

Onward

The Onward Newsletter

Enabling you to be your best, in a home you love, and a place you are proud of.

Winter 2023



WELCOME.

Well the Winter is certainly here, with temperatures dropping well below zero!

I know that it can be difficult to keep a home warm and keep up with energy costs at this time of year. Plenty of help is at hand if you are finding things tough this winter. In this newsletter you will find lots of ways to contact us for help, whether you need support with money problems, access to food, or want to join in with helping your community.

Winter is also a time when we are all more likely to find issues with damp, mould or condensation, as we all feel the need to turn the heating up and keep the windows closed! If you see anything that concerns you, please contact us immediately using the information in this newsletter.

We would love to see you at one of our Winter Warmer events during December. These are a great opportunity to share warmth and friendship with others in your community. You will also find lots of help and advice on hand from your Onward neighbourhood team, if you need it.

I hope you have a great Christmas and wonderful New Year.



Bronwen Rapley,
Chief Executive



HELPING YOU THIS WINTER.

We know that winter puts pressure on finances and can be a challenging time for many. If you're worried about managing your money over the festive period, please speak to us.

Our Financial Inclusion Team helps hundreds of customers every year to get back on track. The team provides free, confidential advice on budgeting, household bills and emergency support. If you are struggling to make payments it is important that you let us know as soon as you can. We are here to help.

To speak to a member of the team, please call **0300 555 0600** or email us on customerservices@onward.co.uk. Or head over to the [support services](#) section of our website to find out more about the different types of support we offer.



REPORTING REPAIRS.

Our priority is getting repairs fixed as quickly as possible. We will aim to complete as many of our repairs the first time and in the first visit as possible. For repairs that can be completed in one visit, we will offer you an appointment within 20 days.

Sometimes, we might need to carry out complicated repairs that take longer to complete. In these cases, we will agree with you a time to carry out the work and keep you updated on progress. This might be to carry out an initial inspection before we complete the work. For these types of repairs, we will complete the work within 90 days.



If your repair is an emergency, please let us know straightaway by calling **0300 555 0600**. You can do this 24 hours a day, seven days a week. An emergency could be a complete loss of power, no heating or hot water during the winter, faulty boilers, or a flood or leak that can't be controlled. Emergency repairs will be attended to **on the same day**.

On the day of the appointment, you'll receive a call when we're on our way. Please make sure that someone over the age of 18 is at home whilst the work is being carried out. If for any reason you can't make an appointment, please let us know by calling us on **0300 555 0600**.

As temperatures drop, there are things you can do now to get prepared, such as checking your boiler works and bleeding radiators. For more advice, head over to the [repairs](#) section of our website.



DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION.

If you spot damp, mould and condensation in your home let us know straightaway. Some individuals are particularly at risk of the effects such as elderly people, pregnant women, babies, and young children or those with health conditions. For help spotting the signs head over to the [damp and mould section](#) of our website.

To report a repair, or damp, mould and condensation, you can do this through the [My Onward Portal](#). Here you can tell us about the repair in just a few clicks. Or, you can give us a call on **0300 555 0600** from 8am to 8pm on Monday to Friday, and between 10am to 8pm on Wednesdays. You can also use WhatsApp (**07793 795 882**) or the live chat on our website.



EMERGENCY SUPPORT.

Our emergency fund helps those most in need to get help with essential items. If you're facing extreme financial difficulties, please get in touch with a member of the team to find out more about the support that might be available to you. You can do this by calling **0300 555 0600** or emailing FinancialInclusionTeam@onward.co.uk.

HELP IN YOUR AREA.

Looking for support in your area? There are lots of different organisations offering budget advice, low-cost food, warm spaces, and free activities.

We've pulled together a tool so that you can search for the different types of support that might be available in your area.

Click [here](#) to search for the area you're living in and find the help that you are looking for.

REMEMBER!

Loan sharks target people during the Christmas period. Loan sharks are illegal money lenders who seem like a good option when you need money quickly or are having difficulty getting credit, but can become intimidating or threatening when it's time to pay. With illegal money lenders like loan sharks it's easy for your loan to spiral out of control.

