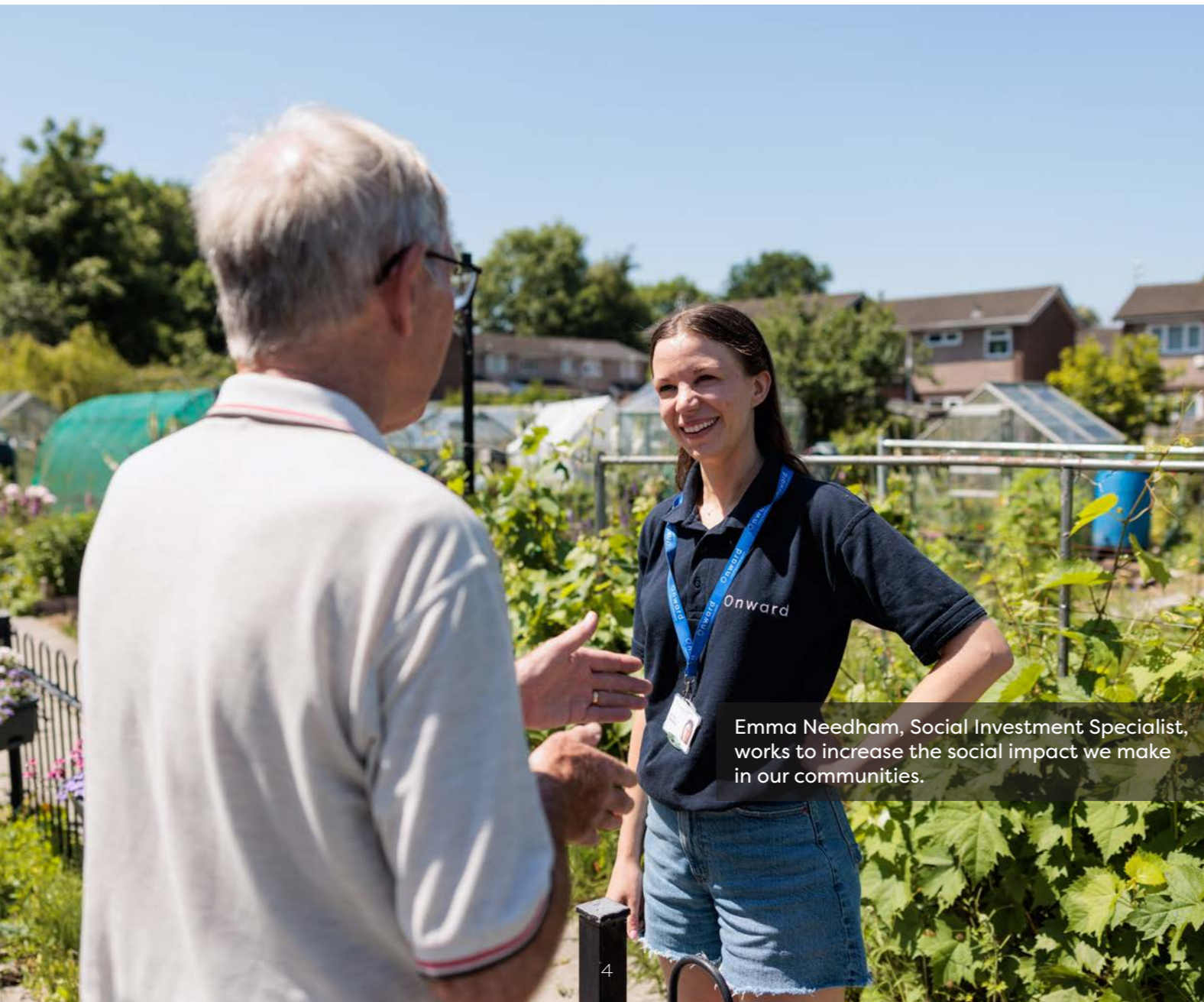


Supported **2,922** customers by generating **£2.2m** in extra income

\*Existing homes that have had an EPC assessment  
\*\* Based on the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile of local market rents

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# Our ESG journey.

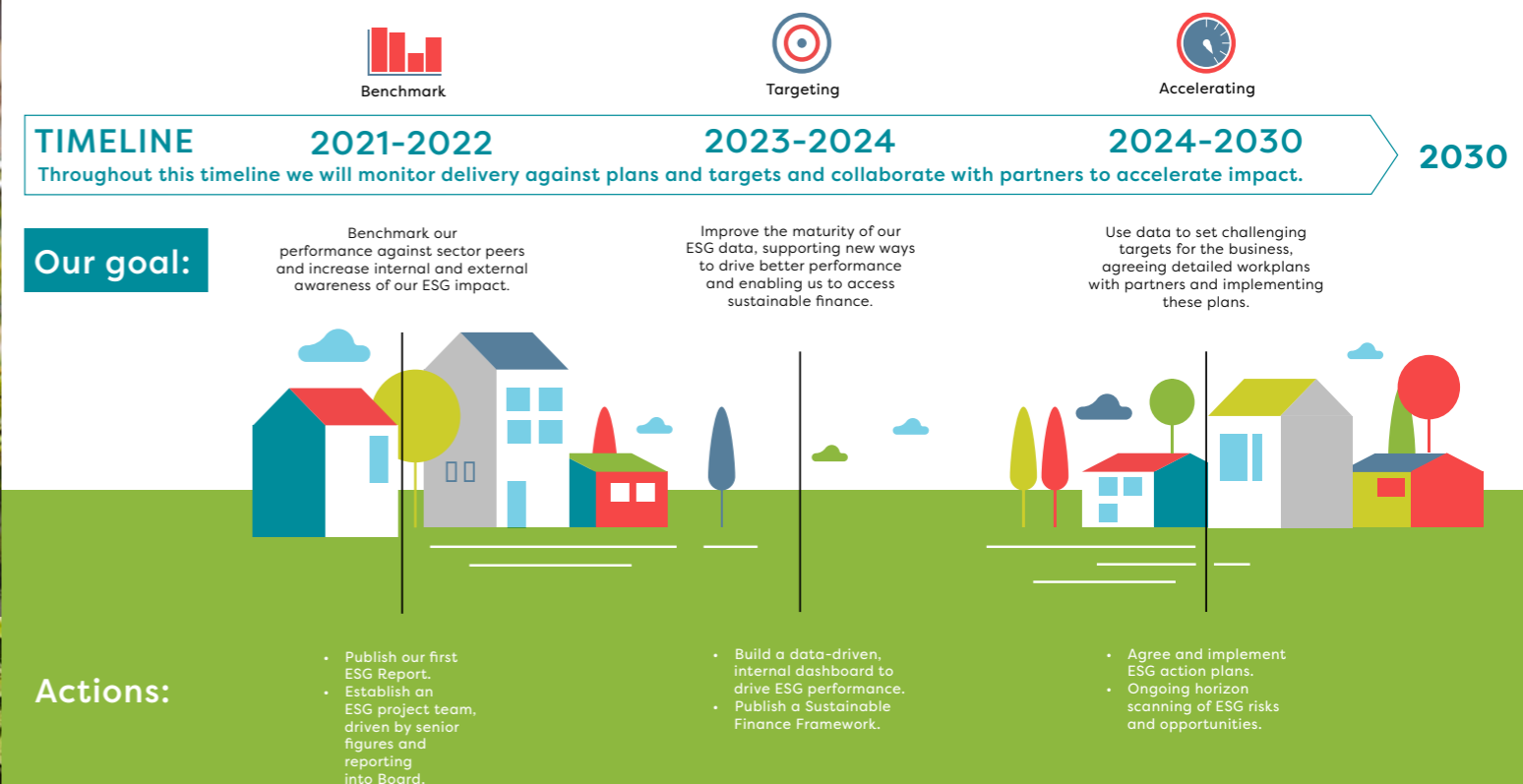
Onward is a social impact business. ESG is not about complementing our core business with nice extras; making a positive social and environmental impact is our core business.

