

The Onward Newsletter

Spring 2025

IN THIS ISSUE: Helpful information on rent and service charges and how we are listening to your feedback to improve our services.

WELCOME.

Welcome to the Spring edition of our customer newsletter. I am sure that you will join me in welcoming the longer days and hopefully some warmer weather.

You will have now received letters setting out changes to your rent and service charges. We know that the cost of living continues to be a challenge for some of our customers. If you are worried about the changes to your rent or service charges please let us know – we are here to help. Our Money Advice Team helps thousands of customers every year, whether that's advice around budgeting, guidance on employment and training, or emergency support.

Our priority is investing in your homes, neighbourhoods and the services that we deliver. Read on to find out more about how we are involving our customers and using your feedback to make our services better. Over the next few pages, we also set out some of the ways that we're working with customers and local partners to make a difference in our neighbourhoods.

If you need any support from us, whether that's reporting a repair, telling us about something that's gone wrong, or if you just want to talk, we are here to help.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bronwen".

Bronwen Rapley,
Chief Executive

GETTING ONLINE.

The Onward Digital Connect initiative has been set up to help to keep you connected online.

If you need help with accessing training, education or want to start a new business, we can provide you with free digital equipment (phone, tablet or laptop) and six months of free data to access training. This is available for those who would consider themselves to have limited or no digital skills, access to the internet, are under 25, over 75 or have a disability.

As well as this, we are supporting a range of projects across our neighbourhoods to help you improve your digital skills.

From drop-in sessions to learn the basics to 16-week skills bootcamps, there's something for everyone.

We also have a range of links to support on our website (onward.co.uk/digital-skills) where you can also find out how to stay safe online, use social media, make your business digital and more.

To access funding or support with getting online, please email socialinvestment@onward.co.uk or call **0300 555 0600**.



**DIGITAL
ONWARD**

DAMP AND MOULD.

Onward Repairs already provides repair services to all customers in Greater Manchester and Lancashire. From the beginning of April our inhouse repairs team, Onward Repairs, will be carrying out repairs caused by damp, mould and condensation for all customers in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire.

Bringing damp, mould and condensation services inhouse gives us more control over the service and means we can be more flexible to your feedback, which we hope will result in a better experience for our customers.



If you spot the signs of damp and mould in your home, please let us know as soon as you can by:

-  visiting the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk)
-  emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk with your full name, full address (including postcode), date of birth and phone number
-  calling **0300 555 0600** or messaging **07793 795 882** on WhatsApp between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 10am-6pm on Wednesdays

To help us assess the problem, please take clear photos from different angles if you can and remember to include your name, address and contact details.

You can also find a helpful guide on spotting the signs of damp, mould and condensation around your home on our website (onward.co.uk/damp).

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.

Our customers told us that they wanted to hear more about our environmental services, how often they're delivered and how we are performing. Earlier this year, we launched a new quarterly update for customers who receive waste management, cleaning and window cleaning, grounds and tree maintenance services. We'll be sharing further updates throughout the year, and you can catch up on the latest edition by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/environmental-update).

As a reminder, if you receive grounds maintenance services, Onward Environmental will be tending to the grass in your neighbourhood throughout Spring and Summer using a cut and drop method. There are plenty of benefits to this, as the cut grass left behind limits weed growth and provides the soil underneath with essential nutrients whilst helping to lock in moisture during hot and dry weather.

Don't forget, you can also access our Environmental Tracker for the latest updates from Onward Environmental. To get started, simply visit our website (onward.co.uk/environmental-tracker). If you need help accessing this online, please speak to any Onward colleague who will be happy to help. Alternatively, please contact us by emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk or calling **0300 555 0600**.



YOU SAID, WE DID.

We want to make sure that your voice is at the heart of everything we do, and our Customer Engagement Community helps us do just that. We already have over 3,700 customers who are part of our community and help make our homes and neighbourhoods better places to live.

Here are just some of the ways customers have helped to make our services better.

