

The Onward Newsletter

Spring 2026

IN THIS ISSUE: How your views are shaping the services we provide and helpful information on rent and service charges.

WELCOME.

Welcome to your spring newsletter, and my first as Chief Executive at Onward. It is a privilege to lead the organisation and serve our customers and communities. That is the reason I have taken on the role.

We will continue to be a visible presence in your neighbourhood, focusing on the basics that matter to you. Through the hard work of our colleagues in Onward and guidance from our customers, we are making progress but know that there is much more still to do.

In the year ahead, we'll be changing the way we work by embracing new technology, continuing to invest to improve your homes and building more affordable homes for those who need them most in our communities.

Our aim is to see every decision through your eyes, and we will work in partnership with you, listening, hearing and, most importantly, acting on your feedback.

In this newsletter, you'll hear all about how we are working with customers, improving our services and making The Onward Difference. You'll also find details on how we can support you, whether that's advice on managing the cost of living, gaining new digital skills, or adapting our services to meet your needs.



A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sandy".

Sandy Livingstone
Chief Executive



YOUR RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES.

From the start of April, rents for most of our customers increased by 4.8%. This is in line with the Government Rent Standard which allows for rent increases of inflation, plus 1%. The changes in rents enable us to continue to invest in customers' homes and improve standards for the long term, and deliver improvements across our neighbourhoods and services.

Some of our customers also saw changes in their service charges, which cover services like cleaning or a scheme manager. As a reminder, you only pay for services that you receive, and a full breakdown of costs will always be provided.

For more information on rent and service charges, please visit our website (onward.co.uk/rsc) or give us call on **0300 555 0600**.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP.



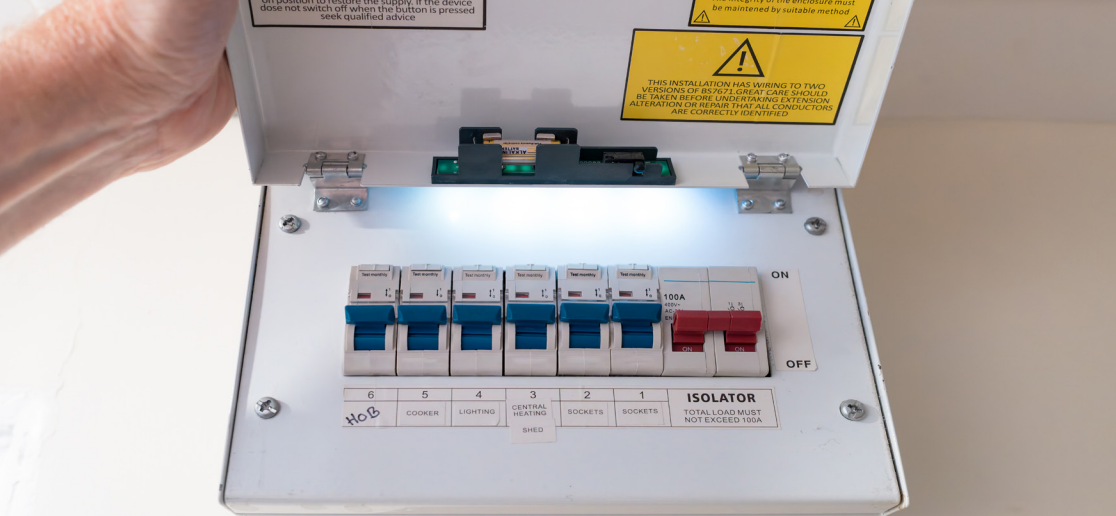
We know that the cost of living can be challenging and are here to help customers that might need extra support.

Our Money Advice Team can give you free, confidential advice. This could include supporting you with changes to Universal Credit and other benefits, practical tips around managing your household budget, accessing additional support you might be entitled to, or helping you with emergency funds.

You can get in touch with a member of the team by emailing moneyadviceteam@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.

Our Customer Accounts Team can help you keep on track with rent and service charge payments. If you miss a payment, or your financial position changes, we will work with you to find a solution and discuss affordable repayment plans.

Our promise is that no one will lose their home where they are working with us to make payments. If you think you will struggle to pay, please let us know as soon as you can by giving us a call, messaging us on WhatsApp or emailing customeraccounts@onward.co.uk.