We provide social homes for more than 50,000 people and support them by investing our time, resources and care in their communities. Our Corporate Plan commits us to becoming a leading environmentally friendly landlord. As we continue to build more homes and invest in our communities, we recognise the importance of treading lightly on the environment and reducing our carbon emissions.

Our ESG journey is all about shining a light on the good work we do and finding opportunities to do more, better. In the next phase of our journey, our focus will be to embed sustainable practices further into our day-to-day processes. We are continuing to develop our ability to measure and report on progress, collect better data, develop our vision and collaborate with partners.



The timeline below sets out our ESG goals and how we will achieve them over the lifespan of our current Corporate Plan.



# Social.

**T1 AFFORDABILITY AND SECURITY** - This theme seeks to assess the extent to which Onward provides long-term homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low incomes.

## C1 - C5 Secure and Affordable Homes

Providing genuinely affordable homes for those on low incomes is our core purpose as an organisation. Our priority is providing customers with secure tenancies, providing them with strong foundations and a place to call home. Our data shows:

- Our stock portfolio is diverse and demonstrates our commitment to providing tenure types that support people across the socio-economic spectrum, from individuals in need of the basics to families being supported into home ownership for the first-time.
- Our rent is well below the regional private sector average, with 100% of Onward's general needs and affordable homes having rents that are lower than or equal to Local Housing Allowance (LHA).
- We are committed to building more genuinely affordable housing, with 308 new homes delivered in the 2022/23 financial year.
- We provide secure tenancies for our customers, creating places where they can settle down and make their own. 79% of our social-rented tenancies have been in situ for 3+ years. (C5)

### C1 Rents well below the regional private sector average\*

	Onward	Median weekly rent NW	%
General Needs	£88.45	£150.00	58.9%
Supported, HOP excluding those with exception	£79.01	£150.00	52.7%
Supported, HOP including those with exception	£89.25	£150.00	59.6%
Average Weekly Gross Rent for Affordable Rent	£109.85	£150.00	72.9%

\* Based on the 30th percentile of local market rents

### C2 Our stock portfolio

		Tenure	2022-2023
Social rented assets owned by Onward		General Needs	20,267
		Housing for Older People	3,874
		Affordable Rent*	2,130
		Supported	1,928
		Intermediate	107
		Care Home	72
<b>Total</b>			<b>28,378</b>
Home Ownership		Shared Ownership	1,111
		Leasehold (inc. Non-Social Leasehold)	958
		Shared ownership staircased to maximum	197
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,266</b>
Home Ownership		Non-social housing	156
<b>Total</b>			<b>156</b>
Owned by another body but managed by Onward		Non-social leasehold (CPS)	4,106
		S4B	888
		Social rented assets owned by another body	29
<b>Total</b>			<b>5,023</b>
<b>Total owned and managed</b>			<b>35,823</b>

\* New homes, part funded by Homes England to make them affordable.

### C3 All our new homes are affordable

Stock type	Number of new builds delivered in this financial year, 2022/23
Affordable Rent	168
Shared Ownership	86
Intermediate Rent	15
Joint Ventures	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>



Our Financial Inclusion team provide money advice and support to our customers.

### C4 Taking action to tackle fuel poverty

Our dedicated Financial Inclusion Team provides customers in need with free, confidential advice around managing their finances, including support around energy costs. The cost-of-living crisis led to these challenges becoming more acute and made it more important than ever that we work to tackle fuel poverty and shield our customers from the market's volatility. Onward has supported customers with rising energy costs by:

- Providing fuel vouchers and energy saving advice to hard-hit households through our Social Investment and Financial Inclusion teams. Our Financial Inclusion team has supported 80 customers through distributing fuel vouchers totalling £5246, and helped customers to identify more affordable tariffs.
- Partnering with the Green Doctor, a team of energy efficiency experts, to provide free, impartial, practical advice to over 50 customers in Greater Manchester.
- Improving the energy efficiency of our stock by enhancing the standard of our new builds and continuing with an ambitious and long-term retrofit programme, creating warmer homes that are cheaper to run.

**T2 BUILDING SAFETY AND QUALITY** - This theme seeks to assess how effective Onward is at meeting its legal responsibilities to protect customers and keep buildings safe.

### C6-8 Almost all homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

Maintaining high quality assets is fundamental to Onward's purpose as a social landlord and makes long term business sense too. This year, 99.92% of our homes met the Decent Homes Standard. We're completing any outstanding repairs and investigating our disrepair cases, so we can resolve any issues as soon as possible and increase this percentage in 2023/24. 99.70% of our properties have an accredited gas safety check and 100% of our properties have an in-date fire risk assessment where this is required.

**T3 RESIDENT VOICE** - This theme seeks to assess how effective Onward is at listening to and empowering customers.



**C9 We are held accountable by our customers**

Onward has an active and engaged customer community, backed by a comprehensive Customer Engagement Policy that sets out our strategy for meaningful dialogue with our customers. We want our customers to be involved with us at every level, and it is vital that we hear their views on what we are doing well, and where we can improve.

We currently have over 3,000 customers signed up to our Customer Engagement Community (CEC). The CEC is open to all customers and provides customers with the opportunity to shape and influence the delivery of services through a menu of involvement opportunities, for example service-specific forums, focus groups, training and local engagement activities.

**C10 We continue to improve customer satisfaction year-on-year**

We continue to measure customer satisfaction across a wide range of services, including repairs and gas, planned works, complaints handling, new tenancy sign ups, and grounds maintenance, the latter having been introduced in 2022/23. Nearly 143,500 transactional surveys were sent to customers with over 41,500 responses, a response rate of 29.0%.

In addition to this, we also continued our monthly 'Customer Pulse' survey where we ask a random sample of 1,000 customers to provide feedback on the overall service that we provide and the quality of their home. More than 3,000 customers replied to give us their views (a 25.6% response rate) and customer satisfaction for our high-volume transactional areas continues to improve year on year.

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Repairs & Gas	80.2%	83.7%	85.1%
Contact Centre	86.6%	88.9%	89.1%

Results from our transactional surveys.

Our Scrutiny Board provides customers with the opportunity to hold us to account for the provision of services. Meeting quarterly, the Scrutiny Board reviews performance across all service areas and provides constructive challenge alongside in-depth scrutiny on aspects of service delivery. The roles of both ensure we are accountable to customers and that their voice and perspective is a part of the decision-making process.