You told us that you'd like us to make our communications about rent and service charges clearer, with more information about the services we provide and how income from rents is spent.

Working with customers from the Onward Scrutiny Board and Customer Engagement Community, we have made improvements to these communications, including:

- better descriptions for each type of service charge and what you can expect from us
- clear explanations for the cause of any increases in costs
- a graphic showing how we spend every £100 of the rent we collect
- frequently asked questions

You told us how we could improve our complaint resolution process.

Our Customer Resolution Forum met with members of Onward's Board alongside customers from the Onward Scrutiny Board. At the workshop, we discussed what was important for customers when they complain and how we can improve communication throughout our complaint resolution process.

Over the coming months, we'll be implementing some of their ideas, such as ensuring problems are resolved in a timely manner, regularly updating customers on the status of their complaints, and improving communication with customers about ongoing issues and repairs.

If you'd like to get involved by answering surveys, joining one of our groups, forums, or the Onward Scrutiny Board, we offer different levels of involvement to suit your lifestyle and interests, so you can participate as much as you like. To sign up or find out more, please visit our website (onward.co.uk/get-involved), email customerengagement@onward.co.uk or call **0300 555 0600**.

SHARING YOUR VIEWS.

We regularly carry out surveys with customers to understand how we can improve our services.

In 2023/24, we carried out the first annual questionnaire using the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures. This survey asks for your views on things like repairs, antisocial behaviour and complaints. The survey will take place every year and the results are shared with the Regulator of Social Housing and published by us. You can see how we did last year by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/tsm-results).



Results from the 2024/25 survey will be shared with you later this year, and we will be asking customers to take part in this year's survey soon. We survey a sample of our customers and you may be contacted to take part.

If you have any feedback about your experience of our services, or suggestions for improvement in the meantime, please do get in touch.

CHANGES TO YOUR RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES.

From April 2025, rents for most of our customers will increase by 2.7%.

Our rents are set within a Government limit, which allows for increases of inflation plus 1%. We are increasing rents for most of our customers by 2.7% from April 2025. All income from rents is invested back and enables us to deliver important improvements in your homes, neighbourhoods and our services.

Many customers also pay a service charge in addition to their rent to cover the cost of things like communal cleaning, grounds maintenance and essential building safety. Whilst inflation has eased over the last 12 months, we continue to operate in a challenging economic environment, so some of our customers will also see changes in their service charges from the beginning of April this year.

We understand that the cost of living continues to be a challenge for many. Our Money Advice Team can provide free, confidential advice around managing your money, household budgets and additional support you might be entitled to. You can get in touch with a member of the team by calling **0300 555 0600** or by emailing moneyadviceteam@onward.co.uk.

With your rent and service charge letters we shared FAQs to answer any questions you may have. You can also view these by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/rsc).

WE'RE HERE TO HELP.



If you need to speak to us about your home, tenancy or would like to access one of our support services, there are plenty of different ways you can get in touch. Our Customer Services Team will help to answer your queries or will direct your enquiry to the most appropriate team.

You can get in touch by:



visiting the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk)

emailing

customerservices@onward.co.uk



with your full name, full address (including postcode), date of birth and phone number



calling **0300 555 0600** or messaging **07793 795 882** on WhatsApp between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 10am-6pm on Wednesdays

If you need to report an emergency repair, such as a complete loss of power, faulty boilers, a flood or leak that can't be controlled, please call us as soon as you can on **0300 555 0600**. You can do this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

KEEPING OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS SAFE.

The way your neighbours behave can make a big difference to how happy you are in your home. That's why we take reports of antisocial behaviour, hate crime and domestic abuse very seriously and will take the necessary steps to protect you.

You can let us know about any problems by filling in the form on our website (onward.co.uk/report-asb), emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk or calling **0300 555 0600**.

You can also report crime and antisocial behaviour anonymously via Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

GET HELP WITH HOARDING.

