

Onward

Our home standard.

Your home is where our heart is...



What is the Onward Home Standard?

Our tenants have helped us to write our Home Standard so that you know what to expect when we look after and improve your home. We want you to be happy, safe and secure in the place you live.

We know the quality of your property has a huge impact on your quality of life.

When we take care of your home, our aim is to meet and exceed national housing standards. Our Home Standard outlines what you can expect when we improve your home and replace key items such as kitchens and bathrooms.

Throughout the document you will see two icons.



The Onward Extra icon shows you where we are offering services to you in addition to the national standard.



Our life-cycle icon shows you how long you can expect this area of your home to last before a replacement is considered necessary.



Understanding your home

To ensure we meet our Home Standard, we need to understand the condition of your home.

We hold a lot of historical information about repairs carried out at your property and this helps us to make sure that components such as bathrooms and kitchens are replaced when they get to the end of their life cycle.



Surveying your home

Typically we examine the general structure inside and outside, the roof, drainpipes, windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms, heating, electrics, flooring, fencing and paths. This helps us to know what needs to be replaced and when.

We carry out routine surveys and if you would like to know when your home is due to be surveyed, or when a specific improvement will be undertaken, please contact us.



Energy Efficiency

We will also assess how energy-efficient your home is and advise you about how you can save money by reducing your gas and electricity bills.

If you think your home needs a survey because of its age or condition, please contact us. See back page for contact details.

Meeting the National Housing Standards

There are a number of national housing standards we must comply with to make sure that your home is in a safe, sound and secure condition.

Our Home Standard aims to meet these standards and exceed them where possible.

The following provides an overview of the national standards.

The Decent Homes Standard

In 2000 the UK Government set a target to make sure all social housing met minimum standards by 2010 and that they were maintained in the future.

The Government defined a Decent Home as:

- Meeting the minimum safety standards for housing
- Being in a reasonable state of repair
- Having reasonably modern facilities and services
- Sufficient thermal comfort

We also meet a number of other Government standards, covering things such as gas and fire safety, your health and safety, and asbestos.

You can find more information about the Decent Homes Standard at www.gov.uk and view the additional standards at www.legislation.gov.uk

Onward's Home Standard

We aim to meet five key areas detailed within our Home Standard:

- Modern Homes
- Living Independently
- Warmth and Efficiency
- Safety and Security
- Your Responsibilities

We have detailed how we intend to meet these key areas in each section.

Your Kitchen

We appreciate how much you value the kitchen as the heart of your home and aim for all our homes to have reasonable modern facilities and finishes in good working order.

Under the Decent Homes Standard, the Government defines a modern kitchen as less than 30 years old. However, we will replace your kitchen every 20 years.

As standard

Wherever possible, we will make sure that your new kitchen has:

- 8 kitchen units (or no less than your current number)
- Separate electrical connection sockets for all appliances
- A new sink and water-efficient taps
- 450mm of ceramic tiling above your worktops with a range of colours available (three rows of tiling above worktops)
- New flooring and decoration
- A modern light fitting
- A new accessible device to isolate your water supply

○ Extra



When replacing your kitchen we will:

- Employ kitchen designers to consult you about the design, style and colour scheme and incorporate your ideas where we can.
- Offer you a choice of modern colours for kitchen units, wall tiles and flooring.
- Where necessary, help you to clear out your existing units ready for the new kitchen installation.
- Where there is a risk of scalding, we will install thermostatically controlled taps.
- Carry out additional work, such as extra tiling or integrating appliances, at your own cost and subject to agreement with the contractor.
- Reasonably adjust the design of your kitchen to accommodate your health needs, where you've told us about them.

Your Bathroom

When we upgrade your bathroom, we will provide you with a modern, durable and functional replacement.

Under the Decent Homes Standard, the Government defines a modern bathroom as less than 40 years old. However, Onward will replace your bathroom every 30 years.