We have reviewed our Governance structure to ensure our involved customers have a regular dialogue with the Board, this helps to ensure that our customers can hold us to account at the highest level of our organisation and also that our Board hear first hand about the issues that are most important to our customers.

We will continue to engage with customers on a range of different areas through ad hoc surveys that focus on service-specific and/or geographically relevant issues, including areas such as anti-social behaviour, damp and mould and building safety. We are currently completing our Tenant Satisfaction Survey and will use this feedback to improve services for our customers.

We now also make customer comments available to colleagues, as standard, through our customer satisfaction reporting which is developed in house. We also continue to develop our approach to customer sentiment and have implemented sentiment analysis of customer complaints. We will be applying this to other areas of customer feedback and survey activity in 23/24 so that we can drive continued improvements in customers' experiences of our services.

**C11 Learning from Complaints**

A total of 19 complaints have been upheld against Onward by the Housing Ombudsman in 2022/23, ten of which were service failures, eight maladministration, and one severe maladministration. We are committed to identifying our own learning opportunities from every determination that we receive. Therefore, in addition to the orders and recommendations that the Housing Ombudsman made, we identified and completed 37 additional learning opportunities and actions in the year.

Whilst we are disappointed to receive more complaints than we did last year, we welcome feedback from our customers to help make our services better. We have a clear idea of where we need to improve and have plans in place to get better and reduce the number of complaints we receive. We have made a number of improvements in the past year in response to customer feedback. These include:

- Introducing new and more convenient ways for customers to communicate with those handling their complaints, such as by text message. These additional communication channels enable a direct point of contact between complainants and our Customer Resolutions Team.
- At the point of acknowledging a complaint, we attempt to contact all complainants by telephone to help get more detail about the complaint and to understand what the customer would like to see from us.
- Before issuing our written complaint responses, we always attempt to contact customers by telephone to explain the outcome of their complaint and confirm that they are completely satisfied with our response.
- Where a complaint is about a repair, we do not close this until any works to address this have been completed and the customer has confirmed that they are satisfied with the outcome.
- Improving our written correspondence by removing excessive detail making the content simpler, particularly around how we have reached our conclusions and any follow up actions.
- Developing a new approach to ensure that our complaint handlers are delivering a consistently high standard of service when dealing with complaints.
- Continuing to improve how we report and gather insight from the complaints that we receive, so that we can use this information to inform our learning and and deliver continued improvements for customers.

We will continue to look at how we can improve our complaint handling service for our customers. Please find our latest Annual Complaints Report online [here](#).

**T4 RESIDENT SUPPORT** - This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that Onward runs to support individual customers.

**C12 Generating £2.2m in extra income for our customers**

Onward offers a range of support services, including helping customers to build financial resilience. We want to have a positive impact on every single one of our customers, and make sure we always provide meaningful support.

Onward has a dedicated Financial Inclusion Team that supports our customers with their finances, including advice about benefits, budgeting, utilities, and maximising income. The team accepts referrals either directly from customers or from other operational teams within the business, with support offered to all Onward customers, including renters and leaseholders. The team provides a comprehensive package to each customer from emergency support to day to day budgeting advice.

In the last financial year, the team supported 2,922 customers and generated £2.2million in extra income. We are always looking for new and improved ways to increase our customers' access to appropriate money advice and support, helping balance their financial protection and stability.

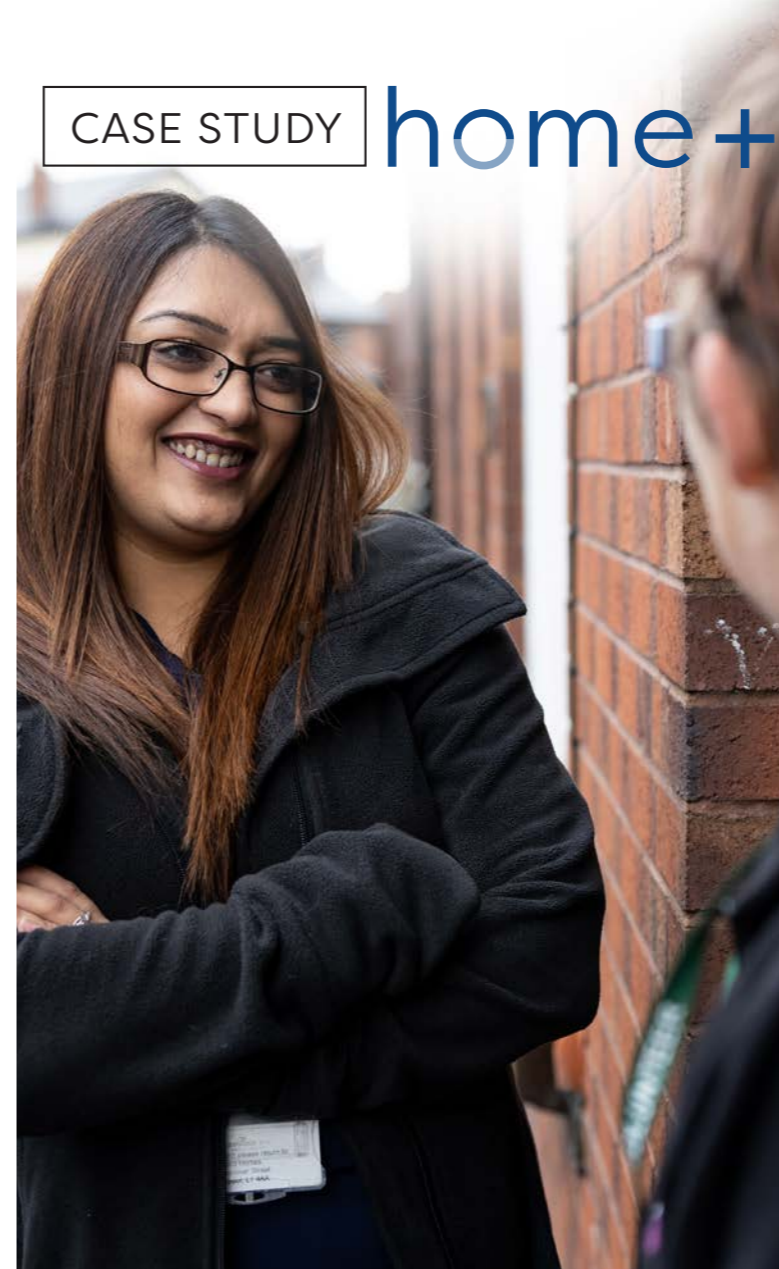
**C12 Investing £800,000 through our social investment programme**

Onward's Social Investment Team has continued to deliver, support, commission and invest in projects and organisations doing great work in our communities.

Theme	Focus
<b>WORK</b>	<b>Supporting community-based employment, training, volunteering and enterprise opportunities.</b> We have supported more than 100 residents into work, as well as connecting customers and communities to opportunities within Onward and our supply chain.
<b>FOOD</b>	<b>Supporting food resilience in communities during a challenging economic period.</b> We support great sustainable food initiatives within our communities, particularly those with innovative and successful ways of achieving food resilience.
<b>WELLBEING</b>	<b>Improving wellbeing, particularly through access to and use of greenspace and youth engagement work.</b> We support the wellbeing of residents, particularly through the creative use of green and open spaces, and supporting initiatives linked to mental health and wider wellbeing.
<b>DIGITAL</b>	<b>Playing our role in fixing the digital divide as part of digital Onward.</b> We are delivering our Onward Connect Action Plan, targeting our support to those who need and want it and using our influence and partnerships to support digital neighbourhoods.



