

Onward



WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

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[*Your responsibilities and key information about your home and tenancy.](#)

If you need any help understanding the information in this document, please give us a call on **0300 555 0600**, send us a message on WhatsApp to **07793 795 882** or send an email to **customerservices@onward.co.uk**.

Please note, the information in this document was correct at the time of publication. For the latest information, please visit our website (**onward.co.uk/welcome**) or get in touch.




WELCOME.

We hope you're very happy in your new home and enjoy getting to know your local community.

This booklet is your chance to get to know us. It will also go through a few important details, such as your rights and responsibilities as a customer, and what services and support we offer.

One of our colleagues will be in touch within your first few weeks to see how you're settling into your new home. They'll be able to offer help and advice on any support you may need and may also take a look around your home and garden to check everything's still in good condition.

If you have any issues in the meantime, we're here to help. You can get in touch with us by:

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

 emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk**

Our emergency phone line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you need to report antisocial behaviour or an emergency repair, such as a flood or leak that can't be controlled, please call us as soon as you can on **0300 555 0600**.

MANAGING YOUR HOME ONLINE.

Through the My Onward Portal you can:

- report repairs
- view your rent account
- make a payment
- set up a direct debit
- report antisocial behaviour
- change your contact details
- chat to us about any queries you may have



It's quick and easy to sign up, you'll just need your tenancy reference number and the email address you used when registering for your home.

To sign up, simply visit my.onward.co.uk or scan the QR code with your mobile or tablet device to get started.



MAKING THE ONWARD DIFFERENCE.

The Onward Difference, our Corporate Plan, is all about the positive impact we make by enabling people and communities to be their best. We do this by providing homes that you love, in places you are proud of.



We also do this through the work of our Social Investment Team, who have created excellent links with hundreds of local community organisations doing great work and making a positive difference in communities across the North West.



These include sustainable food and employment projects, digital skills and improving green spaces for mental health and wellbeing. If you are keen to get involved, volunteer or could benefit from the support of these organisations then we would be happy to put you in touch.

In The Onward Newsletter, which you receive four times per year, we'll share examples of the work we've been doing across the North West. You can also explore how we are making The Onward Difference in your local area by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/local-updates).

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEEDS.

To help us tailor the services you receive, it is important to let us know if you or someone you live with need any additional support.

If you haven't already done so, you can let us know by emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk** or calling **0300 555 0600**.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR HOME.

We take pride in the quality of our homes and ensure they are safe, secure, warm and well maintained. In line with the Government's Decent Home Standard, your home will be fit for human habitation and will comply with relevant health and safety legislation.

Detailed below is what you can expect from your new home.

- It is structurally sound, wind, weather and watertight
- It is safe, with gas and electrics checked and certificates provided
- External doors are fitted with an insurance approved five-lever mortice lock or multipoint system (with the exception of homes with a suited lock)
- Doors and windows are fully functional
- Ground floor opening windows are lockable
- Internal and external joinery, such as doors and staircases, are in a good condition
- Drains and brickwork are in a good condition
- Floors are left in a good condition ready for new carpet or flooring to be fitted (please note, if carpets and/or flooring are left by the previous customer and you do not wish to keep them, you are able to remove them)
- Walls and ceilings are in a decoratable condition
- Sanitary fittings are in good condition and free from damage
- Bathroom is clean and working with adequate flooring
- A kitchen with:
 - Units in working condition with accessible cupboards and drawers
 - Work surfaces in good condition
 - A sink with a supply of hot and cold running water
 - Space for a cooker and an electric/gas point depending on energy supply
- A clean standard throughout your home with no mess or debris left inside or outside
- Garden is in a maintainable standard
- Free from hazards, including damp and mould

If you live in a home with communal areas, these will be inspected regularly to ensure they are clean and free from rubbish. We will also ensure there are no health and safety concerns, and that fire equipment is maintained and tested regularly.

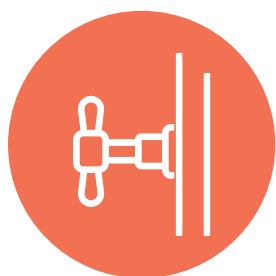
For more information on communal cleaning, including windows and grounds maintenance, please head to the environmental services section of this booklet (pages 17 to 19).

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES.

We expect you to:

- Maintain your home and garden if you have one to a good standard
- Report any repairs that arise (more details can be found on page 15)
- Allow our employees and contractors to access your home for repairs and annual gas safety and electrical checks to be carried out
- Keep communal spaces tidy and free of any personal items
- Let us know if there are any changes of your circumstances
- Ask for permission before making any alterations to your home
- Ensure your home is in the same condition as when you moved in, if you choose to move out

We have provided some helpful guidance below on items that you will find in your home.



Stop tap

A stop tap will enable you to switch off the water supply in your home if there is ever a leak.

If you have a standard stop tap, this will usually be located under the kitchen sink, near the front door, in an airing cupboard or bathroom. To switch off your water, simply turn the tap clockwise.

If you have a Surestop fitted, this will usually be located in your kitchen or bathroom. To switch off your water, simply press the switch to the off position.



Extractor fan

An extractor will enable you to control the moisture and humidity in your home. These will usually be found in your bathroom, wet room and/or kitchen. These fans use minimal amounts of electricity and help to reduce damp, mould and condensation, so please be sure to keep them switched on.



