Onward

Home user guide

A practical guide for occupiers

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Introduction

This information pack has been provided to assist you in looking after and enjoying your new home. The pack contains useful reference points and general guidance on some of the typical 'teething problems' usually associated with moving into a new build home. We advise that you read this pack at your earliest opportunity and make yourself familiar with the emergency shut off points and safety valves. Full technical information and instruction manuals are provided in Section 10.

Repairs during the first 12 months

The contractor who built your home (Starship) is responsible for certain repairs that occur within the first 12 months of your home being completed. Repairs during this period are called a 'defect.' After the 12-month period has expired, Onward will assume responsibility for repairs for rented properties. Please note that for Rent to Buy homes, the homeowner will assume responsibility for all repairs after they buy their home, assuming the 12-month defect period has expired.

Please read the important information below for confirmation on what is classed as a defect.

What is a defect? A defect is a problem with a new build property that should not have occurred, which the contractor has a responsibility to rectify.

What causes a defect? Faulty workmanship, materials, components, or a finish that does not meet the expected performance standards.

Commonly mistaken defects. Defects do not include accidental damage, criminal damage, misuse by residents or visitors, loss of keys or lack of maintenance. Also requests for extra items (gate, handrail, etc.) are not a defect and should be requested in writing to Onward and not reported as a defect.

Shrinkage/Settlement Cracks All new build properties will develop shrinkage/settlement cracks within the first 12 months. These are a natural occurrence caused by the drying out of materials (such as plaster). Although these cracks could be considered a defect, they are dealt with at the 12 months End of Defects inspection and put right before the property is handed over to Onward's in-house maintenance team. Settlement cracks less than 2mm in width would not be considered as a defect.

End of Defects Period The End of Defects Period, or DLP (Defects Liability Period), is 12 months from when the property is handed over to Onward by the Builder. A few weeks before this date you will receive a letter from us with an inspection date. These inspections usually take around 20

minutes and are carried out by Onward's Clerk of Works, a representative from Starship, and the Employer's Agent. A list will be made of defects and a timescale assigned to Starship to rectify them. Once the repairs are complete Onward will 'back check' a proportion of the properties in the scheme, to ensure that we are satisfied that the properties are now Onward's future maintenance responsibility.

Reporting a repair during the first 12 months

Although Starship is responsible for defect repairs during the first 12 months, these need to be reported directly to Onward so that we can 'log' the defect, instruct Starship to attend, monitor any trends and monitor response times.

You can report a defect to in a number of ways

- By telephone: 0300 555 0600
- Email: customerservices@onward.co.uk
- Fill out a contact form and find other ways to get in touch via our website: www.onward.co.uk/contact-us/

Reporting a defect repair after the first 12 months

At the end of the 12-month defects period, our systems are automatically updated and any repairs you report will be directed to our in-house maintenance team.

You can contact Onward to report a repair in the same way as shown above.

Section 1 – About your new home

The company responsible for the construction of this property is:

Starship Group Ltd
Hythe
Wirral Waters
CH41 1AA
Tel: 0333 772 7494
Web: **www.starshipgroup.co.uk**

Settlement

Each new home is an individually built, hand crafted product. However, some level of variation can be expected with the finished appearance. The nature of the materials used, and the way in which they interact and settle, means this is not an unusual occurrence. Do not worry, this is normal and happens with all new buildings.

Drying out & condensation

The materials in new homes, such as timber and concrete, alter in size and shape as they dry out. All new homes should be "run in" gently and your new home is no exception. There will be a some degree of moisture held within the fabric of the building as concrete, bricks, timber, plaster, and other materials may have been used during construction.

The drying out process will take time and will depend on the local weather conditions and the number of people living in your home. As each room is heated and lived in, the timber and plaster materials will shrink, which may cause minor cracking to appear. These cracks are nothing to worry about as they are not a structural matter and can be cured with a little redecoration. This work will generally be carried out at the end of the 12-month defect period.

The following will aid the drying out process:

Try to keep an even temperature throughout the day.

Use the heating sparingly at first so that the built structure warms up gently and has time to dry out gradually.

Try to produce less moisture in your home. Condensation levels can be reduced by covering pans when cooking, using cooker hoods and extractor fans where possible and avoiding drying clothes on radiators.

Condensation on windows can and should be wiped clean as soon as it appears, as build up can cause damage to wooden frames and internal decoration.

Condensation is a consequence of excess moisture in the air which can cause mould. If allowed to persist, it can damage floor covering, clothes and bedding etc.

Efflorescence is a natural consequence of brickwork drying out. This may appear as white staining (salt) on the face of the brickwork. This is a normal occurrence, it is not harmful and usually disappears over time. If efflorescence occurs on internal walls, it can be wiped or brushed away. If efflorescence persists internally, it could indicate a water leak, in this instance you should report directly to Onward.

Note: Your Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) should only be turned off when the system requires maintenance, which will be carried out by a professional service engineer on behalf of Onward.

Switching off the ASHP for long periods is likely to increase the risk of condensation as the main surfaces of the home get colder and react to the warmer air. During the first 9-12 months, alter your heating programme accordingly so that the temperature is maintained at comfortable levels. This will reduce the risk of condensation.

Once construction materials have dried out (normally 9-12 months) you should no longer experience condensation problems, although normal daily activities such as cooking and bathing will produce some water vapour.

For further information regarding condensation please refer to the ventilation section later in the Home User Guide.

Section 2 – Location of services

Cold Water Supply

If you have a burst water pipe or leak in your home, isolate the incoming water supply by turning off the tap using the stopcock or Sure Stop button (if fitted) and contact Onward immediately.

Stopcock and Water Meter

The mains incoming water stopcock is located in the cupboard under the staircase and is identified by a blue tap, similar to the image above. Please familiarise yourself with its location and operation in case of an emergency.