Our Social Investment team has connected with over 400 local organisations to deliver more for our customers.



**CASE STUDY** home+

**Home + provides extra support to help our new customers settle in.**

Business analysis found that 10% of new Onward customers were likely to need furniture and white goods to help them set up their new home. We recognised an opportunity to provide more for customers at the start of their tenancies.

In response we set up Home+. This initiative helps new customers in need by providing essentials like furniture, white goods, blinds, and floor coverings. The scheme is discretionary and managed by colleagues in our Neighbourhood, Tenancy Support and Financial Inclusion teams. By identifying where additional support is required and providing this early on, we have helped more people to sustain their tenancies.

In the last financial year, we assessed 199 cases and provided Home+ packages and support to 139 new customers. Our tenancy sustainment rate through the scheme was 99.28%. After the success of our first year of Home+ seen through the number of our sustained tenancies increased, Onward has committed to the scheme to support our new customers through to 2024.

Delivering the Onward Difference is at the core of what our Social Investment Team does.

**In 2022/23 we:**

- ✓ Made our funding go further by **£482K** match funding through our partnerships
- ✓ Donated **£100K** through the Onward Community Fund
- ✓ Engaged **5,000** customers in green and wellbeing activities
- ✓ Connected with **430** community organisations
- ✓ Supported **240** students in work-based activities such as mock interview sessions
- ✓ Helped **120** customers with digital training
- ✓ Supported **120** customers to gain employment through our 1st Call service
- ✓ Connected **111** colleagues with volunteering opportunities

Over the next financial year, we will continue to deliver a wide-ranging social investment programme based on neighbourhood working, our key themes and by working with our partners to do more. Supporting customers through these extremely challenging times has been our focus and will continue to be so.



Mark Burnett, Head of Asset Management, plans our investment in homes.

**T5 C13 PLACEMAKING** - This theme seeks to highlight the wider set of activities that Onward undertakes to create well-designed homes and places that meet local needs and provide great places for people to live and enjoy.

Making targeted investments to build vibrant and connected communities is an essential part of achieving our Corporate Plan ambitions.

Investing in our neighbourhoods clearly demonstrates our commitment to sustainable and inclusive neighbourhood regeneration. We're committed to providing more than homes; we strive to create places that promote health, happiness, wellbeing and opportunities for our customers. Above all, we want every customer to love their home and feel proud of where they live.

Placemaking has always played a significant part in our new build developments, and particularly our major regeneration programmes in Hattersley, Murdishaw and Preston. This is not just about bricks and mortar, but building and sustaining communities where people choose to stay or put down roots.

## CASE STUDY

Linda Geddes, Chair of the Gorsewood Green CiC, the social enterprise behind the new local centre in Murdishaw.



### Community-led regeneration in Murdishaw.

Onward owns and manages around 500 homes across the Murdishaw neighbourhood and is committed to ongoing investment to regenerate the area and deliver major economic and social benefits to the community for years to come.

In the very centre of Murdishaw, in the popular green space of Gorse Wood, there was a disused boxing gym that has been a vacant space since just after the Covid 19 pandemic. As part of the community-led regeneration of the homes in Murdishaw, Onward wanted to help bring this great community space back to life, giving local residents a place to meet.

Onward worked in partnership with Halton Borough Council, Riverside Housing and a Community Design Team, a group of local residents, to understand their aspirations for the future of Murdishaw, letting them lead and shape decisions about the local area.

In partnership with the Community Design Team, we helped them to develop plans for a new local centre, which would support a range of activities for local people. Their vision was to

create not just a standalone local centre but a vibrant campus culture that connects with the existing community centre, with planned activities across both spaces. From the feedback we received during a community consultation, it was clear that local people wanted somewhere to meet informally, somewhere to learn and share skills and get involved in activities at different times of the day.

The Tea Tree Café will be a new place for local people to socialise and enjoy a range of activities. We will also be working and coordinating with the existing community centre on a range of training, learning and skills opportunities. The café will be run and owned by the community, with a dedicated team of volunteer directors, who are residents of Murdishaw, making decisions on the space. The money made will be invested back into the cafe to provide more opportunities for local people.

The doors to the cafe officially opened this Autumn. The Gorsewood Green CiC is hosting a series of pop-up events whilst getting used to the space before establishing regular working hours in the next financial year.



CASE STUDY

## Placemaking in Preston.

Onward has a long-standing commitment to Preston and has plans to bring quality affordable homes back into the city centre, supporting the aspirations of the Council as set out in its Stoneygate Masterplan.

In 2022, following consultation with residents and local partners, Onward reached a decision to demolish the three tower blocks located in its Queen Street and Avenham neighbourhood. The tower blocks will be replaced with high-quality, modern homes that better reflect local housing needs. Since then, we have been working with residents to guide them through every stage of the rehousing process and have a comprehensive package of support in place.

In the summer, Onward launched a consultation on plans for new homes at the Horrocks Mill site, located near to the tower blocks and within walking distance of the city centre. If approved by Preston City Council, the scheme will redevelop this derelict brownfield site and provide much-needed affordable homes alongside new green spaces and improved links into the city centre. This vision is about much more than new homes and, underpinned by our commitment to place-making, will be transformed into a thriving new community.

# Environmental.

**T6 CLIMATE CHANGE** - This theme seeks to assess how the activities of Onward are impacting on climate change, and how we are mitigating the physical risks of climate change. This theme considers current practice, as well as the changes being made to improve performance in the future.



## C14 -15 Activity is underway to build a more sustainable organisation

Sustainability is both a challenge and an opportunity for Onward to deliver positive change for our customers, communities, and the wider environment. Creating a more sustainable future is a key part of our Corporate Plan 'The Onward Difference'; providing warm, dry, and affordable homes; building green neighbourhoods; using less energy; and emitting less carbon.

Activity underway in recent years includes retrofitting hundreds of homes to a higher energy performance standard and introducing sustainable technologies across our office estate. With good foundations in place, we are looking to the future by working to become a leading environmentally friendly landlord and demonstrating how we are performing against our commitments.

**73.7% of our existing homes\* are EPC C or above**

**100% of our new homes are EPC B or above**



## C16 Our Carbon Footprint

Onward is planning on improving its data collection processes for the data sets already captured and has engaged with a new energy broker, Trident, who will be supporting us to calculate our overall carbon footprint. Our intention is to report this figure by our next report in 23/24.



### Improvements to our homes in Murdishaw.

In February 2022, as part of the Liverpool City Region's wider bid for over £11 million from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Onward secured £1.4 million in funding, which has been used to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to our customers' homes in Murdishaw.

Specifically, this funding has been used to retrofit 132 bungalows in the neighbourhood, which we identified as homes requiring improvements to enhance their overall energy efficiency.