Room thermostat

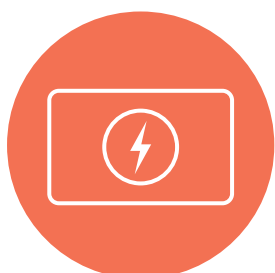
A room thermostat keeps your home at a steady ideal temperature, which is between 18 and 21°. This means that it will automatically turn the heating on if a room falls below this temperature, or turn it off if it rises above.

If you have a standard room thermostat, use the dial to set your desired temperature. If you have a wireless thermostat and a battery starts flashing on the screen, you can replace these with standard batteries. Failure to replace the batteries could result in your boiler not working properly.



Kitchen appliance sockets/switches

You may have a socket in your kitchen which is attached to a fused switch, which are designed for appliances such as cookers and fridges. If you find that your appliance is not working, please be sure to check that the switch is in the on position.



Fuse box

If at any point the electricity doesn't work in your home, please check your fuse box to see whether any of the switches have moved to the off position. If they are, please move them to the on position (they may be stiff when doing so which is normal). If your electricity does not come back on, or if the fuse box trips again, please contact us by calling **0300 555 0600**.

GIFTS.

In some instances, there may be additional fixtures or fittings that can be gifted to you to maintain, such as sheds or carpets. These will be for you to maintain or replace and we will discuss this with you during the sign up process.

INVENTORY.

When you move into your new home, your Neighbourhood Specialist will make a record of any items given to you for the home, such as keys and fobs. This helps us to keep track of them and gives you a clear idea of what needs to be returned at the end of your tenancy.

Please take good care of your keys or fobs, as you will be charged for any that are lost or broken.

GAS SUPPLY & UTILITIES.

Your gas supply will have been capped for safety reasons when the previous customer moved out. Once the utilities are in your name and you have credit on your meter, let us know so we can arrange for your gas to be switched on and tested.

You can contact British Gas regarding your gas and electric by visiting their website (britishgas.co.uk/discover/home-move) or calling **0330 808 3880** and United Utilities regarding your water by visiting their website (unitedutilities.com/my-account/moving-home) or calling **0845 746 2200**.

COUNCIL TAX.

Don't forget, you need to pay Council Tax on your property from the day your tenancy starts. Please contact your local authority's Council Tax department as soon as you sign your tenancy agreement to let them know your new address and avoid future issues. We will also make them aware of your tenancy for our records.



PETS AT HOME.

We know pets become part of the family, which is why typical domestic pets are welcome in our homes unless we believe they might cause annoyance, nuisance or damage.

However, if an animal causes problems, you will need to rehome it; for which we will allow a reasonable amount of time.

In some cases, it might not be appropriate for larger animals like dogs or cats to move in with you, such as in schemes which have communal passages, stairways and doorways. Please speak to your Neighbourhood Specialist for more information, particularly if you need a hearing or guide dog.

You'll be fully briefed about the specific Pet Policy for your home when you sign up, so if you have any questions, now is a good time to ask.

MOVING OUT.

We know that for a variety of reasons, some of our customers will eventually leave their home with us. To legally end your tenancy, you need to give us four weeks' notice in writing or via email. During this notice period it's important that you give your Neighbourhood Specialist access to visit you to discuss next steps.

At this visit, we'll let you know if you owe any outstanding rent or are due for a refund. We'll also discuss how your home and garden must be left to avoid any potential charges. This includes making sure:

- ☑ Personal belongings are removed from all areas
- ☑ Gardens are well maintained
- ☑ All areas are clean, tidy and free from rubbish
- ☑ Any unapproved alterations are reversed
- ☑ A full set of keys, all fobs and any parking permits are returned
- ☑ Alarm codes are provided

SWAPPING YOUR HOME.

Whether you're looking to move to a new home in your current area or to somewhere else in the UK, a mutual exchange is a great option.

Through a mutual exchange, you can swap your home with another household, whether that's an Onward customer, or someone from another registered provider.

For more information on how you can swap your home through House Exchange, please get in touch or visit our website (onward.co.uk/mutual-exchange).





PAYING YOUR RENT.

Paying your rent is the most important part of meeting your tenancy conditions. Keeping on top of your personal finances is the best way to make sure you can do this, and to minimise any worry around paying rent and bills.

Please make sure your payments are made on time and in full otherwise you'll be at risk of losing your home.

If you're struggling financially and think you won't be able to pay your rent, please get in touch with our Money Advice Team by emailing **moneyadviceteam@onward.co.uk** or calling **0300 555 0600** for free and confidential advice.

As explained during the application and sign up process, your rent is payable in advance. You need to pay your rent in advance, as per the terms of your tenancy agreement, in line with how often you make payments. Your rent account should never fall into arrears.

We use your rent for important services that benefit our customers, such as the improvements that we make to our homes and the extra support we offer. As well as your rent, you may also be paying a service charge, which goes toward things like cleaning or gardening. A breakdown of these charges can be found at the back of your Tenancy Agreement.

Your rent and service charges are reviewed annually, and we will keep you informed of any changes.

WAYS TO PAY.



The easiest way to pay your rent is by setting up a **Direct Debit**. Your rent will be taken automatically from your bank or building society on your chosen date, so you never have to worry about forgetting to pay.