Isolating valves

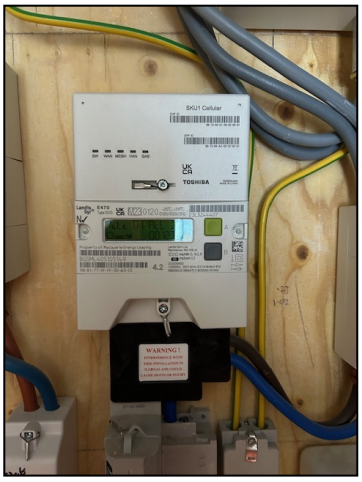
Isolating valves have been installed on both hot and cold-water pipe work. They are located below the final connection to the sanitary fittings, the kitchen sink, and the shower pipe. Isolating valves can be operated by using a flat head screwdriver and rotated through 90 degrees. This disables the supply to the faulty appliance.

Connecting appliances

Be careful if you are connecting kitchen appliances to the water supply and drainage. Check that hoses are properly connected and tightened before turning the water on. It is a good idea to re-check the connection once the appliances have been in use for a day or two – dripping connections can cause serious damage.

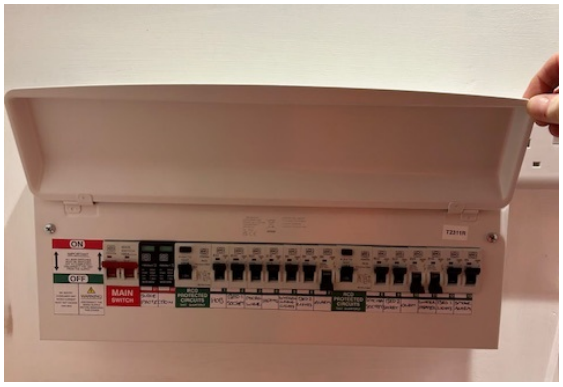
Note: Access holes have not been installed for the connection of the waste pipes through the cupboards due to differing manufacturers' specifications.

Electricity supply



Your property's mains electricity meter is located within the service cupboard under the staircase and is owned and maintained by Scottish Power. The meter installed is a smart meter, which means that the electricity supplier does not require access to your home to read the meter. The electricity consumer unit is also positioned within the same cupboard. This unit has Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCB), which act like fuses: they do not need rewiring should they fail.

*See section 6 for more information



If there is a fault in the dwelling wiring or a fault with an appliance you have plugged in, the MCB will switch off or 'trip' the electricity supply (this can also happen if a bulb 'blows'). You will be able to see at a glance which fuse has tripped as it will be facing the opposite way to the rest of the switches. Simply switch it back on to maintain the power.

Further protection from electrocution is given by a Residual Current Devise (RCD). This automatically switches off the power if an electrical appliance is faulty. Circuit breakers are marked up to assist in locating the correct circuit.

Note: One of your own appliances could have a fault which causes the electrics to trip. You can locate the faulty appliance by unplugging all the appliances, resetting the consumer unit, and plugging your appliances back in one by one. Once the faulty appliance is identified, you will need to stop using it and have it serviced by a reputable appliance service provider. If you are unable to identify a faulty appliance and are still having problems after resetting the consumer unit, please consult an electrician.

Section 3 – Coping with extreme weather

Flooding

Much of the land your home is built on is located in a flood zone known as 'Flood Zone 2', with a small percentage of the south corner located in 'Flood Zone 3'. This means that potential flooding could occur from either a river or the sea, and it can be difficult to predict when this may happen. Some simple preparations before the occurrence of a flood can significantly reduce the damage caused. Use this checklist to help you prepare:

- Know who to contact – keep important telephone numbers handy.
- Keep items of personal value to upper floors or safe places. Do not wait until a flood occurs to move treasured items to a safe place.
- Think about what you will want to move to safety if a flood happens, such as pets, cars, furniture, and electrical equipment.
- Make sure your contents are insured.
- Know how to turn off your gas, electricity, and water mains supplies.
- Keep a kit of essential items handy. For example, insurance policies, a torch, bottled water, a first aid kit and prescribed medication.

If you want to know more about flooding and how it could affect you, the government operates a free advice service, which is open 24hrs a day. Call Floodline free on 0845 988 1188.

Heatwaves

Hot weather can be a risk to the very young, elderly, overweight and seriously ill. In particular, breathing and heart problems have been shown to increase at higher temperatures. If somebody in your home is at risk from heat, then prepare your home by:

- Identifying which is the coolest room, so you know where to go to keep cool.
- Keep rooms cool by using light coloured shades or drapes on the windows. Metallic blinds and dark curtains can make a room hotter.

- When it is hot outside shut the windows and pull down the shades. Open for ventilation when cool.

- Keep a kit of essential items handy; stock up on prescription medicines and cold drinks.

More advice is available from NHS Direct or your local GP.

Winter weather and cold

If the temperature in your home drops below 16°C (61°F) you may be risking your health, particularly if you have respiratory problems or allergies. If somebody in your home is very old, very young or seriously ill, it is recommended that you keep the temperature above 20°C (68°F). This can be easily set using the Vaillant Sensocomfort programmer.

Following the suggestions below will help you to keep your home warm, affordably:

- Before winter, check the ASHP is working as normal and ensure there is nothing obstructing the unit so that a steady flow of air is maintained.

- Keep your main living room heated to 20°C. Your other rooms do not need to be as warm but do try to keep them above 16°C.

- Use your programmer to turn the heating on 30 minutes before you need it, and turn it off 30 minutes before you go to bed or leave the house.

- Thick curtains will help keep heat in, shut them as soon as it starts to get dark and keep doors between rooms shut to stop cold draughts.

- Make sure your radiators are not obstructed by any furniture or curtains.

- If you are elderly or on certain benefits you may be eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment or Cold Weather Payment to help with the cost of energy bills.

- If you have concerns about keeping your home warm or affording your fuel bills, please call your energy provider as they may be able to provide help.