The scheme has taken a 'fabric-first' approach to decarbonising the properties, with works including a new roof, windows and doors, external and internal insulation and a new ventilation system. During the programme, a total of nine Neighbourhood Champions volunteered to help advocate for other residents around practical issues experienced during the works. This group influenced all communications, gave their views on design and approach, and helped feedback and monitor the performance of contractors and sub-contractors. Regular meetings were held by the project team to update the Champions on progress, raise issues and devise solutions, and agree all communications.

The Champions have reported back that our customers have noticed their homes are warmer, quieter and more comfortable.



## C17 Investing in warmer homes

Over the last 12 months we have continued to invest in our current and new homes to improve energy efficiency, offset our carbon emissions by making greener homes, and improving our offices through energy saving activities.



Our Kirkdale neighbourhood will benefit from Wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

### Securing £6.8 million for energy efficiency improvements across the North West.

Onward has been successful in securing over £6.8m from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.1 to deliver energy efficiency upgrades in residents' homes. This follows on from Onward's success in securing £1.3m from SHDF Wave 1 in March 2022.

The funding secured is part of several partnership bids into the fund. Onward partnered with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and a consortium of 13 local authorities in Lancashire led by Blackpool Council.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund was set up to help decarbonise the UK's social housing stock to tackle fuel poverty, reduce carbon

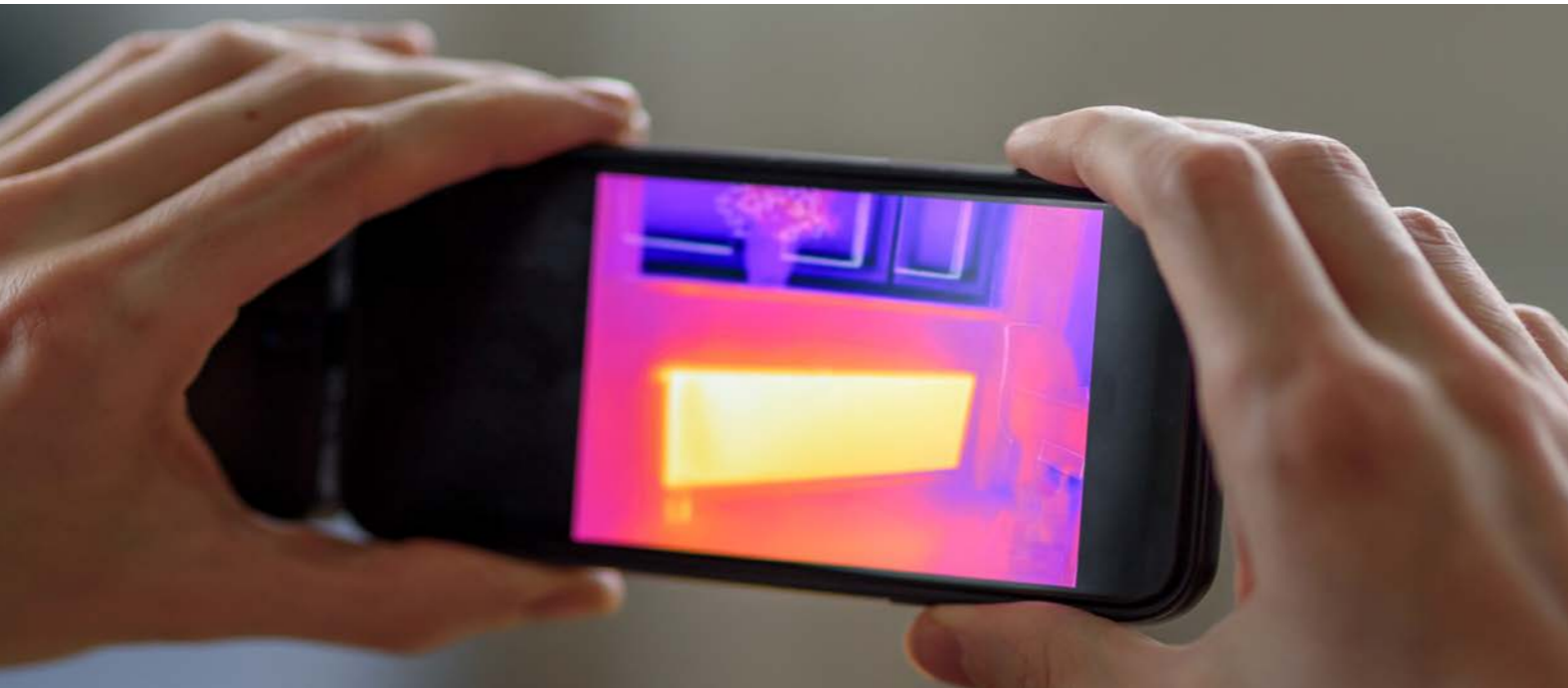
emissions and increase the energy efficiency of homes. This funding will allow us to build on the momentum of our existing retrofit programme and bring the benefits of energy efficient improvements to even more customers across our neighbourhoods. We will also create more jobs and opportunities for training for local people to take advantage of the investment coming in to the region.

Onward will use the funding to retrofit over 600 homes across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire, with plans to install new energy efficient windows alongside external wall and roof insulation to create more sustainable, green and energy-efficient homes for residents. The programme of work will begin in January 2024.

## C18-19 Mitigating Climate Risks

We hold a significant amount of information on our customers' homes and our wider portfolio. We continue to use this data to assess the likelihood of homes at risk of overheating and those with increased flood risk. We hold this information in our asset management system and can overlay other datasets within the business to improve the accuracy of our predictions.

We are currently working on updating our existing flood policy to ensure that in the event of an extreme flood event and we have appropriate protocols in place, working with the local authority and national agencies as required. Onward also provides information to customers about correct ventilation and heating in their welcome pack when they sign their tenancy agreement. We encourage customers to get in touch with their local authority for guidance on recycling.



### Robust processes for managing cases of damp, mould and condensation.

In the last year, we have been focussing on having adequate and robust processes in place for managing cases of damp, mould and condensation in our homes. We know that our portfolio of homes includes a relatively high number of older properties. These come with challenges that can make them more prone to damp and mould. In 2021/22 we established the Damp Project to improve how we dealt with these issues, which taught us some important lessons about our approach.

### Our Damp & Mould Project has put us in a stronger position to prevent damp, mould and condensation and sort things out quickly for our customers when it happens. So far, we have:

- Established a new process to deal with damp, mould and condensation and provided training to colleagues to help them diagnose issues.
- Shared guidance for customers on our website to help them with identifying and reporting issues.
- Created a dedicated support team to focus specifically on cases of damp, mould and condensation.
- Developed reporting to give us a clearer picture of damp, mould and condensation cases.
- Produced a damp, mould and condensation policy to guide our approach.

**T7 ECOLOGY** – This theme seeks to assess how Onward is protecting the local environment and ecology. The theme is made up of two criteria around managing pollutants and increasing biodiversity.

## C20 – 21 Creating Greener Neighbourhoods

Onward is committed to protecting the environment. We want to minimise our impact and enhance the natural environment around us. We will reduce our impact through effectively managing our assets, whilst boosting local biodiversity.