To set up a Direct Debit, call us on **0300 555 0600** between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 6pm on Wednesdays with your bank account details to hand and we'll do the rest. You can also set up a Direct Debit via the My Onward Portal (**my.onward.co.uk**).

Once your direct debit is set up, we'll write to you to confirm what the payment arrangements are. If your payments increase, we will arrange it and let you know in advance.



Pay your rent **online** 24/7 through the My Onward Portal (**my.onward.co.uk**), where you can also view your rent account.



Pay your rent **over the phone** by calling us on **0300 555 0600**. Press '1' to use our automated telephone service (available 24/7), or stay on the line to speak to one of our advisors between the hours of 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 6pm on Wednesdays.

To make payment over the phone, you will need:

- Your tenancy reference number
- Your account number
- Your bank details
- A credit or debit card



Pay your rent by **bank transfer** using the following details:

- Name: Onward Homes
- Sort code: 01-02-69
- Account number: 25724452
- Reference: your tenancy number



Payments can be made at your local **Post Office** or any retail outlet which accepts **Allpay**. Simply take your payment card to the counter together with your payment.



You will be given a receipt as proof which we recommend that you keep in a safe place.

If you do not already have a payment card, please get in touch by emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk** or calling **0300 555 0600**.



When your rent and/or service charge payment is due, or if you miss a payment, we might send you a link to pay by email or text message.



Pay By Link makes things much quicker and easier. Simply follow your unique link to our payment portal, where you can make a secure payment with your credit or debit card. There is no need to enter your tenancy number or 19-digit AllPay reference number.

You may have already seen these links in messages from Onward. If not, you may start to see them in the future. If you ever feel worried or unsure about an email or text message from Onward, please let us know.

HELP PAYING YOUR RENT.

You might be entitled to get help from the Government with your rent, usually in the form of either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

If you are eligible for **Housing Benefit**, your rent payments will be made by the Government directly to us. To make a claim for Housing Benefit, please get in touch with your local council. It's really important that you complete all forms correctly and provide all the information they need, to make sure you don't miss out on any of your benefits.

If you are eligible for **Universal Credit**, payments will be made into your bank account each month and then, unlike Housing Benefit, it's your responsibility to make sure your rent is paid out of these. To find out more or make a claim, please visit **gov.uk/universal-credit**.

If you're claiming Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, it's important to know that you could face certain Government restrictions if your home is considered to have too many bedrooms for your household's needs.

Customers with spare bedrooms have their Housing Benefit reduced by 14% for one spare bedroom and 25% for two or more spare rooms. For example, if you move into a home that costs £100 a week but you have two spare bedrooms then the maximum Housing Benefit you could receive is £75 a week.

You are responsible for making up the shortfall to avoid falling into rent arrears. This is something to carefully consider as you will have to make up any shortfall to avoid getting behind on rent.

If you have any questions about your entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, please get in touch with our Money Advice Team by emailing moneyadviceteam@onward.co.uk or calling **0300 555 0600**.

HOUSEHOLD BILLS.

In addition to your rent and service charge (where applicable), you also need to pay for your household bills including council tax, water, gas and electricity.

It's also important to include extra living costs in your budget for bills like contents insurance, a TV licence, wifi, your mobile phone, food and travel.

If you're ever unsure about budgeting or worried about money, please get in touch with our Money Advice Team who can help you with finances or money issues.

GET DISCOUNTS ON YOUR EVERYDAY SHOPPING.

We've partnered with Housing Perks to give you access to discounts on your everyday shopping at over 100 shops and online stores.



Housing Perks is a free app offering up to a 20% discount at supermarkets, high street shops and online stores like ASDA, B&M, Sainsburys, Morrisons, Primark, Argos, TK Maxx and more.

To get started, simply download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store by searching for 'Housing Perks', or **scanning the QR code** on your mobile or tablet device.



You'll need your Tenancy Reference Number to hand when signing up, which will be given to you when signing up. You can also find it on the rent letters we send to you in February, via the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk) or by contacting us.



CONTENTS INSURANCE.

As your landlord, we insure the building and anything we provide, but we don't cover your home's contents and belongings.

We recommend getting contents insurance in place to help cover the cost of replacing your furniture, decorations, flooring and other personal belongings in case the worst should happen.

To learn more about contents insurance, please visit our website (onward.co.uk/contents-insurance).



GET HELP WITH YOUR FINANCES.

If you need help with your finances, our Money Advice Team offer free, confidential advice about managing household budgets. They can also signpost other support you might be entitled to and provide access to emergency funds.

You can get in touch with the team by emailing moneyadviceteam@onward.co.uk or calling 0300 555 0600.






**Money Advice
Team**

OUR REPAIRS SERVICE.

From time to time, you may need to report a repair in your home. It's our top priority to get these fixed as quickly as possible.

You can report a repair to us by:

-  visiting the My Onward Portal (**my.onward.co.uk**)
-  calling **0300 555 0600** or messaging **07793 795 882** on WhatsApp between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 6pm on Wednesdays
-  emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk**



EMERGENCY REPAIRS.

An emergency repair includes things like a flood or leak that can't be controlled. If you need to report an emergency, please call us as soon as you can on **0300 555 0600**. You can do this 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We want you to feel happy, safe and secure in the place you live and know the quality of your home can have a huge impact on your quality of life. So you know what to expect when we look after and improve your home, we have worked with customers to create Our Home Standard which you can find on our website (**onward.co.uk/policies**).

