

Onward



Customer Annual Report 2024/25

In your Customer Annual Report, we share examples of the work that we have done to improve your homes, neighbourhoods and services during the last financial year. Our focus is enabling customers to be their best, in homes they love, and places they are proud of. Over the next few pages, we set out some of the ways that we are making this a reality.



Your feedback is important to us and we are listening to what customers are telling us about our services. There are examples later in this report of how our involved customers are helping us to make our services better from improvements to repairs to the ways that we handle complaints.

In 2024/25, we continued to invest in customers' homes and spent £87.7 million on repairs and improvements. We own many ageing properties that can be difficult to heat and manage. Over this period, we completed improvements to 290 homes across all regions, which will make these warmer, more comfortable and easier to run.

Our country faces a housing crisis and we are committed to helping even more people to find a place to call home. Over the last twelve months we have built 434 homes, our highest annual total. These include a mix of a mix of affordable rent, social rent, rent to buy and shared ownership to reflect the different needs of our communities.

We have also brought more of our services in-house with gas servicing moving from contractors to Onward Repairs. We have also introduced new technology in response to customer feedback to make it easier to track the work that Onward Environmental carries out in your area.

In the next few pages, we share information on how we are performing in different areas. This year we have seen continued high demand for our homes and services alongside the significant financial pressures faced by our sector. Our priority is balancing these pressures whilst targeting homes most in need of investment and continuing to make improvements to services. We must take a careful approach so that we can make The Onward Difference well into the future.

Whilst our performance data shows some signs of improvement, we know that there is more work to be done. It will take time for all customers to fully feel the benefits of the changes that we have made to our services. We hear what you are telling us about where we need to improve and have significant plans in place to do so.

Bronwen Rapley,
Chief Executive



Our year at a glance.



Delivered energy efficiency improvements to **290** homes, which will make these warmer and easier to run



Built **434** new homes, helping more people to find a place to call home

Spent **£87.7million** on repairs, improvements and compliance work in our customers' homes



Delivered our first **net zero homes** at Greenleas, Wirral



Supported **1,335** customers with the cost of living, unlocking **£4.1million** in extra income



Brought more services **in-house**, with gas servicing in Greater Manchester moving from contractors to Onward Repairs

Carried out upgrades such as new windows, kitchens and doors, with an investment of **£36.1million**

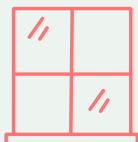


Investing in your home.

In 2024/25, we spent **£39.9million** on repairs, **£34.7million** on improvements and **£13.1million** on compliance work in customers' homes. We have also continued to deliver upgrades including:



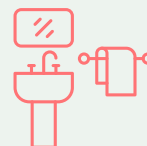
2,971
doors



1,362
windows



1,130
kitchens



953
bathrooms



241
roofs

How we are doing.

In 2024/25, we continued to see high levels of demand for our homes and services. We have put improvement plans in place to adapt to this and make our services better, which you can learn more about on page six.

The tables below show we performed in 2024/25 compared to the previous period. We know there are still areas that we need to improve, and customers might not feel the benefits of the changes we are making

right away. We are building on the progress already made by moving more services, such as repairs, cleaning and grounds maintenance, over from contractors to Onward. Doing this means we have more control over the quality of the service and can be more flexible to your feedback.

Over the next few pages we will set out how we are using your feedback to improve your homes, neighbourhoods and services.

	2023/24	2024/25
Rental income		
Proportion of rent collected from customers	98.9%	99.9%
Proportion of overdue rent owed by customers	4.8%	4.7%
Lettings and turnover		
Average days to relet an empty home	45.7 days	47.9 days
Average days to relet an empty home (excluding sheltered and supported homes)	44.5 days	46.8 days
Repairs completed within target timescales		
All repairs	77.3%	85.9%
Emergency repairs	82.9%	97.3%
Routine repairs	75.3%	82.7%
Keeping you safe		
Homes with a valid gas safety certificate	99.6%	99.6%
Homes with a valid electrical safety certificate	97.7%	97.8%
Homes with a complete fire risk assessment	99.8%	99.7%

The annual tenant satisfaction survey.

Our performance data provides us with lots of insights into how customers think we are doing in different areas.

Alongside our regular surveys, we also carry out a survey every year based on new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). We have shared the results from our latest survey using the TSMs. The Regulator of Social Housing will also publish these results.

You can find a breakdown of the results and what we have learnt by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/tsm-results). Our TSM results, along with other performance data, show us that there are areas where we need to improve.

Our complaints service.

We know that we don't always get things right the first time and are looking at what our complaints data tells us to help us focus on improving our services.