As standard

We will make sure that your new bathroom has:

- A water-efficient white ceramic pedestal wash basin, toilet and a pressed steel bath
- Water efficient taps
- White tiling installed in splash areas and above the basin, with a range of coloured border tiles
- New flooring and decoration
- A low-energy extractor fan
- A modern light fitting
- Install an electric shower over the bath

○ Extra



When replacing your bathroom we will:

- Offer you a choice of colours for flooring, decoration and border tiles, and a matching bath panel and toilet seat.
- Where there is a risk of scalding we will install thermostatically controlled taps and showers to prevent scalding.
- Install alternative or additional tiles, supplied by you, subject to agreement with the contractor.
- Reasonably adjust the design of your bathroom to accommodate your health needs, where you've told us about them.
- Offer all sheltered scheme customers a level-access shower.



External Decoration ○ Extra



We will look after the outside of your home by painting it every 5 years.

We will also paint communal areas that you share with other tenants.

As standard

We will maintain the outside of your home by painting:

- Woodwork that has been painted before, including timber windows and doors, and any wooden areas around your roof
- Previously painted walls, including rendering and cladding
- All new materials we have installed, including woodwork and rendering
- Fencing and gates

When maintaining the outside of your home we will:

- Provide a choice of paint colours to you, although this may be limited if you live in a listed building or conservation area.
- Inspect roofs and make sure that they are wind and weather proof.
- Make sure that chimneys are free from vegetation, have no loose or missing pots, and the brickwork is in good condition.
- We will clean roofs that have a severe growth of weeds and other vegetation on them.
- We will make sure that gutters and rainwater pipes are safe, secure and that water can flow through them easily.

Your roof

We will ensure that your roof is watertight and repaired when necessary. We will replace your roof when it has reached the end of its life cycle or it is no longer value for money to keep repairing it.

As standard

When we renew your roof we will:

- Replace pitched and flat roofs including flashings with materials of a similar type
- Replace gutters, fascia, soffits and verges with an equivalent, usually made from PVCu. Different materials may be used on listed buildings or homes within conservation areas.
- Inspect your roof structure before we start work and if needed treat any infestations or rot in the timbers
- Make sure your T.V aerial, satellite dish, alarm, and telephone services etc. continue to work while we undertake roof work and ensure they are re-fixed once work is complete.



Living independently

We want you to be able to live independently and recognise that undertaking some small changes or adapting your home can help you to live there happily for longer.

We understand you may need support and if you are experiencing difficulties, our Housing and Wellbeing Team may be able to help you. We will visit you at home to discuss your needs and then agree how best we can support you.

As standard

We can provide:

- Small adaptations, such as handrails
- Major adaptations to help you move around more easily (please note this is subject to additional funding requirements)
- Undertake housing, health and wellbeing assessments to identify any support needs you may have.
- Help to connect you with specialist agencies and services which may be able to support you.

○ Extra

When providing adaptations we will:

- Work in partnership with occupational therapists to make sure your needs are fully assessed before work begins
- Employ specialist, experienced contractors and make sure you are confident using any equipment we install
- Provide other equipment or aids to help you manage better at home
- Consider your future needs when carrying out planned improvements and when building new homes (such as installing level access showers into sheltered accommodation)



Energy efficiency as standard

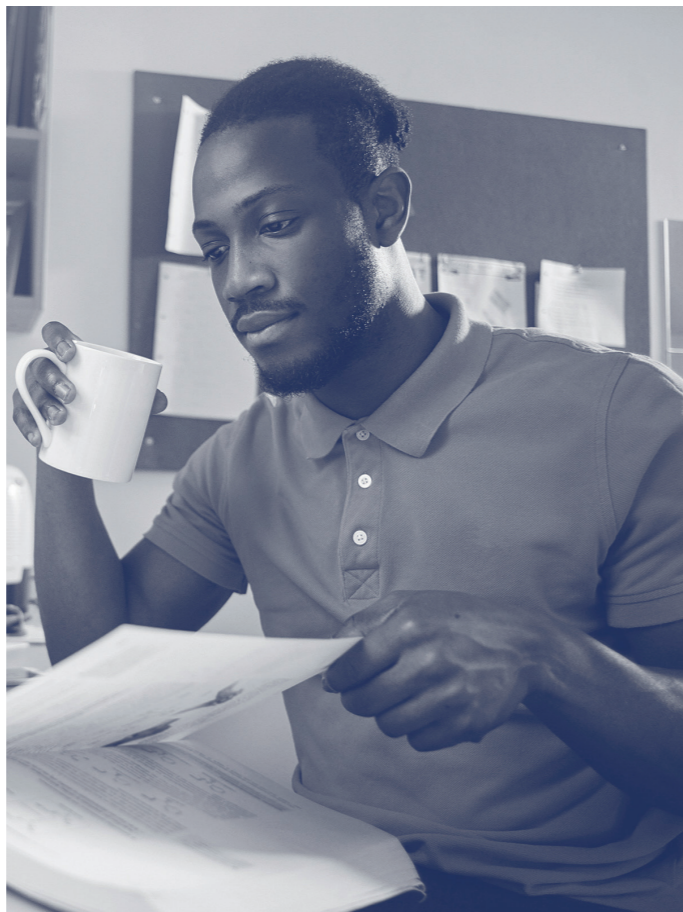
When we survey your home, we will look at how energy efficient it is and make improvements wherever we can, including:

