

The Onward Newsletter

Designed with customers, for customers

November 2021



**COULD SHARED OWNERSHIP
BE FOR YOU?** See
page 3.

**INSIDE THIS
EDITION:**

ONWARD VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME, YOUR MONEY,
WINTER TIPS, REPAIRS UPDATE, BUILDING STRONG
COMMUNITIES, GETTING INVOLVED WITH ONWARD.

WELCOME.

Winter is certainly with us. There is so much to enjoy at this time of year, from comforting traditions like bonfire night, to being at home with family and loved ones as the nights grow darker.

But the coming of winter also brings challenges for many. Maybe it will be harder to get out of the house to meet friends. Or perhaps the turn in the weather means we notice something that needs fixing in the home; something else to sort out in an already busy life.

We have a plan this winter to make sure we are there for you when we are needed.

So if something goes wrong in your home, we will sort it out as quickly as possible. This newsletter includes an update on our repairs service and explains the work we are doing to stay ahead of supply shortages in the wider economy.

Or maybe you are finding it increasingly hard to make the money add up, or to pay your rent? Our team of income specialists is just a phone call away with their expert advice and guidance. Please contact us, even if you are just worried and want a chat.

You will also find an update on the work we are doing with individuals and communities to prepare them for the future. We share some stories about equipping people for work and nurturing local networks, so people can look to themselves and their neighbours for help.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and wish you a restful Christmas season when it arrives.



Bronwen Rapley,
Chief Executive



HELPING COMMUNITY PROJECTS TO SUCCEED.

Got a great idea for a community project, but need a little help to get it off the ground? The Onward Community Fund is available for local groups to bid for up to £2,500 for help make a positive difference to their communities.

In the last two funding rounds we've supported a mix of projects across Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside including:

- Lancashire Women
- ROC Garden, Salford
- Anfield Amateur Boxing Club
- Food Larder – The Little Centre
- Daisy Hill Cricket Club
- Crescent Food Bank

We're looking to support more projects for our next round of funding which closes 15th January 2022. If you have an idea to help your community, whether it's improving mental wellbeing or building digital skills or providing employment and training support, then we want to hear from you.

Contact socialinvestment@onward.co.uk or visit onward.co.uk to find out more about the Onward Community Fund.

GET ON THE LADDER FOR LESS WITH SHARED OWNERSHIP.

Dreaming of buying a new home but don't think you can afford it? Well, with Shared Ownership it might be easier than you think.

Shared Ownership is another way to buy your home. You buy a share (between 25% and 75%) and pay rent on the rest. Onward owns part of it – but you're living there, you decorate it, and you decide when to sell.

Buying a percentage of your home means a smaller deposit and smaller mortgage. And usually, you can carry on buying shares, to own it 100%.

It's a sooner first step on the ladder for lots of people. Like Kristian and Gillian (pictured), who swapped the one-bedroom flat they rented from Onward for a brand new family home in Whitefield, buying a 55% share in a three-bed house with a deposit of just £5,000.



Onward
living

To see if Shared Ownership might be for you, find out more and browse our latest homes for sale at: www.onward-living.co.uk

ONWARD VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME.

Rock Street Orchard



The Onward volunteering programme was launched in December 2020 to help with food deliveries and provide support to residents over the Christmas period.

Throughout 2021 we have expanded the programme and secured more opportunities for Onward colleagues to volunteer and support community projects across the North West.

So far this year, 115 Onward colleagues have volunteered across 38 organisations in Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside, including:

Rock Street Orchard – Working with local school children and Sow in the City, we've cleared the green space at Rock Street to create a garden. There will be regular volunteering opportunities to help maintain the garden once finished.

The Naz



The Naz - Volunteers have painted the local community centre in the heart of our Salford East neighbourhood. The centre provides support for Onward customers and is a base for community projects.

YOUR MONEY MATTERS.

This time of year can be expensive and money can often be tight. Our Financial Inclusion team can provide free and confidential advice on managing your money and planning your budget. Contact us on 0300 555 0600 for support.



RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES.

In the new year we will be reviewing rent and service charges.

We're determined to make a positive difference to our customers' lives and offer good value for money. If you have any concerns about finances, contact our Financial Inclusion Team for free and confidential advice on 0300 555 0600.

ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS.

Over the past few months, Onward has been using new automated technology to talk to our customers. The Income & Financial Inclusion team have introduced automated texting and phone calls to reach out to customers to offer financial advice and support, and to discuss rent when required.

This technology is helping us to talk directly with customers and make sure we're available if you need to speak to us about your rent or your finances. We're now able to speak to more customers and give you the help and support you need. If you have any concerns about a message you've received from Onward, please contact us and we will be able to advise you.

We know that things are getting expensive with increasing energy costs, fuel prices and changes to Universal Credit. We're keen to remind you of some services and support available if you need a bit more help.



COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS.

You may be eligible for a cold weather payment if you receive these benefits:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Support for Mortgage interest

To learn more about the Cold Weather Payment scheme, visit www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment.



WINTER TIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR HOME.

As temperatures drop, most of us will be spending a lot of time indoors so it's important to make sure your home is safe and warm.

Here are a few tips to help you look after yourself and your home.