In 2024/25 we saw an increase in the number of complaints from customers. New requirements set out by the Housing Ombudsman have removed informal complaints. This means that issues that would have been dealt with informally are now categorised as complaints, which may have contributed to this increase. The table below shows how we are doing around complaints compared to 2023/24.

	2023/24	2024/25	Difference
Number of complaints received	1,388	2,159	+771
Number of Housing Ombudsman complaints	27	79	+52
Complaints closed within 10 days	81%	84%	+3%
Average time taken to resolve complaints (working days)	9	11	+2
Number of complaints upheld	77%	71%	-6%
Number of customer compliments received	378	413	+35
Complaints per 1,000 properties	48	70	+22
Complaints not accepted	67	114	+47
Number of complaints escalating to Stage 2	158	318	+160

Our plans to improve.

It is always disappointing when customers complain to us, however these complaints help us to understand what we need to do better.

We have been working with our involved customers to make improvements to our complaints service. These include looking at how we can get ahead of issues and making it easier for you to contact the teams dealing with your complaint.



Here are some of the improvements that we have made to our complaints service this year in response to your feedback:



We set up a new team to contact customers who might be more likely to make a complaint based on their past contact with us. The goal is to fix problems early, before they become complaints. So far, this team has helped 1,600 customers.



Introduced a new appointment booking system so that customers can schedule a call to speak to their complaint handler directly and at a time that is convenient for them. This was introduced in response to customer feedback about the need to be able to contact colleagues directly and have an open dialogue with us about their complaints.



Delivered training to all colleagues with a focus on improving customer service and getting the basics right. Alongside this, senior colleagues involved in complaint handling meet weekly to look at performance, specific cases and customer feedback.



Meeting more regularly with our Customer Resolution Forum, with meetings changing from quarterly. This gives us more opportunities to speak directly with customers about complaints and get feedback on the service.



Ensured that regular updates are being provided to customers on their complaint status and next steps.



Finally, we have introduced a high-risk management approach, which means that we have the right resources in place to deal with more complex complaints that need additional time and resources.

Whilst we hope that our customers will soon start to feel the benefits of the changes that we have already made, we are always aiming to improve what we do. To find out more about how we're responding to complaints and our plans for the future, please take a look at our Annual Complaints & Service Improvement Report [here](https://onward.co.uk/reports) or by visiting our website (onward.co.uk/reports).

Listening to your feedback.

Through our Customer Engagement Community, we provide opportunities for customers to share their views and influence how we deliver our services. Here are some examples of how we worked with customers during 2024/25 to make services better:

We have worked with our customers to develop a new Environmental Tracker on our website (onward.co.uk/environmental-tracker), which allows customers to check the work carried out by Onward Environmental, such as when we've visited, when we'll next be in the area and view photos after services are carried out.



We have worked with our customer Regional Repairs and Maintenance Groups to make changes to the letters that we send around repairs and the information that we share on our website to make these clearer and easier to understand.



We've made several improvements to our website following feedback from the Customer Equity Forum. This has included better communication around the accessibility and translation tools available, as well as the introduction of a local updates section that provides details on how we've made The Onward Difference across each local authority area.





Working with customers from the Onward Scrutiny Board and Customer Engagement

Community, we have made our rent and service charge communications clearer and easier to understand, for example sharing more detail on what your service charges cover. We received fewer calls from customers about rents compared to last year, which shows that this communication has improved because of customer feedback.



Customer volunteers have been working with us on our energy efficiency projects. These volunteers have regularly given feedback on how the work was progressing and monitored the performance of contractors and sub-contractors.



Our Customer Resolution Forum continue to monitor how we respond to customers' complaints. We have made changes in response to their feedback, such as ensuring problems are dealt with in a timely manner, regularly updating customers on the status of their complaints and improving communication with customers about ongoing issues and repairs.



Our Home Ownership Forum has shared views on where we can deliver improvements to our repairs and grounds maintenance services. The Forum has also tested the new home ownership portal (onward.co.uk/portal), which will enable customers to manage their account on the go with access to a range of features, such as reporting communal repairs and checking on their progress.



Making The Onward Difference

Our Corporate Plan, The Onward Difference, sets out the different ways we will improve your homes and neighbourhoods. Here are some of the ways we have done this during 2024/25.

ENABLING

Helping people take control of their lives and neighbourhoods.

We have built 434 new homes, our highest annual total, across twelve different local authorities. We build a mix of homes so that we can meet the different needs of our customers. These comprise 182 affordable rent, 140 social rent, 88 shared ownership and 24 rent to buy homes.



In March, we handed over the keys to customers at our first net zero development at Greenleas in Wirral. All 13 of these homes are zero carbon and use new technologies to help make them more energy efficient including air source heat pumps. We will be looking at new ways to scale up this approach so that even more customers can feel the benefits that these types of schemes can bring.