We will always let you know when one of our contractors is going to visit your home. Before letting anyone into your home, it's important to check for ID. This includes Onward employees and any contractors. If you are unsure who they are, they cannot provide their ID badge and things don't feel right, please do not let them into your home. Please report this to us as soon as possible by emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk** or calling **0300 555 0600**.

For more information about our repairs service, what repairs we're responsible for, what you're responsible for and tips for dealing with common, low-level repairs, please visit our website (**onward.co.uk/repairs**) where you can download our Repairs Handbook.




If you need help understanding these documents or want to request printed copies, please get in touch.

REPORTING DAMP AND MOULD.

Damp and mould can happen in any home, but it is more likely to happen in some homes than others. Looking out for any signs of it happening and reporting it to us quickly when it is found is really important.

There are different kinds of damp and mould, and they can look quite different. Head to our website (onward.co.uk/damp) to take a look at our visual damp and mould guide to help you spot anything in your home that needs attention. If you need help understanding this document or want to request a printed copy, please get in touch.

If you notice any damp or mould in your home, please get in touch with us straightaway. For some people, mould can cause or worsen some health issues – so don't delay, contact us immediately by:

-  visiting the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk)
-  calling **0300 555 0600** or messaging **07793 795 882** on WhatsApp between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 6pm on Wednesdays
-  emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk

When you first report damp, mould or condensation to us, our team will assess the type of issue to identify the most appropriate solution and explain to you what work needs to be carried out. We will aim to respond to any reports as quickly as possible. We will also check if there is anyone in your household that could be particularly at risk of the effects of damp and mould, such as elderly people, pregnant women, babies, and young children or those with health conditions. If this is the case, we will visit your home within five working days.

When we visit your home we will check if a mould treatment is required and carry this out. In most cases this resolves the issue unless there is a defect with your property. As such, when we carry out our visit, we will also inspect your home to check the root cause of the issue and carry out any repairs.

For the more complicated cases our team of professionally qualified surveyors will visit your home to determine what works need to be carried out. We will contact you six weeks after the work is completed to check that you are happy that the issue has been resolved, and will only close this down when you are satisfied with the outcome.



OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.

Onward Environmental is responsible for maintaining and managing spaces across your neighbourhood. This includes waste management, cleaning, grounds and tree maintenance in shared areas, shared gardens and some open spaces.



Fly tipping and waste management

We know that litter, waste and fly tipping are important issues for many of our customers. That's why we are committed to working with you and partners across our communities to keep our schemes and neighbourhoods tidy.

When we receive reports of fly tipping and waste management issues, we will visit to remove it or arrange for communal bins to be cleared. If we are unable to identify the person responsible, the cost of this work will increase the service charges you pay, so please report fly tipping or misuse of bins stores to us.

You can do so by visiting 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 notice fly tipping on the street or in alleyways, please report this to your local council. Your local council may also collect large unwanted items for free or a small fee. To apply for the collection of a large waste item, please contact your local council or visit gov.uk/collection-large-waste-items.



Grounds maintenance

We are passionate about our green spaces, and we know that our customers are too. That's why we are committed to providing high quality grounds maintenance services to ensure that customers are proud of where they live and can enjoy the outdoors.

An outline of the seasonal grounds maintenance services delivered can be found in the table below.

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Trimming fronts of hedges and shrubs	✓	✓		
Grass cutting	✓	✓		
Litter picking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planting new trees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tidying lawn edges			✓	✓
Blowing fallen leaves away from footpaths			✓	✓
Removal of moss on footpaths			✓	✓
Hedge and shrub reductions			✓	✓
Gritting (identified high risk sites only)			✓	✓



Tree maintenance

We look after trees across our neighbourhoods and keep them in a safe condition. This includes trees in your garden, shared areas and some open spaces.

We also regularly plant new trees and are always keen to get customers involved, so if you'd like to take part, please send an email to **socialinvestment@onward.co.uk** or call **0300 555 0600**.

Please do not prune, remove or try to deal with any damaged trees yourself, or employ someone else to do so on your behalf. Many of our trees are protected and it is a criminal offence to prune or remove them without consent from the local authority.

If you notice any tree related issues or are approached by someone who is offering to cut trees down, remove rubbish or maintain your garden for a fee and things don't feel right, please report this to us as soon as possible by emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk** or calling **0300 555 0600**.



Cleaning and window cleaning

We deliver a variety of services for buildings with shared areas, including internal cleaning and exterior window cleaning.

Most communal areas are cleaned every two weeks, with some buildings and Sheltered Schemes cleaned more frequently. For internal cleaning in shared areas, we use environmentally friendly zero-waste cleaning products and during our visits will:

- Sweep and mop or vacuum floors and stairs.
- Wipe skirtings, banisters and handrails, communal doors, interior windows and windowsills and other surfaces.
- Clean lifts and entrance panels.
- Remove junk mail.

Window cleaning is carried out once every two months on most sites, with some sites cleaned at a different frequency.

We clean all windows at height using a pole reach system that follows a four-step method to ensure they are cleaned effectively. For some buildings with more complex window placements, we employ specialist contractors for window cleaning services.

TRACK YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.

Through our Environmental Tracker, you can now search by your postcode to get the latest updates from Onward Environmental, including things like when we've visited, when we'll next be in the area and photos after services are carried out.