1. Close blinds and curtains at night to help keep the heat in your home.
2. Keep furniture away from radiators to allow heat to circulate freely.
3. Keep outside doors shut to minimise draughts.
4. If you have a pre-payment meter, make sure you have sufficient credit.
5. If you are away from your home at Christmas keep your heating on at a low constant temperature for an hour per day.

It's also helpful to make sure to know how to turn off your gas and power, and where your stopcock valve is to turn off your water. Don't forget to keep a torch handy too in case of a power cut.



We also have a range of helpful three minute video guides to help you though the winter available at www.onward.co.uk



Scan with your phone camera to watch the videos

If you have any concerns about paying your energy bills please get in touch with us on

BE WARM, KEEP SAFE.

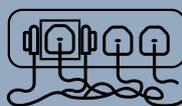
When the nights draw in and temperatures fall, we look for ways to stay warm – but safety isn't always the first thing on our minds. Here are a few things to remember this winter:



Test your **SMOKE ALARM** monthly.



Never leave **CANDLES** unattended make sure they are extinguished properly.



Don't overload **SOCKETS**. If wires are damaged or frayed, do not use items. Don't leave washing machines, tumble dryers or dishwashers running unattended.



Keep **HEATERS** away from clothes, curtains, furniture and other flammable materials.



SEASONAL DECORATIONS can catch fire very easily. Keep them well away from heat sources or electricals.

The fire service offer a free 'safe and well' service that gives you fire safety advice personally tailored to you and your household.

To book a visit, call:

Lancashire	0800 169 1125
Merseyside	0800 731 5958
Greater Manchester	0800 555 815

HELP KEEP YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD TIDY.

We know that litter, waste and fly tipping are important issues for many of our communities. When rubbish is dumped outside homes it creates a mess for residents and can be a fire or health risk.

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.

We're working with local authorities, contractors and communities to tackle fly tipping and litter across neighbourhoods and help make it easier to dispose of waste.

You can report dumped rubbish or fly tipping to us on 0300 555 0600 or via the MyOnward portal.



REPAIRS UPDATE.

Our top priority is getting your repairs fixed as quickly and efficiently as possible. We have maintained our routine repairs service since reopening after the first lockdown.

Like all social housing providers, we are dealing with supply chain challenges facing the UK, from securing repairs materials to getting skilled people to complete the work. Due to forward planning, we are currently doing OK, but we will face challenges throughout the winter.

Our frontline teams are working hard to meet demand but some lower priority repairs may take a little longer than expected to complete.



We will keep you informed if your repair is delayed or the appointment has to be changed.

If your repair is an emergency call us immediately on 0300 555 0600. Emergency repairs can be reported 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



REPORT A REPAIR.

If you need a repair, we'll arrange a convenient time to fix it.

Log your repair via the **My Onward portal**
Email us at customerservices@onward.co.uk
Call us on **0300 555 0600**

BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES.

Our Social Investment team has worked with nearly 70 organisations across the North West this year to provide advice, connect groups with each other, and support funding opportunities.



Community volunteers helped with the refurbishment of facilities at St Barnabas Community Centre in Hattersley.

OVER THE LAST YEAR WE HAVE SUPPORTED KEY PROJECTS INCLUDING:



Hattersley Community Garden – Within a three year period the local community has transformed an abandoned allotment space to a flourishing garden, providing work, skills and volunteer placements in the community. We continue to work with the Hattersley community to provide practical support to help the community garden grow.



Foxton Centre – We worked with the Foxton Centre to secure a major funding grant that will see it return it to a youth and community centre for the Queen Street and Avenham community.



Murdishaw Community Design Team – A team of 15 residents has worked to shape the development of a community village for their area and we've supported them to lead and guide future improvements in and around Murdishaw.

SUPPORT FOR JOBS AND SKILLS.

Throughout 2021 we have supported 350 customers and helped more than 20 people into work. We have also continued to deliver our key mentoring projects – the Hattersley Work and Skills Coach and the 1st Call and More Positive Together projects in Lancashire.

The Onward Employment and Training Fund has helped 69 people access training and opportunities to boost their skills and start new jobs. This support has helped provide clothing and assist with the costs of starting a new job, and is available to all Onward residents.

In Oldham we've helped deliver 'Step into the NHS', an employment training project for residents to find out more about careers in the NHS, working alongside Oldham Council's 'Get Oldham Working' initiative, Regenda, Northern Care Alliance (NHS) and Hollinwood Thriving.

We are also working with the Careers and Enterprise Company's Enterprise Advisor Programme, supporting pupils on careers and interview days and building links with local employers with local employers.



ARE YOU A MEMBER?



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 Customer Engagement Community. With over 2,500 members the Community ensures that our customers play an influential role at Onward.

Members regularly take part in online forums and service inspections as well as completing surveys, covering all subjects from repairs to the environment to customer services.

Over the last year, members have

- Shaped customer communications
- Influenced service delivery
- Participated in training
- Shared their views on neighbourhood priorities

Monthly newsletters keep the Community updated on opportunities to participate, along with updates on recent activities.

All members are also entered into a monthly prize draw!

There is no obligation to take part – as a member you can participate in whatever you want when it suits you.

If you aren't already a member, then join today. Email us at customerengagement@onward.co.uk or scan the QR code.



Joe Corbett,
Customer
Community
Member



Scan with your
phone camera