Spot the signs of a loan shark:

- They've offered a cash loan
- They haven't given you paper work
- They have added huge amounts of interest or APR to your loan
- They have threatened you
- They taken your bank card, benefit card, passport, watch or other valuables from you

If you're worried about your finances please get in touch and we can help identify the support that could be available to you.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES.

Got a great idea for a community project, but need help to get it off the ground? Through the Onward Community Fund, local groups can bid for up to £2,500 in funding to support their work, which could be digital training courses, youth projects for better health and wellbeing or community events providing low-cost nutritious food options.



Humans MCR applied to the Community Fund to support its work aimed at tackling food insecurity by providing residents with access to low-cost nutritious food. The funding will enable the group to expand their community grocers on wheels to a second site in Salford, helping even more residents in need.



Over in Lancashire, **Redeeming Our Communities** secured funding to start a new project to empower unemployed residents by offering skills and training support.



In Merseyside **The Brunny**, a Bootle-based community centre, has used the funds to host cooking classes that will give residents an opportunity to learn more about healthy eating.

We've helped 60 organisations across the North West in the last year and your project could be next. Interested? The deadline for the next round of applications is **1st February 2024**. For more information email socialinvestment@onward.co.uk.

HELP WITH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.

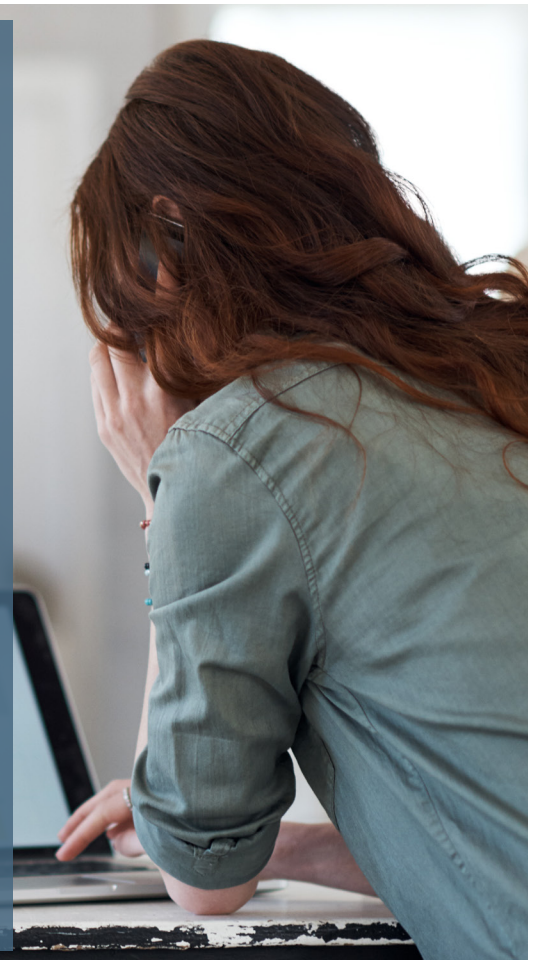
If you're looking to get into work or to progress in your current role, you could apply for a grant of up to £500 to help you take your next step.

The Onward Employment and Training Fund awards grants of up to £500 to help with costs to access work, training, or self-employment. This could be costs for courses, books, in-work equipment, childcare, travel passes, or workwear.

You can apply for a grant whether you are unemployed, employed, self-employed or are a student. You must be an Onward customer and over 16 years old. One of the customers we have supported in the past said:

“The Onward Employment Fund has helped me buy the equipment I need to start my own business, including boxing gloves and body pads. I've spent the past year focusing on my mental health, losing weight, and trying to become stronger every day. Through this funding, I can now help other people achieve their fitness goals whilst supporting their mental health.”

For more information email socialinvestment@onward.co.uk.



NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES.

We want our customers to live in homes they love, and places they are proud of. One of the ways we're doing this is by building new homes to help people settle down and find a place to call home.