We also completed Birch Lea Park, our new over 55s scheme in Hattersley. Birch Lea Park provides 91 modern apartments along with support packages that are tailored to individuals and a range of high-quality communal facilities.

As well as providing homes that our customers love, we also work with organisations that share our commitment of enabling people to be their best. Our 1st Call Team, based in Preston, Hyndburn and Hattersley, offers help to local residents around health and wellbeing, managing finances and getting into work and training. In 2024/25, the team has supported 2,497 people living across our communities.

ENVIRONMENT

Reducing carbon by making our homes warm, dry and affordable.



We own and manage properties that can be difficult to heat due to their age or how these were built. One of the ways that we're improving customers' homes is through works to make these properties more energy efficient.

Through our energy efficiency programme we are looking at those homes most in need of improvement and prioritising these first. The improvements that we are carrying out will make these homes warmer, more comfortable and easier for customers to run.

In 2024/25, we have started works on 376 homes and completed improvements to 290 homes across Greater

Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire.

In March, we were awarded a further £2.9million which will support more improvements to customers' homes and our goal to become a leading environmentally friendly landlord.

LISTENING

Hearing what customers tell us and being visible in our neighbourhoods.

We know that repairs are an important issue for our customers and we know that there are areas where we need to improve. We have listened to what you have told us about the service to make some major changes over the last twelve months.

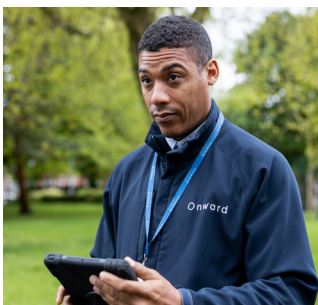
Onward Repairs already carried out services in Lancashire and in April 2024 repairs services in Greater Manchester and Cheshire East also moved in-house. By having our own teams carry out repairs we have more control over the quality of the service that we deliver. In November, Onward Repairs also took over gas servicing and repairs in Greater Manchester and Cheshire East. Alongside this we have continued to invest in improvements to our repairs service in Merseyside.



We know that there is more work to be done to improve the service. We will continue to work with our involved customers to monitor repairs performance and deliver ongoing improvements. We do this through our Regional Repairs and Maintenance Groups, which are made up of customers from across the North West, who meet regularly to discuss aspects of our repairs, servicing and planned maintenance programmes.

TECHNOLOGY

Modern technology, great experiences and a landlord that is easy to contact.



One of the ways that we will improve our services is by using modern technology to give customers the best possible experience of living in our homes.

At our Greenleas scheme in Wirral, we've used the latest technology to make homes more efficient and easier for customers to run, such as air source heat pumps and other low carbon technologies.

Customers have told us that they want more information about the work carried out by Onward Environmental. In April 2024, we launched a new Environmental Tracker on our website (onward.co.uk/environmental-tracker). The tracker is a quick and easy way to check what work our grounds maintenance and cleaning teams are carrying out in your area, including things like when we've visited, when we'll next be in the area and photos after services are carried out.

COLLEAGUES

Always learning how to do a better job for our customers.

We invest in the learning and development of our colleagues so that everyone has the skills and capabilities needed to contribute towards delivering excellent customer care.

All colleagues and contractors have taken part in customer care training, and we continue to roll this out as new colleagues join the organisation. We have also launched a new Leadership Academy to enable our colleagues to continue to develop both professionally and personally, equipping them with the skills and expertise to help us to continue to deliver our Corporate Plan.





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 to do just that. We already have thousands customers from across the North West who help make our homes and neighbourhoods better places to live. By joining our Customer Engagement Community you'll have the opportunity to:

- Influence 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**.

Contact us:

We're here to help if you need us, so please do get in touch by:



visiting the My Onward Portal (onward.co.uk/portal)



emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk



calling **0300 555 0600** or messaging **07418 344 603** on WhatsApp between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 10am-6pm on Wednesdays

If you need any help understanding this document, please give us a call on **0300 555 0600**, send us a message on WhatsApp to **07418 344 603**, 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 07418 344603 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 07418 344603 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 07418 344603 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 07418 344603 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 07418 344603，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 07418 344603, 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 07418 344603 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 07418 344603, ou envoyez un e-mail à customerservices@onward.co.uk.

ئەگەر پێویستت بە یارمەتی ھەیە بۆ تیگەیشتن لەم بەلگەنامەیە، تکایە پەیوەندیمان پێوە بکە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 03005550600، لە واتسەپ پەیامیکمان بۆ بنێرە بە ژمارە تەلەفۆنی 07418 344603 یان ئیمەیلیکمان بۆ بنێرە بۆ customerservices@onward.co.uk.

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