Visit onward.co.uk/environmental-tracker or scan the QR code with your mobile or tablet device to get started.

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.

LANDLORD GAS SAFETY CHECK.

By law, we must make sure there is an annual gas safety service and check carried out on all the gas-fired appliances we maintain in your home. When your check is due, we will contact you to arrange a suitable day and time to carry this out.

As stated in your Tenancy Agreement, from time to time we will need to access your home to carry out essential gas safety inspections, repairs and improvements. Letting us complete this work is really important, so where we are repeatedly unable to access your home, we will take legal action as a last resort.

Faulty gas appliances such as boilers and gas fires can be deadly, so making sure they are in safe working order is extremely important.

If you smell gas take action:

- Call Cadent on **0800 111 999**
- Put out all naked flames and cigarettes
- Do not switch on any appliances, lights, doorbells or mobile phones
- Open all doors and windows and keep them open until the leak is stopped
- Check to see if your gas tap, fire or cooker has been turned on accidentally
- Turn off the gas supply - in most homes or properties the gas lever is next to the gas meter, unless located in the basement or cellar
- Leave the property if the gas continues leaking and calmly tell your neighbours about the problem

By law, we need to install a carbon monoxide alarm in every room that contains a fuel-burning appliance (except rooms used solely for cooking).

Carbon monoxide alarms save lives and we advise you to check your alarm weekly. If your alarm is not working, please let us know immediately and we will come and replace it for you.

If your carbon monoxide alarm activates, please:

- immediately get out of the building
- call Cadent on **0800 111 999**
- call Onward on **0300 555 0600**



ELECTRICAL TESTING.

It is also important that we complete an electrical safety test every five years. When your check is due, we will contact you to arrange a suitable day and time to carry this out.

As stated in your Tenancy Agreement, from time to time we will need to access your home to carry out essential safety inspections, repairs and improvements. Letting us complete this work is really important, so where we are repeatedly unable to access your home, we may take legal action as a last resort.

SMOKE ALARMS.

Working smoke alarms save lives. We advise you to check your smoke detector weekly and replace the battery if necessary. If we fitted the smoke detector it's very important you let us know straight away if it's not working and we'll come and repair this for you.

FIRE SAFETY.

You'll be given a Fire Evacuation Strategy when you move in to help you get out of your home safely if there's a fire. Please put this on clear display in your home so you can easily access it in case of an emergency. A copy of this strategy can also be found on page 22 of this document.

If you live in a flat, we will collect some personal information to create a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) with details of any support you may need to evacuate your building. It's therefore important that you keep us updated on any changes to your circumstances that could affect your ability to evacuate your home safely.

If you have any communal spaces shared with neighbours, you will need to ensure that these are kept tidy and free of any personal items.

Any items or obstructions found in communal areas of your building will be removed. If there is no immediate risk, or the item(s) might have value, we will give notice of our intention to remove the item(s). Any item not claimed within seven days of expiry of this notice will be disposed of permanently. We will not be liable for any damage to the item during disposal and owners of any obstructions will be responsible for the cost of disposal.

You can also find more safety advice on our website (onward.co.uk/home-safety).

FIRE EVACUATION STRATEGY 2024

The Evacuation Strategy for your building is:

STAY PUT

This building has been designed to protect residents if a fire breaks out. Remember, if a fire starts in your flat, it is up to you to make sure that you can get out.

IF YOU BECOME AWARE OF A FIRE SOMEWHERE IN YOUR BUILDING:

- It will usually be safe for you to stay in your own home
- Close all doors and windows
- Only leave the building if smoke or heat affects your home or if you are instructed to leave by the Fire Service.

ONLY IF A FIRE BREAKS OUT IN YOUR FLAT

- Do not stay behind and try to put the fire out
- Tell everybody else in your flat about the fire and get everybody to leave
- Close your front door and leave the building. Do not use the lift (if your building has one)
- Alert your neighbours **ONLY IF SAFE TO DO SO**.
- Raise the alarm by using a 'break glass' call point
- **CALL THE FIRE SERVICE** by dialling 999.

CALLING THE FIRE SERVICE

- Dial **999** and ask for the **FIRE SERVICE**
- Provide the telephone number you are calling from, and your full address
- Do not end the call until you are told to hang up.

WHEN YOU HAVE LEFT THE BUILDING AND RAISED THE ALARM:

- Call us on **0300 555 0600**
- We will check you are OK and arrange for any repairs or rehousing if necessary

If you have any questions or concerns about fire safety, please call us immediately on **0300 555 0600**



STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME

- Test your smoke alarms every week, by pressing the test button until the alarm sounds. If you don't have working fire alarms, please contact us immediately.
- If you smoke, NEVER smoke in bed or anywhere you could fall asleep. Make sure you always extinguish your cigarettes safely.
- Don't overload electrical sockets and only leave essential appliances switched on, like your fridge or freezer. Turn all other appliances off when not in use.
- If you have to use candles, make sure they are always secured in a stable holder and kept away from curtains, fabrics and paper. Never leave them unattended and always put them out when you are leaving the room or going to bed.
- Close all doors at night to prevent any fire and smoke from spreading. Keep the exit route from your flat clear so that you can escape in an emergency.
- You must ensure you are aware of your escape routes and know how to open emergency doors on your escape route. If you have any concerns, you must report these to us.