If clutter gets in the way of your everyday living, you feel overwhelmed and unsure where to begin, you're not alone. We understand that getting started can be difficult and it may be hard to let people into your home. Our team is always here to work with you at your own pace.

For more information on how we can help and our Hoarding Support Peer Groups, please visit our website (onward.co.uk/hoarding). If you need help from us, you can get in touch by emailing hoarding@onward.co.uk or giving us a call.

MAKING A COMPLAINT.

We don't always get things right first time and if you do have any problems, please get in touch to let us know as soon as you can. We'll do our best to rectify the problem during the initial enquiry.

If you feel our services haven't been up to standard and you wish to make a complaint, you can do so by:

- visiting the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk)
- calling **0300 555 0600**
- emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk
- writing to **Onward, Renaissance Court, 2 Christie Way, M21 7QY**

You can also contact The Housing Ombudsman for support by calling **0300 111 3000**, emailing info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk or writing to **Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET**.

CUSTOMISE OUR WEBSITE AND KEY DOCUMENTS.

With our accessibility and translation tool, you can customise the information and documents on our website.

- Read information aloud
- Translate to over 100 languages
- Change fonts, size, colour and spacing
- And much more...

**Accessibility
& Language**



Take a look at the guide for instructions on how to use the tools available by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/accessibility).

The Onward Difference

Our Corporate Plan, The Onward Difference, is all about enabling you to be your best, in a home you love and place you are proud of. Here are some examples of the work we've been doing across the North West.

ENABLING PEOPLE TO BE THEIR BEST



Through a grant from the Onward Community Fund, UK Yoga CIC is launching an initiative in Rochdale that will give families the skills to support each other's mental wellbeing and strengthen bonds within the community across local parks and outdoor spaces.



Over in Lancashire, we have supported Maundy Relief which is using a grant from the Onward Community Fund to expand its food growing project by increasing food production across allotments and delivering more produce to nine food banks and pantries across Accrington.



MERSEYSIDE

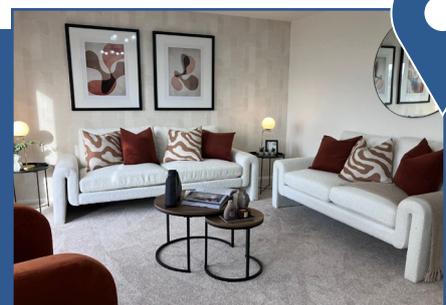


Team Oasis Children's Charity's Pathways to Employment project will help local people living in Dingle to pursue sustainable employment with targeted workshops, practical work placements and career mentorship through a grant from the Onward Community Fund.

If you've got a great idea for a community project but need a little help to get it off the ground, we support local groups and projects through the Onward Community Fund. To learn more and apply, please visit our website (onward.co.uk/community-fund) or email socialinvestment@onward.co.uk.

PROVIDING HOMES OUR CUSTOMERS LOVE

Just outside of Macclesfield is our Bollin Grange development of 62 homes, available through a mix of Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership. Construction is progressing well thanks to our partners, Vistry, with 22 homes completed in March with more to follow later this year. The show home is now open, so please head down to take a look.





LANCASHIRE

Over in Longridge, our Alston Grange development with Tilia Homes is helping local people put down roots through a mixture of 63 Rent to Buy and Affordable Rent homes. The first cohort of customers who moved in last November are settling in well, and we look forward to more homes being released later this year.



CHESHIRE WEST



Our Pavilion Park development of 215 affordable homes in Helsby is progressing well. The foundations are laid for our first Shared Ownership homes that are on track to be released later this Spring.

If you're interested in any of these developments or would like to learn more about Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership schemes, please visit Onward Living's website (onward-living.co.uk) or call **0300 555 0130**.

CREATING PLACES PEOPLE ARE PROUD OF

'Sow the City' transformed the communal garden at our Oaklands Extra Care scheme in Fallowfield, with customers now looking after planters full of plants and vegetables. A customer living at the scheme told us they "had a wonderful time getting to know each other" whilst "creating a beautiful garden to relax in and enjoy".