*See section 6 for more information

Section 4 – Energy savings

Energy efficient light bulbs

Your property has been fitted with Energy Saving Lightbulbs as they use less than 20% of the energy of a conventional light bulb and can last up to 15 times longer, saving energy and in-turn saving you money!

Your Energy Saving Lightbulbs are widely available in all leading supermarkets, DIY shops and online stores.

Energy saving tips

Heating

- Lower the temperature on your controllers by 1 degree.
- Set your heating programmers to turn off before you leave the house and turn it off 30 minutes before you go to bed.
- Pull curtains shut at night to reduce heat loss, but be careful not to drape them over the radiators as this will funnel heat out of the windows.
- Put on additional clothing instead of using your heating.
- Don't excessively heat an empty house. If you are away from the house for a period of time, set your controller to maintain a reasonable temperature to avoid condensation build-up.
- On a sunny day, open curtains to utilise sunlight as a natural source of heat.

Water saving tips

- Have a shower instead of a bath. Baths use on average 80 litres of water compared to 35 litres for a five-minute shower.
- Turn off the tap whilst brushing your teeth to reduce water waste.
- Using a sink of water to wash up once or twice a day rather than having the hot or cold tap running could save around £35 a year on your gas bill and around £30 on your water bill.
- If you do need to rinse utensils or wash vegetables, use cold water and don't leave the tap running.
- If you have a dripping tap please rectify immediately in order to prevent water wastage.

Lighting & electrics

- Switch off lights when you leave a room.
- Use natural lighting.
- Turn your TV and other appliances completely off, do not leave on standby.
- Unplug you phone charger when your're not using it.
- Placing lamps in the corner of rooms will reflect more light so you won't need to use as many.

In the kitchen

- Only boil the amount of water you need for one cup rather than boil a full kettle.
- Use a pressure cooker, steamer or slow cooker instead of an ordinary pan.
- Defrost you freezer regularly to keep it running at top performance and keep your fridge/freezer three quarters full to be most efficient.
- Make sure your dishwaher is full on every load.
- Wash your laundry at 40 degrees rather that 60 degrees as 85% of the energy used to wash your clothes is used to heat the water.
- Dry your laundry outside whenever possible.

Recycling and waste

With increasing pressure from central government to reduce the amount of waste produced, we need to think about what is thrown away and what is produced in the first place. It is everyone's responsibility to help make your area cleaner and greener and this can be achieved through:

- Reducing the amount of waste we produce
- Re-using waste
- Recycling

General waste collections

The council operates its recycling and refuse collection service every week (Monday to Friday) no weekends.

To find out your waste collection day, contact Wirral Borough Council: www.wirral.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/bin-collection-date
Green Bin (Non-Recyclable) - Thursdays (Fortnightly)
Brown Bin (Garden Waste) - Tuesday (Fortnightly)
Grey Bin (Recycling) - Thursdays (Fortnightly)

The website will also give you further information to assist you.

Local recycling centres

Clatterbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre
Mount Rd,
Bebington,
Wirral
CH63 4JZ

The WRAP scheme

The WRAP website offers guidance on sustainable waste disposal and recycling in your home – Visit the website for more information **www.wrap.org.uk**

Section 5 – DIY

Wall fixings

The type of fixing you should use to attach items to walls depends on the construction of the wall and the weight of the item. Pictures and other light items can be hung on all types of walls using steel picture hooks or masonry nails. Your house has been constructed using a light gauge steel frame and modular panel system which is different to traditional masonry i.e. brick and block. For fixing into the walls, follow the advice below:

Metal frame internal walls

For heavy items such as wall cabinets or bookshelves, you should find the position of the metal frame behind the plasterboard and screw into that. The vertical metal studs are normally located at 600mm (2ft) centres and can be located using a device known as a stud detector. If studs are not in a suitable positions, it may be necessary to spread the load by screwing a piece of wood between two studs and fixing onto that.

Proprietary partitions

Certain plasterboard fixing devices are also available for fixing relatively light loads to proprietary partitions. Some type of proprietary partitions may not be suitable for fixing heavy items.

Floor fixings

It is highly recommended **NOT** to fix or screw any type of fixing that would penetrate the concrete floor due to the presence of underfloor heating pipes. Any damage caused by fixing through the concrete floors is the liability of the resident.

Decorating

Walls

Starship has painted the walls with emulsion paint and it is advisable that further coats of emulsion, oil-based paints or wallpaper are not applied to walls until they have dried out (this normally takes around 12-18 months). Any agreed defects within the first 12 months will be repaired using the original paint/colour applied by Starship. Any other paint covering or wall paper fitted will **NOT** be repaired.

Woodwork

New woodwork absorbs a lot of paint or stain, so the first painting of your home may not give as good a finish as later repainting. The surface should be cleaned and prepared properly and be completely dry before repainting. Any agreed defects within the first 12 months will be repaired using the original paint/colour applied by Starship. Any other paint covering or wall paper fitted will **NOT** be repaired.

Section 6 – How to operate

Heating and hot water systems
Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP)

How to Use Your Air Source Heat Pump Efficiently

This guide will help you understand how to use your ASHP efficiently to keep your home warm and your energy bills as low as possible. If you've been used to gas central heating, you'll notice a few differences in how the system works, so we'll highlight those as well.

How an Air Source Heat Pump Works

An air source heat pump extracts heat from the air outside, even when it's cold, and transfers it into your home to heat water for your radiators or underfloor heating. It works like a reverse refrigerator, and it's more efficient than traditional gas boilers.

How to Use Your Air Source Heat Pump Efficiently

1. **Set it and leave it**

   Unlike gas boilers, which are typically turned up high and then turned off when the home is warm enough, an ASHP works best when it's set to a lower, steady temperature and left on for longer periods. This is because ASHPs produce heat more slowly and efficiently at lower temperatures. Try to keep your home at a consistent temperature, rather than turning the system off and on frequently.

   Tip: Set your thermostat to around 18-21°C during the day and lower it slightly at night, especially in bedrooms.