This year, we started our new development in **Clayton-Le-Moors, Hyndburn**, which will provide 127 new homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and rent to buy, enabling local people to put down roots in the area.

We've also moved forward with building 30 homes in **Whitefield, Bury**, which will include affordable rent and shared ownership to help residents take their first step onto the property ladder. We're expecting to complete the development in Autumn 2024.

In **Hattersley, Tameside**, we're progressing with new affordable homes across four different sites, with our final homes for shared ownership completing this winter, and new homes for affordable rent due to be ready to move into next spring.



Clayton-Le-Moors, Hyndburn.



Whitefield, Bury.



Hattersley, Tameside.

KEEPING SAFE THIS WINTER.

There are some important steps that you can take to keep you and your home safe over the winter.



HOME SAFETY

- Make sure to test your smoke alarm every month
- Never leave heat sources unattended and put them out before you go to bed
- Don't overload sockets and if wires are damaged or frayed do not use them
- Don't heat your home with anything that uses a gas cannister or open flame
- Make space around oil-filled or electric radiators and never use them to dry clothes
- Never tamper with gas or electricity meters in your home

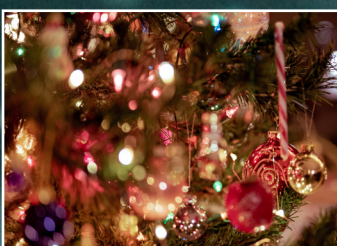
ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Check cables and power sockets for damage
- Never overload electrical sockets or extension cables
- Don't overcharge battery-powered devices, such as e-cigarettes or e-scooters, and never leave items charging unattended
- If you have an e-bike or e-scooter, make sure to store them and any batteries in a cool place and never charge them near something flammable



KITCHEN SAFETY

- Never leave pans cooking unattended
- Keep the area around your cooker clear of fabric
- Turn all appliances off before you go to bed



Remember, festive decorations can also catch fire very easily. Keep these away from heat sources and make sure that you don't overload sockets.



CLEARING THE CHRISTMAS CLUTTER.

We know how important it is that your neighbourhood is kept clean and tidy.

General household waste increases over Christmas, especially with more parcels being delivered throughout the festive season. Help keep your neighbourhood clean by recycling and disposing of rubbish safely using the bins at your home or scheme.

You can report dumped rubbish or fly tipping to us on **0300 555 0600** or via the [MyOnward portal](#).

JOIN US AT OUR WINTER WARMER EVENTS.

Across our communities, we will be hosting a series of drop-in events this winter, where we'll be on hand to help whether that's with finances, debt, housing, food, employment and mental health and wellbeing.

We know just how important it is to hold these events across our neighbourhoods, making sure every resident has a chance to get support and advice from local partners. Our teams are organising more of these events and will be promoting these across our communities over the coming weeks and months. Keep an eye on the news section of our website to find out more about the events coming up near you.

If you or someone you know needs some extra support, please come along and talk to the team. We are here to help. Please email socialinvestment@onward.co.uk to find out more about events in your area.



AN EASIER WAY TO PAY - PAYBYLINK!

We're about to launch a simpler way for you to make credit and debit card payments. When a payment is due or if you miss a payment, you may now get a link in emails or texts from us that will take you through to a payment portal. By following this link, you'll be able to send make payments without putting in your tenancy number or 19 digital Allpay reference number, making things much quicker and easier.

You'll start to see the links in messages from Onward in the next few weeks. If you're unsure about a link on a message from Onward, just get in touch on **0300 555 0600**.

HAVE YOU JOINED YET?

Are you interested in providing feedback on the services that you receive? Would you like to be able to influence how we deliver services and our future priorities?

If so, then we invite you to become a member of our growing Customer Engagement Community. With over 3,000 members the Community ensures that our customers play an influential role at Onward. You can do this by taking part in forums and events, giving feedback through surveys, or you can volunteer to review documents from the comfort of your own home. Every 3 months all members receive the Your Voice newsletter, as well as entry into exclusive prize draws!

If you're interested in becoming part of our Customer Engagement Community, please email customerengagement@onward.co.uk asking them to sign you up.