IF YOU HAVE A BALCONY:

- Do not use barbecues on your balcony under any circumstances
- Never store fuels or flammable materials on your balcony
- Try to keep any items on the balcony to a minimum.
- If you smoke, make sure you stub cigarettes out and NEVER flick them off your balcony.



BEFORE GOING TO SLEEP

- Turn off electrical appliances
- Check your cooker is switched off
- Put candles and cigarettes out properly
- Close all doors - help prevent any fire and smoke from spreading
- Make sure all exit routes are clear
- Make sure your keys are left on your escape route and that everyone in your home has practiced an escape plan.



FIRE DOORS

There are a number of fire doors in your building, both your own front door and those in communal areas. These are there for your safety and inspected on a routine basis.

COMMUNAL FIRE DOORS

All communal fire doors must remain in good condition to protect people and property.

- A closing device is installed on communal fire doors and must not be disconnected at any time
- Communal Fire Doors may be held open by electronic devices and must not be interfered with. These fire doors will automatically close if the fire alarm is activated
- Fire doors must not be damaged, removed or obstructed in any way
- Fire doors **MUST NOT** be wedged open at any time.



YOUR FRONT DOOR

- Keep your door in good condition, closing automatically, and report any issues immediately
- Do not drill or screw anything to the door, including:
 - Doorbells
 - nails for decorations
 - cables
 - handles or door knockers
- Never disconnect your door's self-closing device.





E-BIKES AND E-SCOOTERS: BATTERY SAFETY

Lithium-ion batteries, like the ones used in **E-scooters** and **E-bikes** are responsible for a rising number of fires within homes. In the space of just two years, the number of fires linked to battery devices has risen by more than **400%**. Please remember to:

- Only buy vehicles, chargers, batteries and conversion kits from reputable retailers.
- Register your product with the manufacturer to validate any warranties.
- Never store e-bikes or e-scooters in communal areas of your building.
- Only store e-bikes, e-scooters and their batteries in a cool place.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and unplug your charger when it's finished.
- Always follow best practice for charging devices.
- Look out for any damage or normal wear & tear.
- Always dispose of batteries and devices responsibly.



OUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMUNAL AREAS

- Carry out Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) in all our buildings, to highlight any fire risks
- Hold regular communal area inspections to ensure that escape routes are free from obstructions and that no unauthorised items are being stored
- Make sure that a suitable fire detection and alarm system is fitted and regularly tested
- Employ contractors to carry out regular gas, electrical and fire safety system checks in communal areas
- Provide Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for all customers who might struggle to evacuate the building independently in an emergency
- Help to arrange a home fire safety visit from your local Fire and Rescue Service
- Ensure fire doors and house entrance doors are effective fire and smoke barriers.



YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMUNAL AREAS

- Never leave any items in communal areas of your building
- Do not interfere with any fire doors, equipment or signage in the building
- Keep corridors, landings, foyers and stairways completely clear at all times
- Keep all meter and alarm panels accessible at all times.



IF YOUR BUILDING HAS SPRINKLERS

- Your fire sprinkler system can only be activated by heat. It cannot be activated by smoke.
- Please do not paint over the sprinkler housing, this can prevent the cover plates from releasing.
- Please ensure that no items such as tall furniture are blocking the sprinkler cover plates





COULD YOU EVACUATE YOURSELF IN AN EMERGENCY?

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

If anyone in your household would need assistance to safely evacuate this building in an emergency, you need to inform us **as soon as possible**.

We especially need to know if anyone in your home:

- has chronic or acute mobility issues
- regularly uses oxygen as a breathing aid.

Your **Onward Specialist** can create a **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)** for you.

Your safety is our number one priority. By keeping us updated, you can help keep our buildings safe for everyone.



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- Communal Fire Doors held open by electronic devices must not be interfered with.
 - These fire doors will automatically close if the fire alarm is activated
- Fire doors must not be damaged, removed or obstructed in any way
- Fire doors **MUST NOT** be wedged open at any time.

YOUR FRONT DOOR

- Keep your door in good condition, closing automatically, and report any issues to us
- Do not drill or screw anything to the door, including:
 - Doorbells
 - nails for decorations
 - cables
 - handles or
 - door knockers
- Never disconnect your door's self-closing device.

Fire safety in your home.



SMOKE ALARMS save lives, but only if they're working. Test your smoke alarms every week.



CANDLES should never be left unattended and should be fully extinguished before you leave the room or go to bed.



IN THE KITCHEN...

DON'T leave pans unattended while cooking and **NEVER** leave children in the kitchen alone. Keep cooking areas clear and clean your oven and grill regularly.



ELECTRICAL ITEMS...

If the wires on your items are damaged or frayed, do not use them. **DON'T** leave washing machines, tumble dryers or dishwashers running overnight.



HEATERS should be kept away from clothes, curtains, furniture and other flammable materials.



PUT IT OUT. **NEVER** smoke in bed and take extra care if you smoke when tired or are under the influence of alcohol or other substances.



ESCAPE ROUTES

Plan an escape route. Keep exits clear from clutter and obstructions. Keep your door and window keys on your escape route.

Familiarise yourself with the evacuation policy for your building by reading the Fire Evacuation Strategy on display in communal areas.

If you don't have working smoke alarms, please call us ASAP on 0300 555 0600
For more information, please check the Fire Safety area of the Onward website.