1. **Use the Timer Settings**

   Use the system's programmable timer to match your heating needs. For example, you can schedule the heat to come on an hour before you wake up in the morning and reduce the temperature slightly during the day when you're not at home.

   Tip: Since the ASHP heats slowly, set the heating to start earlier in the morning than you would with a gas boiler to reach your desired temperature.

2. Heat Your Home Gradually

Air source heat pumps work at lower temperatures than gas boilers, so they won't heat your home as quickly. If you come back to a cold home, resist the urge to turn up the heat to high. Instead, set it to your regular temperature and let it warm the home gradually. This prevents the system from overworking and wasting energy.

3. Use Your Heating Zones Wisely

Your home has heating zones (separate controls for upstairs and downstairs). The controller for downstairs controls the heat for the underfloor system whilst the first floor controls the heat for the radiators. Make sure you're only heating the areas you need. You can set different temperatures for each zone to avoid heating unused rooms.

Tip: Close doors between rooms to keep the heat in areas you're using, as air source heat pumps heat more effectively in contained spaces.

4. Don't Block the Radiators

Ensure your radiators or underfloor heating systems aren't obstructed by furniture or curtains, as this blocks the heat from circulating. Letting the heat flow freely will allow the system to work more efficiently.

Key Differences Compared to Gas Central Heating

5. Lower Operating Temperature:

• Gas boilers heat water to a high temperature (usually around 70-80°C), which makes rooms heat up faster.

• Air source heat pumps heat water to a lower temperature (typically 35-55°C). This means your home heats more slowly, but the system is much more energy-efficient over time.

6. Longer Heating Periods:

• Gas boilers are often turned on and off quickly to boost heat.

• Air source heat pumps work best when kept running steadily for longer periods, maintaining a constant temperature. Avoid turning them off and on frequently.

7. Efficiency in Mild Weather:

• Air source heat pumps are particularly efficient in milder weather (above freezing), as they extract more heat from the air. In very cold weather, they will still work but may require longer running times to maintain your desired temperature.

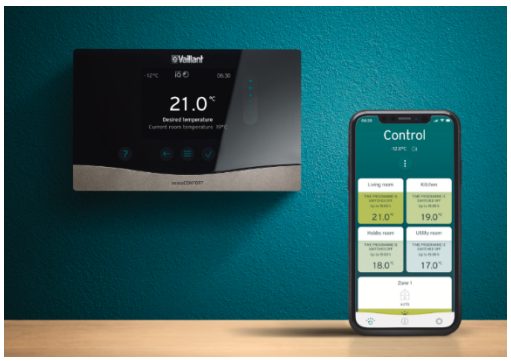
Extra Tips for Maximising Efficiency

• **Keep the outside unit clear:** Ensure the outdoor ASHP unit isn't blocked by debris, snow, or leaves. This helps the system extract heat from the air more effectively.

• **Use insulation:** Your home is well insulated and airtight – because the more insulated your home is, the less your ASHP will need to work, which saves energy and money.

• **Check the settings:** Review your heat pump's settings for energy-saving or eco modes that automatically adjust for optimal efficiency.

By following these simple tips, you'll be able to use your air source heat pump in the most efficient way, keeping your home warm and cozy while minimising your energy bills. If you have any questions or need help with your system, don't hesitate to contact Onward for advice.



Each heating zone (i.e. ground floor and first floor) has its own thermostatic programmer, which provides you with full and easy control of the air and hot water temperatures throughout your home.

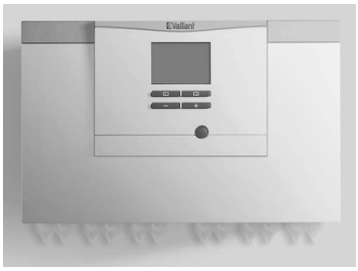
The ground floor heating is provided via the underfloor heating system, whilst the first-floor rooms are heated via wall-mounted radiators.

The ground floor Sensocomfort controller located in the entrance hall of your home allows you to control the heating on the ground floor along with hot water control, whilst the controller located on the landing at first floor allows you to control the air temperature.

Along with the programme controllers, Vaillant also offer a downloadable mobile app which provides the same control but with the benefit of remote use. Generally, living areas are best set to around 21°C and bedroom areas to about 18°C.

Refer to section 10 for user help and guidance on the Sensocomfort controllers and the app user guide.

Please be aware that underfloor heating is not a reactive heating system and will not change the zone temperature quickly. You should only change the temperature by a single degree at a time and wait for the room temperature to settle.



The Vaillant panel located within the service cupboard under the staircase does not require any manual input from yourself and is simply a control box which allows the Sensocomfort controllers to communicate with the external air source heat pump. The hot water takes priority from the heating when in demand from the air source heat pump.

Service Cupboard - Equipment

1. Red Expansion Vessel
• Purpose: Maintains pressure in the heating system and absorbs expansion when water heats up.
• Resident Action: Do not touch. Maintained by professionals.

2. White Expansion Vessel
• Purpose: Maintains pressure in the water system and absorbs expansion when water heats up.
• Resident Action: Do not touch. Maintained by professionals.

3. Vaillant Hot Water Cylinder
• Purpose: Stores and provides hot water for taps and showers.
• Resident Action: No action required. Any issues should be handled by professionals.

4. Pressure Gauge
• Purpose: Displays the system pressure to ensure it is operating safely.

• Resident Action: If the pressure drops significantly, contact a professional. Do not adjust.

5. Electricity Meter

• Purpose: Tracks electricity usage in the home.
• Resident Action: No action required. For information only.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long does it take for an air source heat pump to heat my home?

Answer: Air source heat pumps work differently from gas boilers, heating your home gradually over time. Instead of reaching high temperatures quickly, they maintain a lower, consistent heat over longer periods. Depending on the size of your home and the outdoor temperature, it might take a few hours to reach your desired warmth. It's best to set a comfortable temperature and leave the system running, rather than switching it on and off like a gas boiler.

