

Onward

# YOUR VOICE.

FEBRUARY 2022

Welcome to the latest edition of Your Voice, and welcome to all new Customer Engagement Community members who may be reading this for the first time. Each month 'Your Voice' aims to bring you the latest engagement opportunities and updates from previous activities.

Our aim is to have 10% of our customers signed up to the Community and with 9.2% already members, we are not far off this target. If your friends and neighbours aren't already members, please encourage them to sign up.

We have a few new forums this year – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Building Safety and Leasehold, and if you are interested in any of these please drop us a line at [customerengagement@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerengagement@onward.co.uk)

Jo Phillips,  
Customer Engagement Manager

## WELCOME.



In January the Customer Engagement Team welcomed Danny via the GEM Programme.

Since 2018 we have worked in partnership with the GEM Programme to develop individuals by providing placement opportunities and workplace mentors to recent graduates who are interested in the opportunities and challenges housing faces as a sector. We are pleased Danny has joined the team and is settling in well. I'm sure you'll hear more from him in the coming months as he learns the ropes as a Customer Engagement Specialist trainee.

We also welcomed Zahra this month. Zahra is with us until May and will be working alongside the team as a Customer Services Assistant. She will be supporting the team with the co-ordination of engagement activities, as well as supporting customers to get involved.



## DIGITAL INNOVATION LAB.

Thank you to everyone who came to the Digital Innovation Lab in January. Onward colleagues and customers joined forces to review some new technology and share ideas for our digital future. If you are interested in joining in, please email [samantha.amis@onward.co.uk](mailto:samantha.amis@onward.co.uk).

## ONWARD EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING FUND.

The Onward Employment and Training Fund awards grants to people who live in Onward properties to access work, training or educational opportunities that support future employment, self-employment or in-work progression. To find out more visit our website or email [scott.brerton@onward.co.uk](mailto:scott.brerton@onward.co.uk)



# INFLUENCE ONWARD'S FUTURE.

As a member of our Customer Engagement Community, we value the time you take to share your ideas and give feedback on what we do. We are currently in the process of shaping our vision for the future and we want you to play a part in this.

The current Corporate Plan was put in place in 2018 and runs until 2023, but the world has changed a lot since it was written. Now is a great time to refresh our Plan and reaffirm the positive difference we want to make for our customers.

The Onward Board and Scrutiny Board have already met to help shape the Plan; we now want to consult with you ahead of a wider consultation with all of our customers. So, this is an early opportunity to influence our Plan for the years ahead.

You will have recently received an email from us asking you to spend a few minutes reading our proposal and completing a short survey. We really want to hear from you. By taking part in this consultation, you will help to shape the future of Onward. If you haven't received an email, please let us know at [customerengagement@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerengagement@onward.co.uk)

## MURDISHAW BUNGALOWS.

In September 2021, Onward consulted with residents about proposals to deliver improvements to the bungalows on the Murdishaw estate in Runcorn. During this consultation, we asked for views on a range of measures designed to improve the overall appearance of the properties and make them more energy efficient in the future.

The proposals included new doors and windows, improvements to the insulation of exterior walls, and replacement of flat roofs with pitched roofs.

Now that funding is in place for the work and the planning application has been approved, the Customer Engagement Team are recruiting Neighbourhood Champions from each of the five closes of bungalows. The Champions will receive any news before it goes out to all customers and be a friendly reassuring face who can signpost to the right people during the works programme that will take place over the financial year April 2022 to March 2023.

If you live in one of the bungalows and like the idea of being a Neighbourhood Champion contact Val at [val.alker@onward.co.uk](mailto:val.alker@onward.co.uk)



## HATTERSLEY ESTATE MEETING – GREATER MANCHESTER

This month we took part in an Estate Open Evening in Hattersley along with Tameside Council Officers, local Police, and Councillors. The evening was a great opportunity to chat to the local community about what is happening in Hattersley and for residents to share comments, ask questions and raise concerns. The evening was a great success and a positive way of involving residents in shaping local priorities.

We will be at a similar event in Oldham at the end of March so look out for an invite if you live locally.

# ONWARD SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE.

It's been a busy few weeks for the Scrutiny Board. In January they met with members of the Onward Board to give views and ideas for the next Corporate Plan. Their feedback was welcomed by Chief Executive Bronwen Rapley and Chair of the Board Tim Johnson.

This month the Scrutiny Board held their quarterly meeting to review how Onward services are performing. At this meeting Simon Brown, Property Services Delivery Director, gave an update on how we are improving the repairs service in challenging circumstances such as high levels of sickness and component shortages.

We welcomed six new members to the Scrutiny Board in January, and they are making a valuable contribution already.

## HOW ARE THEY FINDING THEIR NEW ROLES?

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Interesting & diverse group. Great mixture of constructive and interesting opinions. **MAXINE**

Hi I am Jude, I've been an Onward customer for over 20 years and live in the Greater Manchester region. I've found my first month of being a new Scrutiny Board member mind boggling initially but once getting used to it it's very interesting and very informative and valid support from customers and from Onward as a whole. **JUDE**

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## RAINBOW ROOFS: THE LGBTQ+ CUSTOMER VOICE.

Rainbow Roofs brings together customers from different social housing providers across the North West, to provide a place for them to discuss issues and concerns specific to them and share ideas for raising awareness on key topics. This year the group have decided to focus on Hate Crime Awareness and how this affects LGBTQ+ communities and the places where they live.

As part of a programme of events being organised for LGBTQ+ history month, members have been invited to an event - 'Legacy of 67' at Manchester Central Library, hosted by the acclaimed artist Jez Dolan - that aims to capture the stories of LGBT people who lived prior to the decriminalisation of homosexuality.

We are currently looking to increase our Rainbow Roof membership, with a particular focus on recruiting customers from Lancashire and Merseyside, as these areas are currently underrepresented in the group. If this is something that you would like to get involved with, contact Daniel at [daniel.gregson@onward.co.uk](mailto:daniel.gregson@onward.co.uk).





# FREE WEBINAR.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) is creating a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. The system will include a set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures that social housing landlords must report on.

The measures will:

- let tenants see how well their landlord is doing; and
- identify which landlords might need to improve things for their tenants.

The recent Government White Paper says landlords should keep properties in good repair, maintain the safety of buildings, handle tenants' complaints effectively, engage with tenants helpfully and with respect, and take a responsible role in managing their neighbourhood.

It suggests possible Tenant Satisfaction Measures designed to see how well landlords are meeting these expectations. The RSH wants to build on these suggestions and decide how to make Tenant Satisfaction Measures a reality, and they are therefore consulting on the proposed measures. You can access the measures and proposals [here](#), and get involved in the consultation by completing the online survey.

## PLANNED REPAIRS AND INVESTMENT.

At Onward we are committed to investing in our properties, which means from time to time we will carry out planned maintenance to your home.

Examples of planned maintenance include:

- Replacing kitchens
- Upgrading bathrooms
- External decorating
- Replacing roofs
- Replacing boilers
- Replacing windows and doors

The Onward Home Standard, developed in consultation with our customers, outlines our approach to planned maintenance and the standards you can expect to receive from us during such works.

If you are having any planned works carried out in your home, we would love you to share your experience with us. We can provide you with a diary that you can spend a couple of minutes updating each day whilst the works are being carried out.

Want to do this? Just drop an email to Val at [val.alker@onward.co.uk](mailto:val.alker@onward.co.uk)