ASBESTOS.

If you live in a home that was built before 2000, it may contain asbestos materials. These can be found in one or more of the following places:

- roof tiles, gutters and downpipes
- fascias
- partition walls
- panels beneath windows
- cupboards around boilers
- panels behind electrical equipment
- bath panels
- floor tiles
- textured coating (artex)

An asbestos survey will have been completed before you moved in, and we will provide a certificate of this when you sign up.

Should this survey identify asbestos materials, they will be in good condition and we will carry out annual surveys to monitor them. For the safety of you and those living in your home, please follow the below guidance:

Do:

- ☒ Contact us to request permission before making any changes to your home
- ☒ Allow our colleagues and contractors to access your home for surveys and/or removals
- ☒ Contact us if you notice any changes to areas in your home we have identified as containing asbestos materials

Do not:

- ☒ Drill, cut or disturb any areas in your home we have identified as containing asbestos materials
- ☒ Scrape or sand any areas in your home we have identified as containing asbestos materials before decorating

For more information and support, please get in touch by calling **0300 555 0600**.

LIFT SAFETY.

If you have disabled lifting equipment (DLE) installed in your home, such as a stair lift, a through-floor lift, or lifting equipment, it's important to follow the guidance below.

Wear your seatbelt

Whilst you won't be reaching fast speeds on a stairlift, wearing a seatbelt or harness is still very important. Just a slight loss of balance could result in a dangerous fall.

Take care when getting on and off

Getting off a lift, especially at the top of the stairs, can be quite dangerous. Consider taking advantage of features such as an extended rail or a swivel seat to mitigate these risks.

Do not overload

It might be tempting to try to carry objects on a stairlift. However, overloading the unit by putting too much weight on it causes safety risks.

Child safety

If you have young children living in or visiting your home, it's a good idea to disable the operation of the lift when not in use to prevent any accidents.

Fold up the seat when not in use

As well as making it easier to get around, folding up seats, armrests and footrests when not in use will reduce tripping hazards. This is especially important if there are small children, others with mobility issues, or anyone with a sight impairment.

If you notice a fault with your equipment, please do not use it until it has been checked by a professional. You can let us know about any faults by calling **0300 555 0600**, and if you have an extended warranty with the installer, you can also contact them directly.

You can also find more safety advice on our website (onward.co.uk/home-safety).

WATER SAFETY.

To help keep your water supply clear and safe to use, please follow the guidance below.

- When you first move into your home, run the bath and all taps for at least five minutes
- If your shower has not been used for a week or longer:
 - place your showerhead in a bucket of water or a full bath
 - switch it on and run the water for five minutes on both cold and hot settings
- If your shower has not been used for more than two weeks or longer:
 - remove the shower head and place it into a bucket with disinfectant for at least an hour
 - run the shower for five minutes whilst the shower head is being disinfected
- If your home has been vacant for a while:
 - flush your toilet twice with the seat down
 - let taps in the kitchen sink and any bathrooms run for five minutes or more on hot and cold settings
 - remove the shower head and place it into a bucket with disinfectant for at least an hour
 - run the shower for five minutes whilst the shower head is being disinfected
 - run all other taps (including outdoor ones if you have a garden tap) for five minutes or more on hot and cold settings

If you notice any rust or unusual matter flowing through your water outlets, please let us know by calling **0300 555 0600**. You can also find more safety advice on our website (onward.co.uk/home-safety).



COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK.

Delivering excellent services matters to our customers, and it matters to us too. Your compliments, complaints and feedback are important to us, as they help to shape the services we provide and put customers at the heart of everything we do.

We'd love to hear your thoughts, whether you've had a positive experience, or if you think there are areas where we could improve.

COMPLIMENTS.

Have you received great customer service from one of our employees or contractors? If you'd like to give them a compliment and recognise them for going above and beyond, you can do so by giving us a call on **0300 555 0600**, messaging **07793 795882** on WhatsApp, emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk or through the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk).



You can also leave a review on our Trustpilot page by visiting (uk.trustpilot.com/review/www.onward.co.uk) or **scanning the QR code** with your mobile or tablet device.

So we can recognise a colleague or contractor for their excellent customer service, please be sure to mention their first name and team in the review.

COMPLAINTS.

We are committed to providing a high-quality service to the customers and communities we serve. 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.

What is a complaint?

- We haven't met our service standards
- We have done something we shouldn't have done
- You are unhappy with how something has been dealt with
- We have taken too long to respond to you
- You are unhappy with how a colleague, contractor, or representative of Onward has treated you
- We have not met the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code

What isn't a complaint?

- Asking for information about one of our services
- Asking us to deal with the actions of others, for example letting us know about antisocial behaviour for the first time
- Something that is already in court or being heard by a court or tribunal
- Asking for information under the Data Protection Act
- If you are unhappy with a decision where there is already a process for challenging that decision or an appeals process already in place

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** or messaging **07793 795882** on WhatsApp between 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday, and 10am – 6pm on Wednesdays
-  emailing **customerservices@onward.co.uk**
-  writing to **Renaissance Court, 2 Christie Way, Didsbury, Manchester, 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**.

For more information about our complaints process, please visit our website (**onward.co.uk/complaints**) where you can access frequently asked questions and our Complaints Resolution Policy. If you need help understanding this document or want to request a printed copy, please get in touch.

FEEDBACK.