2. Should I leave my air source heat pump on all the time?

Answer: Air source heat pumps are most efficient when left running at a steady temperature. They work best when maintaining a constant, lower heat, unlike gas systems that turn on and off frequently. Using the timer and thermostat controls to keep your home at a consistent temperature, especially during colder months, will help you save energy and maintain comfort.

3. Why is my air source heat pump not getting as hot as my old gas boiler?

Answer: Air source heat pumps operate at lower temperatures than traditional gas boilers. This means the radiators or underfloor heating will feel warm, but not hot to the touch like a gas-heated system. The system is designed to heat your home gradually and maintain comfort over time, rather than quickly blasting high heat. This method is more energy-efficient and helps reduce energy bills.

4. How do I use the thermostat and heating controls with my heat pump?

Answer: The thermostat and heating controls allow you to set and adjust the temperature in your home. It's important to set a steady temperature (typically between 18°C and 21°C) and use the timer to schedule heating around your daily routine. Unlike gas systems, which you may switch on and off frequently, it's best to let your heat pump run continuously at a lower setting. If you have zoned heating controls, you can set different temperatures for different areas of your home.

5. What maintenance is required for an air source heat pump?

Answer: Air source heat pumps require regular, but simple, maintenance to keep them running efficiently. The outdoor unit should be kept clear of debris like leaves or snow, and filters need to be cleaned annually. It's also recommended to have the system inspected by a professional once a year to ensure it's working optimally. This maintenance helps extend the lifespan of the system and keeps it operating efficiently.

6. Can I use my air source heat pump for hot water?

Answer: Yes, your air source heat pump can also provide hot water. The system heats water more gradually than a gas boiler, so it's best to set your hot water cylinder to heat at times when you know you'll need it, such as early in the morning or in the evening. It's important to set the water temperature to around 60°C to prevent bacterial growth but avoid setting it higher than necessary to save energy.

7. Does the air source heat pump still work when it's really cold outside?

Answer: Yes, air source heat pumps are designed to work even in cold weather, down to temperatures as low as -15°C or lower. However, they will work more efficiently in milder conditions. During very cold periods, the system may take longer to heat your home, so it's important to keep the system running consistently at a steady temperature rather than turning it off and on.

8. Can I use my air source heat pump to cool my home in the summer?

Answer: No. The air source heat pump installed in your home cannot be used for cooling during hot weather. If the temperature within your home becomes too high when the temperature is set as low as possible then revert to opening windows to allow external flow into your home.

9. How can I reduce my energy bills with an air source heat pump?

Answer: To maximise efficiency and keep energy bills low, set the heat pump to a steady temperature and avoid making frequent adjustments. Use the programmable timer to align the heating schedule with your routine. The installed solar panels will further reduce energy costs by using renewable energy to power the system.

Solar Panels

Making the Best Use of Solar Panels in Your New Home

Your home is equipped with solar panels, which are a great way to generate clean, renewable energy and help reduce your electricity bills. This guide will explain how solar panels work and provide tips on how to use them efficiently.

How Solar Panels Work

Solar panels convert sunlight into electricity, which can be used to power your home. Any excess electricity that you don't use can be exported back to the grid, and in some cases, you may be compensated for this. While solar panels work best on sunny days, they still generate electricity even on cloudy or overcast days, although at a reduced rate. Your solar panel system will include an inverter, which converts the solar power into usable electricity for your home.

Tips for Maximizing the Benefits of Your Solar Panels

1. **Use Electricity During Daylight Hours**
   Your solar panels generate electricity during daylight hours, so try to time your energy-intensive tasks, such as washing clothes, running the dishwasher, or charging electronics, during the day. This way, you'll be using the electricity your panels generate, which can reduce the amount you need to buy from the grid.

   Tip: If your schedule allows, try to run major appliances (e.g., washing machine, dryer, dishwasher) between 10am and 4pm, when the sun is at its peak.

2. **Spread Out Energy Use**
   Instead of using all your appliances at the same time, try to spread out their use throughout the day. This ensures that you're maximizing the electricity generated by your solar panels. For example, you can run your dishwasher in the morning, do laundry in the early afternoon, and charge electronics later in the day.

3. **Monitor Your System**
   Your solar panel system may come with a monitoring tool or app that shows how much electricity is being generated and used. Use this tool to understand your system's performance and adjust your energy usage accordingly. Monitoring can also help you spot any issues, such as reduced generation, which may need to be addressed.

4. **Check Your Inverter**
   The inverter is a crucial part of your solar panel system, and it should show a green light or a display indicating that it's working correctly. If the light turns red or shows an error, this could mean there's a problem with the system, and you should contact Onward.

Maintenance and Care for Solar Panels

Solar panels are durable and typically require very little maintenance. Here are a few key points to keep in mind:

• **Keep the panels clear:** Make sure the panels are free from debris such as leaves, dirt, or snow. If you notice a significant drop in energy production, it could indicate that the panels need cleaning. Most of the time, rain will naturally clean them, but you can arrange for professional cleaning if necessary.

• **Check the inverter:** Regularly check your inverter to ensure it is functioning correctly. If it displays any errors or warning lights, contact Onward for assistance.

• **Monitor performance:** Use the monitoring app or tool that comes with your system to keep track of how much electricity your panels are generating. If you notice a significant decrease in performance, this could be a sign of a problem with the system.

By following these tips and using your solar panels effectively, you'll be able to reduce your energy bills and enjoy the benefits of clean, renewable energy in your new home. If you have any questions about your system or need assistance, don't hesitate to contact Onward.

Solar Inverter

The solar inverter: located in the upstairs cupboard.

• Purpose: Converts electricity generated by solar panels (if applicable) into usable power for your home.

• Resident Action: Do not touch. Maintenance by a qualified electrician.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do solar panels work when it's cloudy or raining?

Answer: Yes, solar panels will still generate electricity on cloudy or rainy days, but at a reduced rate. They work best in direct sunlight, but any daylight will help them produce energy. The amount of electricity generated will depend on the strength of the sunlight.