Our Environmental Services Team has been proactively looking at how we operate across our neighbourhoods, and looking closely at what we can do to reduce our carbon footprint.

Over the last year, we have:

- Introduced shorter term leases for petrol and diesel vans, with options in the future when infrastructure is right for electric fleet replacements.
- Created a new fly tipping strategy to identify problem areas, working with neighbourhood teams to proactively reduce occurrences and with local authorities on enforcement.
- Where possible and practical, we have replaced petrol equipment with electric equivalents.
- Donated wood from our tree operations to local charities.
- Worked with organisations such as City of Trees to identify suitable sites with different species selected to add to biodiversity.
- Supplied our in-house cleaning teams with environmentally friendly cleaning products, which are non-toxic and non-flammable.
- Used a vinegar-based chemicals to kill moss off footpaths and are also looking at environmentally friendly ways of reducing the use of harmful chemicals such as Glyphosate.



Land, trees and shrubs in our ownership

Category	m <sup>2</sup> Total	
	2022	2023
Amenity Grass	1,168,503	1,237,955
Hard Standing	N/A	927,518
Hedges	169,620	201,256
Meadow Grass	29,531	48,384
Shrub Bed	71,459	76,542
Woodland	250,991	26,1901
Grand Total	1,690,104	2,756,319

**In 2023/24, we will be reviewing our biodiversity action plan to map out how we will plant more trees and species across our neighbourhoods.**

**T8 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** - This theme seeks to identify the extent to which the housing provider has a sustainable approach to materials in both the construction and management of properties.

## C22-24 Being more mindful of the resources we use.

Being more efficient with our resources to deliver the new, greener and affordable homes is a key part of our approach to sustainability. Construction, repairs and maintenance are our most resource-intensive activities, and we are looking at ways to address our consumption volumes and reduce waste to lower our carbon footprint.

Plans to establish a resource management strategy are in development and materials, water and waste will all be key aspects. Metrics from the strategy will be embedded into our procurement process by 2025, with the intention of reporting against these the following year.

# Governance.

**T9 STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE** - This theme seeks to assess Onward's overall structure and approach to Governance.

## C25-30 A robust structure

Onward Homes Limited is a registered Society, registered with the Financial Conduct Authority under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. We are a non-profit Registered Provider of Social Housing registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) (registered number LH0250).

We have signed up to the NHF Code of Governance and have received independent assurance that we are compliance with the requirements of the code.

Our governance arrangements have been reviewed by the Regulator of Social Housing who has confirmed that we have retained our G1 grading. This provides assurance with regards to the quality of our governance framework.

We have a Risk Management Policy and procedures. An Audit & Risk Committee oversees the risk management framework. The Board reviews its strategic risks at least every 6 months.

**T10 BOARD AND TRUSTEES** - This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the Board and trustees.

## C31 - 41 An experienced Board

Our Board, Directors and Trustees bring an enormous amount of experience from their varied careers across a range of sectors. Details of our Board and Executive Team members can be found on our website [here](#).

We regularly review Board skills and experience to ensure they match the changing needs of our organisation.

This information is used when recruiting new Board members to ensure our Board can contribute to the success of our organisation and hold management to account.



Tina Kokkinos



Karl Tupling



Diana Hampson

## CASE STUDY

### New additions to the Board

In the last twelve months, we have welcomed three new non-Executive Directors to the Board. Tina Kokkinos is an experienced Board Member spanning various roles at JPM, HSBC and Coca-Cola and most recently as Chief Operating Officer at an FX FinTech start-up.

Diana Hampson joins us with extensive experience in estate management from The University of Manchester where she has been the Director of Estates and Facilities since 1997. Finally, Karl Tupling has forty years' experience in housing and regeneration and has held senior roles in local government most recently as Director of Markets Places and Partners at Homes England.

Our new Non-Executive Directors bring a wealth of expertise and will strengthen our leadership team.

**T11 STAFF WELLBEING** - This theme seeks to assess how staff are supported and how their wellbeing is considered.

## C42-44 An employer of choice

Onward provides homes and services to thousands of people. With customer service at the heart of our business, our success depends on our people. Our people are our most valuable asset; they make our organisation.

We strive to be an employer of choice and are committed to building a diverse, gender balanced and rewarded workforce. As a result, our colleagues are passionate about what they do, are listened to, and feel Onward is a great place to work.



### Our Board and Executive Team in numbers:



Our Non-Executive Director gender split is **67% female** and **33% male**, **11% are BAME** and **11% have a disability**.

Our customer gender split is **53% female** and **47% male**, with **9.4% BAME**.



Our Executive Team turnover was **0%** and Board turnover was **42%** (due to end of tenure).



The maximum tenure is six years with two terms of three years.



**60%** of the Board are non-executive directors.

Please find further information about our Board and Trustees in the Appendix.

## C45-46 Supporting our colleagues

Onward has a number of initiatives to support the physical and mental wellbeing of colleagues. Each colleague has access to SimplyHealth whereby they can claim for the costs of medical treatment, prescriptions, and dental treatment. As part of this, all colleagues also have access to our Employee Assistance programme where they can have a confidential conversation around matters concerning financial and mental health issues. On average, the number of sick days per employee is 8.69 days. We offer occupational sick pay to support any colleagues while they are not able to work.

**We want everyone at Onward to have the opportunity to maximise their potential. In the last year, we have:**



Hosted **65** different training courses.



Promoted **38** colleagues to senior positions.



Started **26** new apprenticeships.

Provided work experience for 6 people on the GEM programme.



Supported **61** colleagues to study for a professional qualification.



Helped **127** colleagues learn a new skill through our Learning for Life fund.

**T12 SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT** - This theme seeks to assess if Onward procures responsibly. The theme is made up of two criteria assessing how social value and environmental impact are considered.

## C47-48 Increasing our environmental and social impact through our supply chain

Our supply chain partners play a key role in helping us increase our positive social impact. Over the last financial year, we have introduced a variety of methods to secure social value as part of procurement, including a partnership with The Social Value Exchange, using their platform Match My Project, and introduced a performance dashboard for capturing and reporting Social Value outcomes.

Additionally, as part of building the specification for our new contracts, we will consider environmental and sustainability factors in both the deliverables and where possible future proofing requirements. We have also made some changes to our Procurement Policy to reflect this and are encouraging our suppliers to participate in the Supply Chain Sustainability School to help them develop their understand of sustainable practices.



Our Onward Academy participants were supported with construction work placements in 2022/23.

CASE STUDY

## Growing the Onward Academy.

This year, we launched the Onward Academy, a network of organisations that will support training and employment opportunities for our customers. This network will facilitate apprenticeships, training and work experience opportunities, and also help our own colleagues develop new skills and qualifications.

In 2022/23, we worked with local education partners the Learning Foundry and Procure Plus to pilot three work experience programmes for 16-24 year olds. Through these pilots, eight young people were supported with their CIH Level 2 Qualification in Housing and a further six secured construction-based work experience with our suppliers.

The Onward Academy will increase the social value we offer, helping us to deliver our sustainability strategy and growth plans, whilst also tackling some of the challenges and gaps our sector faces. In the next financial year, we will be engaging with new delivery and education partners to find more ways to support and enable our customers' aspirations.