GREATER MANCHESTER



LANCASHIRE

Over in Clayton-le-Moors, we're supporting Hyndburn Leisure's Keep It Clean volunteering sessions, where Onward colleagues, students from Accrington and Rossendale College and community volunteers come together each month to litter pick and tidy spaces across the neighbourhood.



In Merseyside, customers joined us at a neighbourhood walkabout in Beechwood and told us about some overgrown green space. We worked with colleagues from Onward Environmental to cut back the grass and make the space useable again.



MERSEYSIDE

To explore how we are making The Onward Difference in your local area, please visit our website (onward.co.uk/local-updates). If you need help accessing this online, please speak to any Onward colleague who will be happy to help or get in touch to request a printed copy.

KEEP IN TOUCH.

When we contact you, it's important that we have the correct details. We also want to make sure we are using your preferred method, such as text message, email, phone call or letter.

If you'd like to update or contact details or let us know your preferred contact method, you can do so by messaging us through the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk), emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk, calling 0300 555 0600 or messaging 07793 795 882 on WhatsApp.

If you need any help understanding this document, please give us a call on **0300 555 0600**, send us a message on WhatsApp to **07793 795882**, or send an email to customerservices@onward.co.uk.

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tego dokumentu, zadzwoń do nas na numer 0300 555 0600, wyślij nam wiadomość na WhatsApp na numer 07793 795882 lub wyślij e-mail na adres customerservices@onward.co.uk.

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى أي مساعدة في فهم هذه الوثيقة، فيرجى الاتصال بنا على 0300 555 0600، أو أرسل رسالة إلينا على customerservices@onward.co.uk رقم الواتس 07793 795882 أو أرسل رسالة بريد إلكتروني إلى

এই নথিটি বুঝতে আপনার যদি কোনো সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের 0300 555 0600 নম্বরে একটি কল করুন, আমাদের হোয়াটসঅ্যাপ -এ 07793 795882 নম্বরে একটি বার্তা পাঠান বা customerservices@onward.co.uk.

اگر برای درک این سند به کمک نیاز دارید، لطفاً با ما با شماره 03005550600 تماس بگیرید، از طریق واتساپ به customerservices@onward.co.uk شماره 07793795882 برای ما پیام بفرستید یا یک ایمیل به

如果您在理解本文件时需要任何帮助，请致电 0300 555 0600，通过 WhatsApp 发送信息至 07793 795882，或发送电子邮件至 customerservices@onward.co.uk。

Haddii aad u baahan tahay in lagaa caawiyo fahamka dokumentigan, fadlan naga soo wac lambarkan 0300 555 0600, farriin noogu soo dir lambarkan WhatsApp-ta 07793 795882, ama email noogu soo dir customerservices@onward.co.uk.

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے میں کسی مدد کی ضرورت ہے، تو براہ کرم ہمیں 0300 555 0600 پر کال کریں۔ customerservices@onward.co.uk ہمیں واٹس ایپ پر 07793 795882 پر پیغام بھیجیں، یا

Si vous avez besoin d'aide pour comprendre ce document, appelez-nous au 0300 555 0600, envoyez-nous un message sur WhatsApp au 07793 795882, ou envoyez un e-mail à customerservices@onward.co.uk.

نہگہر پٹیویستت به یارمہتی ہہیہ بو تیگہیشنن لہم بہلگہنامہیہ، تکایہ پھیوہندیمان پیوہ بکہ بہ ژمارہ تہلہفونی 03005550600، لہ واتسنہپ پھیامیکمان بو بنیرہ بہ ژمارہ تہلہفونی 07793795882 یان نیمہیلیکمان بو بنیرہ بو customerservices@onward.co.uk.

Se necessitar de ajuda para compreender este documento, contacte-nos para o número 0300 555 0600, envie-nos uma mensagem para o WhatsApp para o número 07793 795882 ou envie um email para customerservices@onward.co.uk.