2. Can I run my home entirely on solar energy?

Answer: It depends on your energy consumption and the size of your solar panel system. Solar panels can help offset a significant portion of your electricity use, especially during the day, but most homes still rely on grid electricity at times when energy consumption is high or when sunlight is limited (like at night or on very cloudy days).

3. What happens if I generate more electricity than I use?

Answer: If your solar panels generate more electricity than your home is using, the excess electricity is typically exported back to the grid. Depending on your setup, you might be eligible for payments or credits from your energy provider for the energy you send back to the grid. This is usually referred to as the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG).

4. Do I need to clean the solar panels?

Answer: Solar panels generally require very little maintenance, as rain will usually clean off dust and debris. However, if you live in an area where dirt or leaves frequently accumulate on the panels, you may want to have them cleaned periodically to ensure they are operating at maximum efficiency.

5. Will solar panels help me save money on my electricity bills?

Answer: Yes. Solar panels reduce the amount of electricity you need to buy from the grid. By using the electricity generated by the panels during the day, you can significantly lower your energy bills. The exact savings depend on your energy consumption and the size of your solar panel system.

Ventilation – MVHR

Your home has been fitted with a Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery System (MVHR). This system delivers fresh air to your lounge and bedrooms, and removes stale air from your bathroom and kitchen whilst extracting heat. The extracted heat from these rooms is then reused to warm the incoming fresh air, which is then supplied to your rooms. This is all carried out by a centralised ducted system which brings in, filters and distributes fresh air whilst, via a different ceiling vent, expelling the stale air to an external outlet located on the roof.

This system runs continuously in the background and requires no settings or input from yourself. However, the fan unit or centralised box will require periodic maintenance, usually every 12 months, for filter replacement. Please contact Onward for further details.

One of the benefits of the MVHR system is that it provides your home with cleaner, filtered air which in turn helps those with respiratory diseases and allergies. It also contributes towards eliminating problems associated with condensation and mould growth. However, it is recommended that you still consider the steps on the following pages to help minimise the production of condensation.

Note: Condensation is a consequence of excess moisture in the air and can cause mould. If allowed to persist this can damage floor/wall coverings, furniture, clothes, and bedding, etc.

The MVHR is:
Vent-Axia Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) Unit. Located in the upstairs cupboard

• Purpose: Provides fresh air while recovering heat from outgoing air to improve energy efficiency.
• Resident Action: Ensure air vents are not blocked. Filters will need periodic replacement; contact a professional for maintenance.

About condensation in your home

Condensation is caused when water vapour comes into contact with cold surfaces and condenses to form dampness or water droplets. Air can contain varying amounts of water vapour; warm air can hold more water vapour than cold air. When warm air comes into contact with a colder surface, it cools down and can't retain the same amount of water vapour. The excess water vapour is released and forms condensation. Water vapour is invisible in air and is formed when you breathe and when you carry out normal daily activities in the home. It's also formed as the materials used in your home's construction dry out.

Condensation in the home

Condensation isn't normally a building fault. It can occur in a new home because building materials, such as mortar and plaster, contain a lot of moisture. Water vapour is formed as the materials dry out when the home is lived in and heated. This is a slow process that takes some time to complete.

Modern homes are built so that they don't waste energy. Better insulation, draughtproofing on doors and sealed window units minimise draughts and stop heat escaping from your home. But they also reduce water vapour escaping, which can increase the risk of condensation.

Normal daily activities (such as taking showers and baths, washing and drying clothes, cooking, and boiling kettles) produce warm air containing a large amount of water vapour. If the warm air can't escape through an open window or air vent, it moves around until it finds a cold surface where it cools and forms condensation.

Homes that are heated intermittently are more likely to suffer with condensation problems than homes that are heated continuously. This is because continuous heating keeps the surfaces of the rooms warm, which reduces the risk of condensation forming on them.

Condensation is most likely to appear on windows, colder parts of walls, around external door and window openings, and where ceilings and floors meet with outer walls. It can also appear in areas where air circulation is restricted, such as inside cupboards and behind furniture that is placed against an outside wall.

If condensation keeps on occurring in the same place, it can sometimes cause black mould growth.

Reducing condensation

Controlling water vapour levels is important when living in modern, well insulated homes.

You're unlikely to prevent condensation in your home completely, but you should aim to reduce it to a level so that it doesn't cause problems. The following advice should help you to achieve this.

Produce less moisture

- Put lids on saucepans while you're cooking to reduce the amount of steam.
- Avoid drying laundry on a clothes airer or radiator. If you need to dry clothes indoors, open the window and close the door of the room where the clothes are drying, so that moisture can escape outside rather than circulate around your home.
- If you use a vented tumble drier, make sure it's properly vented to an open window or through an outside wall.

Stop moisture spreading

- While cooking, bathing, or washing, use an extractor fan and/or open a window, and keep the door closed. Keep the extractor fan on and/or the window open for about 20 minutes after you have finished (with the door closed).
- When condensation appears, wipe it away.

Ventilate moisture away

- If you can, put free-standing wardrobes and other furniture against internal walls, leaving a gap between the wall and the furniture so that air can circulate around the room. Try not to overfill cupboards, wardrobes and drawers so that air can circulate around the contents.

Provide even heating

- Keep your home warm to avoid cold surfaces and remember that it can take a long time for a building to warm up.
- If your home is unoccupied during the day, make sure the timer is set so that your home is warm by the time you return. During very cold weather it's better to leave the heating on during the day to maintain an even temperature. The temperature can be set a few degrees lower while you're out and turned up when you return.
- If you don't usually use all the rooms in your home, you should still keep them heated to avoid cold areas. It's better to keep all rooms heated to a low temperature than to have some rooms heated to a high temperature while others have the heating turned off.

Treating mould

If you notice mould growing in your home, you should treat it straight away to stop it from spreading and causing more damage to your home.