- Replacing boilers
- Sealing areas where draughts are coming in
- Install the most energy efficient windows for your property
- Loft and cavity insulation

All our homes with new tenants since 2008 have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). This provides details of the energy efficiency of your home.

You can check if your property has had an EPC by visiting the government website www.epcregister.com which holds all information on completed EPC's

We have produced lots of helpful information so you can find ways of reducing your energy costs. Visit our website or speak with your Neighborhood Specialist who can help further.



Your heating & hot water

We know how expensive the cost of household energy has become and we want all our homes to have energy-efficient gas central heating, where it can be installed.

When required, we will replace boilers with an A-rated energy efficient condensing boiler.

We will replace boilers every 15-20 years and replace your radiators every 30 years .

As standard

When installing your new heating system we will:

- Install a modern, energy-efficient boiler to help you save money
- Inspect radiators and controls to see if they need to be renewed because of age, condition or efficiency
- Provide you with greater control over heating your home more efficiently with a range of controls, including room thermostats, thermostatic radiator valves and a boiler programmer.

○ Extra



When replacing your heating system we will:

- Talk to you to see how we can best replace your heating with as little inconvenience and disturbance to your flooring and finishes as possible
- Show you how to efficiently use the system and programs, and give you the manufacturer's operating manual
- Install radiator reflective panels behind all new radiators to help you save energy, money and reduce heat loss.



Loft & Cavity Insulation

As standard

- Install up to 300mm of loft insulation in your roof space, where it is possible to do so. Usually, you will need to remove all your belongings from the loft to enable us to do the work.
- If your home is constructed with cavity walls, we will install cavity wall insulation. The surveyor will advise you during the inspection

○ Extra

When installing loft insulation we will:

- Clear roof spaces to allow us to carry out the work, if you are in need of support.



Windows & doors

Modern windows and doors not only improve the appearance of your home but provide better warmth and security.

We will consider replacing your windows and doors based on their condition and age (after 25 years for windows and 35 years for doors). This may not be possible if your home is a listed building or within a conservation area.

As standard

When replacing your windows and doors:

- All new doors and windows will comply with Secured by Design standards and fire regulations. Where possible, we will install fire escape windows to the upstairs of your home.
- Ensure new windows are internally glazed to provide greater security and improve maintenance.
- We will make sure all new window handles are lockable and, where possible, positioned so they are easy for you to use.
- Energy efficient glazing



- All windows upstairs, and elsewhere when necessary, will have safety restrictors, allowing them to be opened to a maximum of 100mm unless overridden by an adult.
- We will install low-maintenance front doors and frames with a number, letter box, spy hole, double glazed vision panel (where selected), draught proofing, low level threshold and door knocker
- We will replace patio doors but will not install them where they have not already been in place.
- All windows will be designed to improve the ability to clean them from the inside.

○ Extra

When replacing your doors:

- You will have a choice of door styles and colours, although this may be limited if you live in a listed building or conservation area.

Your health & safety

We may inspect your home to make sure it meets health and safety requirements. This may include checks for asbestos, fire safety or other issues that affect your wellbeing.

We will notify you in advance of any inspection.

Please alert us immediately to any issues that you believe could be damaging to your health.