Our local supplier Connolly Ltd worked with us to create a new growing space for Kirkdale community group 'Urban Roots'.

### Unlocking community investment through Match My Project.

In 2022, Onward signed up to the Match My Project platform to help identify new opportunities to unlock investment in local communities and supply chains. The platform enables businesses and communities to come together to collaborate on projects designed to improve their area in a more coordinated and targeted way.

Community organisations can make requests for resources through the platform, which local suppliers can match to with the resources, skills and experience the community group needs to get their project off the ground.

Suppliers sign into the Match My Project portal to see what projects need some help, offer their support, and once confirmed begin the project. After the project is completed, feedback is displayed on the supplier's profile to share and record the positive impact their support has made to the local community.

The platform provides us with the tools to give more back to our local communities through our supply chain, helping all parties achieve meaningful social value outcomes.

Since Match My Project was launched, over 50 Onward suppliers have:

- Donated 308 hours of volunteer time
- Pledged a further 330 hours of support
- Given over £15,000 of resources

We hope you find our second ESG report insightful, and that it demonstrates our absolute commitment to improving our ESG performance and reporting on it transparently.

There's no doubt that there will be challenges we need to overcome in the year ahead to help us achieve our long-term ESG goals and ambitions. We do, however, have great success stories to be proud of within this report, and we're committed to doing more to demonstrate how we're making The Onward Difference for our customers.

**If you are an investor and have any questions or feedback, please get in touch with:**

Danielle James, Director of Finance  
Rob Loughenbury, Director of Strategy



## SOCIAL

THEME	CRITERIA #	TYPE OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	OUR RESPONSE																																																
AFFORDABILITY AND SECURITY	T1	C1	Core For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against one or more Af-fordability Metric: 1) Rent compared to Median private rental sector (PRS) rent across the Local Authority 2) Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	<p>100% our homes have rents set below the Local Housing Allowance for the respective area.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Onward</th> <th>Median weekly rent NW</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>General Needs</td> <td>£88.45</td> <td>£150.00</td> <td>58.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supported, HOP excluding those with exception</td> <td>£79.01</td> <td>£150.00</td> <td>52.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supported, HOP including those with exception</td> <td>£89.25</td> <td>£150.00</td> <td>59.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average Weekly Gross Rent for Affordable Rent</td> <td>£109.85</td> <td>£150.00</td> <td>72.9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* Based on the 30th percentile of local market rents</p>		Onward	Median weekly rent NW	%	General Needs	£88.45	£150.00	58.9%	Supported, HOP excluding those with exception	£79.01	£150.00	52.7%	Supported, HOP including those with exception	£89.25	£150.00	59.6%	Average Weekly Gross Rent for Affordable Rent	£109.85	£150.00	72.9%																												
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T1	C2	Core	Share, and number, of existing homes (owned and managed) completed before the last financial year.	<p>The following table shows the homes owned by Onward.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Tenure</th> <th>2022-2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="6">Social rented assets owned by Onward</td> <td>General Needs</td> <td>20,267</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing for Older People</td> <td>3,874</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Affordable Rent*</td> <td>2,130</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Supported</td> <td>1,928</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intermediate</td> <td>107</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Care Home</td> <td>72</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>28,378</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Home Ownership</td> <td>Shared Ownership</td> <td>1,111</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Leasehold (inc. Non-Social Leasehold)</td> <td>958</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shared ownership staircased to maximum</td> <td>197</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>2,266</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Home Ownership</td> <td>Non-social housing</td> <td>156</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>156</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="3">Owned by another body but managed by Onward</td> <td>Non-social leasehold (CPS)</td> <td>4,106</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S4B</td> <td>888</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social rented assets owned by another body</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>5,023</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total owned and managed</b></td> <td></td> <td><b>35,823</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* New homes, part funded by Homes England to make them affordable.</p>		Tenure	2022-2023	Social rented assets owned by Onward	General Needs	20,267	Housing for Older People	3,874	Affordable Rent*	2,130	Supported	1,928	Intermediate	107	Care Home	72	<b>Total</b>		<b>28,378</b>	Home Ownership	Shared Ownership	1,111	Leasehold (inc. Non-Social Leasehold)	958	Shared ownership staircased to maximum	197	<b>Total</b>		<b>2,266</b>	Home Ownership	Non-social housing	156	<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>	Owned by another body but managed by Onward	Non-social leasehold (CPS)	4,106	S4B	888	Social rented assets owned by another body	29	<b>Total</b>		<b>5,023</b>	<b>Total owned and managed</b>		<b>35,823</b>
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THEME		CRITERIA #	TYPE OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	OUR RESPONSE
	T1	C4	Core		As the cost-of-living rose at the end of 21/22, we expected that some of our customers would need extra help and support to help manage their money this financial year. With energy, utilities and running costs increasing, it's more important than ever that we work to tackle fuel poverty and shield our customers from the market's volatility.  Please take a look at page 7 for more information.
	T1	C5	Enhanced	What % of rental homes have at least a 3-year tenancy agreement?	79% of our homes have a 3-year tenancy agreement.
BUILDING SAFETY AND QUALITY	T2	C6	Core	What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?	99.70% of our properties have an accredited gas safety check.
	T2	C7	Core	What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?	100% of our properties have an in-date fire risk assessment where required.
	T2	C8	Core	What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard?	99.92% of our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard.
RESIDENT VOICE	T3	C9	Core	What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?	We currently have 2,965 customers signed up to our Customer Engagement Community (CEC). The CEC is open to all customers and sign up provides customers with access to a range of involvement activities, all of which provide customers with the opportunity to shape and influence the delivery of services. Please take a look at page 8 for more detail on this criterion.
	T3	C10	Core	How does the housing provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?	We continue to measure customer satisfaction across a wide range of services, including repairs and gas, planned works, complaints handling, new tenancy sign ups, and grounds maintenance, having been introduced in 2022/23. Nearly 143,500 transactional surveys were sent to customers with over 41,500 responses. Please take a look at page 9 for more detail on this criterion.
	T3	C11	Enhanced	In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman.  How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?	A total of 19 complaints have been upheld against Onward in 2022/23, ten of which were service failures, eight maladministration, and one severe maladministration.  We are committed to identifying our own learning opportunities from every determination that we receive. Therefore, in addition to the orders and recommendations that the Housing Ombudsman made, we identified and completed 37 additional learning opportunities and actions in the year.
RESIDENT SUPPORT	T4	C12	Core	What support services does the housing provider offer to its residents. How successful are these services in improving outcomes?	Onward offers a range of support services, including helping customers to build financial resilience. We want to have a positive im-pact on every single one of our customers, and make sure we always provide meaningful support. In the last financial year, our Financial Inclusion team supported 2922 customers and generated £2.2million in extra income. We have also invested over £800,000 through our social impact strategy. Please see pages 10 - 11 for more detail.
PLACEMAKING	T5	C13	Enhanced	Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place shaping activities.	Making intelligent and targeted investments in placemaking activities is an essential part of achieving our Corporate Plan ambitions. Placemaking has always played a significant part in our new build developments, and particularly our major regeneration programmes in Hattersley, Murdishaw and Preston. All of this focus is not just on bricks and mortar, but on building and sustaining com-munities where people choose to stay or put down roots.  Please take a look at pages 12-13 for more detail on this criterion.