- Sterilise the affected area with a suitable fungicidal wash (available from most DIY stores), following the manufacturer's instructions. Keep checking the affected area for at least a week. If the mould reappears, wash it down again with the fungicidal wash to make sure the area is thoroughly sterilised.
- If the treatment appears to have been successful, you can carry out any necessary redecoration. If painting, use a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould, but remember that this won't be effective if it's later covered by ordinary paint or wallpaper. If wallpapering, use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth.
- If mould or mildew is growing on clothing or carpets, you should dry clean them. Don't disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning, as you can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- To prevent mould returning, make sure that you control condensation in your home.

Smoke and heat detectors

Your home has been fitted with a smoke detector located in the hallway on the ground floor and on the landing at first floor. There is also a heat detector located in the kitchen area. These devices are connected to the mains electricity supply and also have battery back-up supplies. Should the power supply be interrupted to the detectors, the battery back-up will maintain the detector for a limited time. If the battery needs changing, the detector will start to 'beep' intermittently. It is the resident's responsibility to change the battery if it goes flat. Do not under any circumstances remove the back-up battery from the smoke/heat detectors.

Smoke detector testing

Once the button on the detector is pushed and held down for approximately 3 to 5 seconds the alarm will sound for a short period of time. You should conduct this test once a week to ensure the alarm is working. Vacuuming the outside of the alarm from time to time will help avoid false alarms, which can be caused by dust. Smoke detectors have been installed in order to alert you of a potential fire.

Telephone sockets

Telephone socket/data points have been provided to the lounge area and within all the bedrooms. Once the main external line has been connected by BT, these sockets will be functional. British Telecom will supply a connection to your home using the ducts provided. It is your responsibility to arrange the connection with BT. You must also inform BT that the bedroom has a telephone extension.

TV aerial

The TV aerial is connected and ready for immediate use. The aerial is located on the rear elevation at roof level. Please note that it is your responsibility to tune in your TV.

Internal lighting

Your home has been fitted with low energy lighting. By using low energy bulbs, you only use 1/5th of the electricity you would normally use. Low energy light bulbs are designed to last on average eight times longer than normal bulbs.

When it comes to replacing your energy saving light bulbs, they are available from all large supermarkets and online retailers. Check the bulb specification on the expired bulb to ensure it is replaced with the correct new bulb.

External lighting

Your external lighting operates with a seven-day digital switch. The switch can be used manually or automatically.

If you set your switch to work automatically, it will work with a photocell sensor which will turn the light on in darkness and off when it is light outside.

Shower

Your home has been fitted with a bath and an over bath thermostatic shower. The shower instructions can be found within Section 10 of this guide.

Kitchen white goods

Your kitchen includes the installation of an integrated cooker hood, electric hob and electric oven. Three spaces have been provided for the use of a washing machine, dishwasher and condensing tumble dryer. Plug sockets have been provided in the spaces for connecting each appliance.

Cooker position

Cooker Hob: Your new hob has been fitted and is ready to use. Please make sure that you review the operator's instructions, either within your maintenance folder or located within the appliance on handover, to ensure correct usage.

Electric Oven: Your stylish functional oven is ideal for a family home and is both multi functional and economical. Your oven comes complete with baking tray and racks. For information about the many cooking options available, please refer to the operator's manual before use.

Extractor Fan: This stylish extractor hood not only gives your kitchen a sense of style, it also helps protect your home from cooking smells and condensation generated by cooking. Ensure that this is operational every time you cook to fully maximise its benefits.

EV Charging

Your home has been equipped with the facility to charge electric vehicles. The charging unit is fitted to the external wall to the front of your house and looks like the image below.

The model provided is a Project EV (EVA-07S-SE 7.3KW) and offers a simple plug and play interface, which simply means plugging in the charging cable from the vehicle into the charging unit port and when the green light flashes the charging cycle has begun. For full details on the charging facility, refer to Section 10 of this guide or visit: www.projectev.co.uk

The EV charger is connected to your home's electricity supply. During times when the house is using a lot of energy (e.g., when appliances like the washing machine, dishwasher, cooker, or showers are running), the house will take priority over charging the EV. This means the EV charger will wait until there is enough electricity available before it begins charging.

Typically, charging is best during quieter periods, such as at night, when household energy usage is lower. For most households with standard energy use, this is unlikely to cause any issues.

Section 7 – Aftercare

Windows

Window handles

Windows are fitted with key locking 'push to open' handles. This is an easy-to-use system yet secure and long lasting. To operate, simply press the thumb button, turn the handle through 90 degrees and push the window open to the desired position. This also allows the external glass to be cleaned from inside. To close, reverse the procedure by pulling the window closed and turning the handle back to the upright position, thus engaging it automatically. The handles can be deadlocked by using the key provided.

Window locking mechanisms

Windows are fitted with an Espagnolette or 'shoot bolt' locking system. This will allow the window to be locked in a night vent position. To engage the window in this position, open to approximately 15mm and then turn the handle down to its locked position. You may find a slight resistance at first; so not try to force the handle, simply move the window slightly back and forth until the bolts engage. Check that the window is held secure, by pushing it gently. If engaged in its correct position, the window will not move.

Velux Roof Light

The roof window on the second floor of your home is split into two opening types. The top two windows are known as 'centre pivot', which means its hinges are located in the middle

of the frame so when opened they pivot about this point. To open the window, locate the bar positioned at the top of window and gently pull downwards.

The lower windows are known as ‘top hung’, which means the hinges are located at the top and when opened they pivot about the top point. To open the window, locate the handle at the bottom and turn 90 degrees so the handle is upright.

Windows - Emergency Exits



The bedroom windows at first floor are all fitted with an override feature, which enables the window to open fully to allow escape in the event of an emergency. To operate this feature, simply press down the two latches near the window hinges (refer to image above) and push the window open. Please familiarise yourself with the window release.