We are always looking to improve our services with the help of satisfaction surveys, customer feedback, inspections and learning from complaints. If you have any feedback about your experience of our services, or suggestions for improvement, please get in touch.



GET INVOLVED.

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 thousands of customers from across the North West who help make our homes and neighbourhoods better places to live.

From answering surveys, to 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.

The **Onward Scrutiny Board** provides valuable feedback and recommendations on how we can improve the services you receive. They do this by gathering information from customers and teams across Onward, checking our service performance in detail and reporting their suggestions to the Customer Committee (a sub-group of Onward's Board who oversee all services that customers receive).

The **Customer Resolution Forum** independently reviews our complaint handling process to ensure effective and efficient resolutions are given to customers. They also identify areas where we can improve our services and customer experience.

The **Customer Equity Forum** helps to ensure that our services address the needs of all customer groups, as well as reviewing communications to make sure they are accessible and easy to understand. The Forum also oversees an action plan that supports our Houseproud Pledge and helps us to promote and celebrates diversity.

Our **Regional Repair and Maintenance Groups** meet with their local Onward Repairs Manager to discuss the day-to-day service that we deliver, review plans and make recommendations on how we can improve. From 2025, their role will also include planned maintenance programmes, gas servicing and gas repairs.

If you are passionate about your home and neighbourhood, by joining our Customer Engagement Community you'll have the opportunity to:

- Shape and improve services
- Take part in activities to help improve your neighbourhood and local area
- Share concerns, views and ideas
- Help to shape policies and strategies
- Gain useful experiences, develop new skills and increase your confidence

Our members are also invited to take part in training opportunities, as well as being entered into a monthly prize draw (terms and conditions apply).

If you'd like to become a member, please email customerengagement@onward.co.uk or call **0300 555 0600**.



TENANCY SUPPORT.

Our Tenancy Support Team is here to help you set up your home, manage your tenancy and access essential household items like furniture where possible. They can also refer you to local services for support with bereavement, mental health, drugs and alcohol.

We're here to help if you need us, so please do get in touch by visiting the My Onward Portal (my.onward.co.uk), emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk or calling **0300 555 0600**.

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.

ADAPTATIONS.

If you need help making everyday tasks safer and easier, such as grab rails or a level access shower, adaptations can be made across all areas of your home, including your garden.

To learn more about our adaptations service, please email adaptations@onward.co.uk or visit our website (onward.co.uk/adaptations).

SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS.

We hope that your neighbourhood is a welcoming and safe place to live. To achieve this, we ask you to:

- Respect everyone's right to peaceful enjoyment of their home
- Raise minor disputes politely with your neighbour or the individual concerned so that this can be resolved before the issue escalates
- Be respectful to all other residents

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 (ASB), hate crime and domestic abuse very seriously and will take the necessary steps to protect you.

What is ASB?

ASB is generally described as nuisance that is persistent and causes harassment, alarm or distress. This can cover a wide range of activities including:

- drug dealing
- violence and/or threats of violence
- intimidation
- racial harassment and/or abuse
- homophobic harassment and/or abuse
- criminal damage to property
- alcohol related nuisance
- persistent noise nuisance, such as loud televisions and music
- verbal abuse toward neighbours, employees of Onward or the contractors we employ

What isn't ASB?

- The following activities would not ordinarily be considered as ASB:
- children playing in the street
- people gathering socially, unless they are being intimidating
- being unable to park outside your own home
- parking in unrestricted areas
- domestic DIY and car repairs, unless they are taking place late at night
- civil disputes between neighbours, such as shared driveways
- one-off complaints about noise, such as an occasional party

You can let us know about any problems with antisocial behaviour, hate crime or domestic abuse by filling in a form on our website (onward.co.uk/asb) or calling **0300 555 0600**. You can also report crime and antisocial behaviour anonymously via Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

If you're really concerned or scared, please call the non-emergency police number 101. Or if you feel it's an emergency, always call **999**.



EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND VOLUNTEERING.

Onward



Need help getting into work, training or volunteering? We have a number of initiatives that can support you with:

- Training courses
- CV writing and job applications
- Job searches and interview practice
- Work experience and volunteering opportunities
- Career development
- Funding

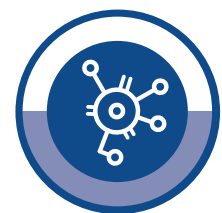
For more information, please contact our 1st Call Team by emailing **1stcallreferral@onward.co.uk** or visit our website (**onward.co.uk/employment**).

We also work with hundreds of great community groups across the North West who may be able to help you onto a career path. For more information, please email **socialinvestment@onward.co.uk**.

GETTING ONLINE.

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

We can provide free digital equipment (phone, tablet or laptop) and six months of free data to access training, education or to start a new business through our Digital Connectivity Fund. This is available for those who have little or no digital skills, have no access or insufficient access to the internet, are under 25, over 75 or have a disability.



**DIGITAL
ONWARD**

As well as this, we are supporting a range of projects across the North West 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**.

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.

ئەگەر پێویستت بە یارمەتی ھەیە بۆ تێگەیشتن لەم بەلگنامەیە، تکایە پەیوەندیمان پێوە بکە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 03005550600، لە واتسەپ پەیامێکمان بۆ بنێرە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 07793795882 یان ئیمەیلێکمان بۆ بنێرە بۆ 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.