# ENVIRONMENTAL

THEME	CRITERIA #	TYPE OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	OUR RESPONSE																					
CLIMATE CHANGE	T6	C14	Core	Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year).	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>EPC Band</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B</td> <td>2465</td> </tr> <tr> <td>C</td> <td>14817</td> </tr> <tr> <td>D</td> <td>5531</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>520</td> </tr> <tr> <td>F</td> <td>79</td> </tr> <tr> <td>G</td> <td>19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Currently being re-assessed</td> <td>4,218</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>27,663</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	EPC Band	Count	A	14	B	2465	C	14817	D	5531	E	520	F	79	G	19	Currently being re-assessed	4,218	TOTAL	27,663
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T6	C15	Core	Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).	100% of new homes completed in the last year are rated EPC B or above.																					
T6	C16	Enhanced	Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.	<p>Onward is planning on improving its data collection processes for the data sets already captured and has engaged with a new energy broker, Trident, who will be supporting us to calculate our overall carbon footprint.</p> <p>Our intention is to report this figure by our next report in 23/24.</p>																					
T6	C17	Enhanced	What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?	<p>Over the last 12 months we have continued to invest in our current and new homes to improve energy efficiency, offset our carbon emissions by making greener homes, and improving our offices through energy saving activities.</p> <p>Onward has secured a further £6.8million grant to help fund retrofit projects for 500-600 properties, improving their energy efficiency through external wall insulation, loft insulation, triple/double glazed windows, composite doors, and improving ventilation systems.</p>																					
T6	C18	Enhanced	How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased flood risk</li> <li>Increased risk of homes overheating</li> </ul>	We hold a significant amount of information on our customers' homes and our wider portfolio. We continue to use this data to assess the likelihood of homes at risk of overheating and those with increased flood risk. We hold this information in our asset management system and can overlay other datasets within the business to improve the accuracy of our predictions.																					
T6	C19	Enhanced	Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc? Please describe how this is done.	We've been focussing on of having an adequate and robust processes in place for managing cases of damp, mould and condensation in our homes. We provide information to customers about correct ventilation and heating in their welcome pack when they sign their tenancy agreement. Please see page 18 for further information.																					
ECOLOGY	T7	C20	Enhanced	How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity on or near homes?	Onward is committed to protecting the environment and striving to minimise the environmental impact of the work that we do, as well as enhancing our existing communities. Please see page 19 for further information.																				
	T7	C21	Enhanced	Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	Plans to develop a biodiversity action plan are in development and how we will reduce and measure our actions will be a key aspect.																				



THEME	CRITERIA #	TYPE OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	OUR RESPONSE
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	T8	C22	Enhanced Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	At present there is no formal strategy in place to increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works. However, all materials used comply with current legislation and timber comes from a responsibly-sourced materials.  Plans to develop a resource management strategy are in development and responsibly-sourced materials will be a key aspect.
	T8	C23	Enhanced Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials?  If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?	We aim to recycle and divert as much as possible from landfill. Our Environmental Services Team proactively monitors environmental crimes and collects all fly tipping across all regions as and when discovered. As part of our contract agreements, we expect that all contractors have a waste management plan on our capital delivery projects so that where items can be recycled, they are.  Plans to develop a resource management strategy are in development and how we manage our waste will be a key aspect.

## GOVERNANCE

THEME	CRITERIA #	TYPE OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	OUR RESPONSE
STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE	T9	C25	Core Is the housing provider registered with the national regulator of social housing?	Yes, our registration number is LH0250.
	T9	C26	Core What is the most recent regulatory grading/status?	We received G1/ V2 rating in December 2022.
	T9	C27	Core Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?	We are currently following the NHF Code of Governance 31 March 2021.
	T9	C28	Core Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?	Yes.
	T9	C29	Core Explain how the housing provider's board manages organisational risks	We have a Risk Management Policy and procedures. An Audit & Risk Committee oversees the risk management framework. The Board reviews its strategic risks at least every 6 months.
	T9	C30	Enhanced Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches etc) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?	No.
BOARD AND TRUSTEES	T10	C31	Core What are the demographics of the board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers residents?	Our Non-Executive Director gender split is 67% female and 33% male; 11% are BAME and 11% have a disability.  Our customer gender split is 53% female and 47% male with 9.4% BAME.
	T10	C32	Core What % of the board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?  Add commentary if useful.	Our Executive Team turnover was 0% and Board turnover was 42% (due to end of tenure).
	T10	C33	Core Is there a maximum tenure for a board member? If so, what is it?	The maximum tenure is six years, with two terms of three years.
	T10	C34	Core What % of the board are non-executive directors?	60% of the Board are non-executive directors.
	T10	C35	Core Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.	Three of our Board members on Audit & Risk Committee have recent and relevant financial experience.
	T10	C36	Core Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?	No
	T10	C37	Core Has a succession plan been provided to the board in the last 12 months?	Yes, the succession plan was reviewed by our Board in August 2022.
	T10	C38	Core For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?	4 years.
	T10	C39	Core When was the last independently run, board-effectiveness review?	We undertake an independently run review of board effectiveness each year.

THEME		CRITERIA #	TYPE OF CRITERIA	CRITERIA	OUR RESPONSE
BOARD AND TRUSTEES	T10	C40	Core	Are the roles of the chair of the board and CEO held by two different people?	Yes.
	T10	C41	Core	How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the board?	Our Code of Conduct, Probity Policy and Delegation Framework set out expectations regarding behaviours and conflicts.
STAFF WELLBEING	T11	C42	Core	Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?	Yes.
	T11	C43	Core	What is the median gender pay gap?	The figure for 22/23 has not yet been published. Please find the results of last year's gender pay gap report via our website <a href="#">here</a> .
	T11	C44	Enhanced	What is the CEO:median-worker pay ratio?	As of 31st March 2023, this is our CEO-work pay ratio: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25th Percentile 8.88 : 1</li> <li>• 50th Percentile 6.82 : 1</li> <li>• 75th Percentile 5.78 : 1</li> </ul>
	T11	C45	Enhanced	How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?	We have multiple resources in place to support the physical and mental health of our colleagues. Please take a look at page 21 for more information on this criterion.
	T11	C46	Enhanced	What is the average number of sick days (both long and short term) taken per employee?	The average number of sick days taken per employee is 8.69 days.
SUPPLY CHAIN	T12	C47	Enhanced	How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?	Over the last financial year, we have introduced a variety of methods to secure social value as part of procurement including a partnership with The Social Value Exchange, using their platform Match My Project, and introduced a performance dashboard for capturing and reporting Social Value outcomes. Since the MMP platform was launched, we have secured an extra £15,000 in social value for our communities across the North West.
	T12	C48	Enhanced	How is Environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?	As part of building the specification for our new contracts, we will consider environmental and sustainability factors in both the deliverables and where possible future-proofing requirements. We have also made some changes to our Procurement Policy to reflect this and are also encouraging our suppliers to participate in the Supply Chain Sustainability School to help them develop their understanding of sustainable practices.