External doors

Cleaning & maintenance

If the door gets dirty or soiled, wipe with a damp cloth to remove the stain. If the stain cannot be removed, a little washing up liquid in warm water may be used, but do not use strong or neat detergents. It is recommended that all bolts, locking pins and hinges be lubricated at regular intervals to ensure smooth operation.

Flooring

The frequency of floor cleaning is dependent upon the number of people occupying and visiting your home. No harsh chemicals or bleach should be used to clean the floors.

Standard surface finish

Sweep, mop sweep or dry vacuum the floor to remove dust and loose dirt. Mop regularly. Stubborn black marks can be removed by using the centre disc of a scrubbing pad and a small amount of undiluted alkaline cleanser. Place the disc under the sole of a shoe and rub – this gives greater pressure. Rinse the area well with clean warm water and leave to dry.

Laying flooring/carpets

If the property is finished without carpet or vinyl product, you must make sure that any new floor covering is worked into the gap underneath the doors (it is your responsibility to have the doors removed, planed and re-fitted).

Sanitary ware

Porcelain & enamel bath suite

The bathroom suite is designed to give years of reliable service, provided it is properly maintained and cared for. Recommended cleaning instructions:

- It is recommended that enamel baths are cleaned after every use with warm, soapy water, rinsed and, if desired, polished with a soft cloth.
- Never use gritty or abrasive cleaners.
- Regular Cleaning will prevent the build-up of soluble salts. Dripping taps should have worn washers replaced as soon as practical. Strong acids and alkalis, including bleach and chemicals, will damage the bath.
- Some cleaning products can have an adverse effect on enamel surfaces. We strongly recommend that the manufacturers' instructions are followed.

Porcelain WC and wash basin

For general cleaning purposes and removal of light dirt or deposits, warm water and detergent solution can be used.

Never use gritty or abrasive cleaners.

Fitted kitchen

Care & maintenance

The units and worktops in the kitchen have been manufactured to a high-quality specification. We strongly advise the user to read these guidance notes carefully before cleaning or polishing any fittings.

It is important to recognise that wall and base units located adjacent to ovens, hobs, and frequently used appliances (such as kettles and boiling pans) can suffer from excessive condensation, and in such cases great care must be taken to ensure that units are wiped clean and dried thoroughly to avoid damage.

Doors and drawer fronts manufactured in laminated chipboard should be kept clean, using a soft dampened cloth containing mild detergent. Heavier stains may be removed by using a cream cleansing agent; however harsh abrasive agents, such as acids, bleaches, petrol, scouring pads, wire wool and so-called cleaning acids should be avoided. During cleaning, do not use excessive amounts of water.

Sink and taps

To maintain the appearance of your sink and taps, clean only using a damp soft cloth. A solution of warm water and a mild liquid detergent may also be used where necessary and then rinse thoroughly.

Abrasive cleaners or acidic cleaners must not be used under any circumstances. Avoid contact with all solvents.

Melamine Faced Chipboard (MFC)

Standard cabinet drawers can be removed by pulling out the drawer until it resists, then gently lift the front edge upwards to disengage the drawer from its rail. To clean the inside of the drawer, remove from the cabinet and brush out. Wipe clean with a soft dampened cloth containing a mild detergent.

Cabinet hinges and drawer rails should be inspected periodically, and any dirt, fluff or grime removed with a dry duster or soft dry brush. Use a lubricant to ease operation if required. This can be achieved using a household spray polish.

The inside of cabinets can be cleaned by brushing out any loose dirt/dust and wiping the interior surfaces with a soft damp cloth and silicone furniture polish. If spillages occur, they should be soaked up immediately and wiped dry.

Worktop stains caused by everyday normal use may be removed using a soft damp cloth containing a mild detergent. More persistent stains may require the use of an abrasive cleaner; however, avoid using harsh scouring powders.

Note: Worktop surfaces can be permanently damaged by placing very hot items onto the worktop surface. This type of damage can be avoided by using a heatproof mat between the object and the work surface.

External Areas

The areas around your home only require limited maintenace and periodic inspections. In order to keep your home looking at its best, the following actions are recommended.

Paving Slabs

Wash down all areas of paving slabs with either warm soapy water or an acid-free soap-based cleaning product and use a stiff brush to remove general surface grime, algae and any moss build up. This should be carried out 3-4 times a year. Avoid using substances such as brick acid or any cleaner that contains hydrochloric acid or muriatic acid, as these tend to cause significant damage to the surface of the paving.

Timber Fencing

The timber fencing surrounding your garden has been supplied as treated panels, which does require maintenance to ensure it remains in good condition, maximising its potential lifespan. It is vital that the timber fencing, including any ironmongery, is periodically inspected in order to assess its general condition and any noticeable defects. You should contact Onward to discuss any repairs needed and any requirements for the application of any protective coatings.

Turfed Areas

It is your responsibility to ensure the grassed areas around your home are regularly maintained. As the turf is in its early stages, it will require watering every 14 days but avoid this during frosty periods. Alternatively, watering will need to increase during hotter periods throughout the year. Please ensure the grass is kept short by regular cutting, and again this will require more frequent cutting during the summer months as the grass tends to grow quicker. If you notice any gaps appearing in the joints in the turf or areas of brown appearing during the early stages of the grass taking root, then please contact Onward to discuss.

House External Fabric

The external fabric of your home doesn't necessarily require any maintenance other than window, window frame, door, and door frame cleaning and periodic inspection. If you notice anything that looks untoward or out of place, please contact Onward to discuss.

Section 8 - Quick links

For addition information, please explore the helpful resources below.

Vaillant

The myVAILLANT app | Vaillant

Valliant Advice and Heating Tips

Valliant Smart Controls-SensoComfort

Vaillant UK YouTube

Digital Manuals

My Vaillant-app-user-guide

Vaillant-heat-pump-leaflet

Vaillant Controls/sensocomfort

Velux

Velux.co.uk/support/service-and-maintenance

Velux-YouTube

Velux V22 New Generation-YouTube