Inspections & servicing

As standard

We will inspect and maintain the following equipment to meet legal requirements, if we have fitted them to your home:

- Gas
- Fire alarms/emergency lights
- Lightning conductors
- Door entry systems
- Solar panels and other renewable technologies
- Passenger lifts and lifting equipment, such as hoists
- Electrics
- Water systems that need to be checked for legionella
- Communal TV systems
- Other specialist equipment installed by Onward

Not all our homes contain this equipment and the list is not exhaustive. Please contact us if you are unsure about the maintenance/repair of equipment in your home.

Gas safety

As standard

We will:

- Carry out a gas safety check on all your gas appliances every year to make sure they are safe. This is our legal obligation
- Notify you when your gas service is due. You must contact us as soon as you receive this
- Provide you with your gas safety certificate once the checks have been carried out
- Service any carbon monoxide detector, if you already have one fitted
- We will install a carbon monoxide detector at your next electrical inspection which will take place over the next five years.

All our gas engineers are Gas Safe-certified and we also hold the Gas Safe Certificate.



Smoke detectors

As standard

- If you live in a flat, we will test your smoke detectors and service the communal fire alarm where one is fitted by us. It is important you give us access to your home for these vital checks
- Where there is not one present in your home, we will install one as part of the next electrical safety check over the next five years

Electrical Safety

All electrical installations deteriorate with age and use. They should therefore be inspected and tested at regular intervals to check whether they are in a satisfactory condition for continued use. Such safety checks are commonly referred to as 'periodic inspection and testing'.

As standard

- We will inspect the electrics in your home every five years to make sure they comply with current regulations (sheltered schemes will be checked every 12 months)
- As part of our inspection, we will test the circuits, check all electrical sockets, and provide you a certificate which details future electrical work that we may need to carry out.
- We will install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector at the time of the visit where there are none present.



Dealing with Asbestos

Based on the age and characteristics of your home, we may carry out a survey to find out whether there is asbestos present.

Although it is now illegal to use asbestos products, it was used extensively in building and construction during the 1970s. Much of the asbestos is still in place, but as long as it is in good condition and is not going to be disturbed, there is no risk to you or your family.

However, if it is disturbed or damaged, it can become a danger to health. We have a robust asbestos policy and procedures which comply with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and asbestos regulations.

As standard

Before we make any major improvements to your home we will assess the risk of asbestos being present and may also need to undertake a survey before work starts.

If a survey is needed, we will let you know in advance and give you feedback once it is complete.

After the survey we will decide what we need to do to manage the risk in your home. This may include:

- Just monitoring the situation as there is no risk to you
- Making some minor alteration to your home to reduce the risk
- Removing the asbestos completely

We will contact you before we take any action.

We maintain an asbestos register for all our homes which we regularly update and use to minimise risk.

If you have any concerns regarding asbestos in your home, please contact us.

All our contractors will have received asbestos awareness training and, where required, we will only use licensed asbestos removal contractors in accordance with Health & Safety legislation.

Preventing Legionella

Legionellosis is the collective term for diseases caused by the legionella bacteria, including the most serious: Legionnaires' Disease.

We take the risk of legionella very seriously and have a number of measures in place to make sure the homes we manage are free from the bacteria.

As standard

- We have identified homes that have water systems that place them at greater risk of legionella than others. This is usually where water is stored but we service and monitor them to ensure that the bacteria does not become a problem.
- We comply with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidelines by identifying risks, assessing what needs to be done, and making improvements based on our assessments.



Reducing the risk of fire

We take fire safety very seriously as it can cause death, injury and damage to your home and possessions.

As standard

We are committed to reducing the risk of fire in your home by:

- Undertaking regular Fire Risk Assessments to all of our blocks of flats.
- Carrying out regular communal area inspections to remove any items that could be a fire hazard or block an escape route.
- Ensuring a suitable fire detection and alarm system is fitted in the communal area of your block (for those living in flats) and inside your home.
- Making sure escape routes are free from trip hazards, are adequately lit, are signposted and lead everyone to a place of safety.
- Carrying out checks to gas, electrical and fire safety systems within your home.

Fences & walls

As standard

- We will replace all existing fences, gates and walls where there is a need with the aim of improving the layout where possible and using modern materials where we can.