BOOK YOUR ELECTRICAL CHECK TODAY!

Our homes rely on electricity, but how often do you think about the risk from faulty electrics or devices?

Almost half of all accidental house fires reported in the UK last year were caused by an electrical item*, and that's why we take our commitment to electrical safety extremely seriously to keep you and your family safe.

By law, we need to carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) for our social rented homes, at least every five years. This report helps us to identify any problems and repairs that may be needed in your homes or to any of the appliances we have provided.

If you have been contacted about your EICR, please help us by booking a visit on a date and time that works for you. You can do so by giving us a call on **0300 555 0600**.

As this is a legal requirement and will keep you safe in your home, we strongly urge you to work with us to arrange access to complete our report. This will avoid us applying to a court to gain access to your home.

*Source: gov.uk



AN UPDATE ON OUR TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY.

Every year, we carry out a Tenant Satisfaction Survey with a sample of our customers based on Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The TSMs ask how happy or unhappy customers are in lots of areas, such as repairs, communal spaces, complaints and the positive local impact we make across our communities.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views in our most recent survey, which is now complete. We were delighted to see that satisfaction has improved, and later this year, we'll share the results and details of how we're working with customers to improve our services. You can also expect to see more updates about how we're listening and using your feedback to make meaningful changes, through this newsletter, our website, emails and personalised messages.

We will be delivering the next Tenant Satisfaction Survey over the next few months. In the meantime, there are lots of other ways you can get involved and share your views, so please do get in touch with the Customer Voice Team by emailing customerengagement@onward.co.uk or calling **0300 555 0600**.

YOU SAID, WE DID.

Turning complaints into action.

We know that we don't always get things right the first time, and there are areas where we can do better. By using your feedback and working together with our involved customers, we're able to better understand the root causes of complaints and make improvements. Here are some of the practical, meaningful changes we've made that were shaped directly by you.



You told us complaint responses were sometimes too formal, didn't clearly explain decisions, what would happen next or how vulnerabilities had been taken into account.



In response, we've worked with our customers to co-create a new approach to complaint responses which has allowed us to see these through a customer lens. Our responses now use straightforward language and a clearer structure to explain what we can and can't do, what will happen next, and how long things should take. They also set out, in simple terms, what actions we've taken because of a customer's vulnerability and why.

We've also introduced extra checks on more complex complaint responses, meaning a second colleague now reads and reviews the response before it's sent. This helps make sure our explanations are clear, fair and easy to understand. As well as this, we've also improved how we record key information during an investigation, so we can give you a more complete and transparent response the first time.



You told us that delays, missed appointments and repeat visits are some of the most frustrating parts of the repairs experience.



We're now doing more to get repairs right the first time, including improving how we identify issues before we attend. We've also given our Customer Service Centre extra training so they can safely talk you through simple fixes which may not require a visit, where these are appropriate.

Instead of repeatedly repairing an old or unreliable boiler, we'll now replace it sooner when it's more cost effective and better for you to do so. This helps break the cycle of breakdown → repair → breakdown and provides a longer term solution. And to reduce the number of appointments needed, gas safety checks and a range of other compliance checks can now be done in one visit where possible. This gives you more flexibility and cuts down the number of times we need to come back, helping make your experience smoother and less disruptive.

We know there's still more to do, so if you'd like to become an involved customer and share your views on how we can improve, please get in touch with our Customer Voice Team by emailing customerengagement@onward.co.uk or giving us a call.

We'll be sharing an overview of our complaints results, what we've learned and how we've worked with customers to listen, hear and improve on our website every quarter, so keep an eye out for the latest updates.

IMPROVING OUR REPAIRS SERVICE.



Over the past few years, we have been bringing more services in-house, so that we can have greater control over the services being delivered in our neighbourhoods. This is already helping us improve our customers' experiences.

The latest stage in this journey saw Onward Repairs take over all gas repairs across Merseyside at the start of April, when our contract with PH Jones came to an end. While we continue to grow our gas service in the area for a short period specialist contractor Rothwells Plumbing Services will manage all gas servicing jobs.



OUR NEW REPAIRS HANDBOOK.

Working closely with involved customers, we recently refreshed our repairs handbook to ensure it is easy to understand and provides up-to-date information about repairs services.

You can download a copy of the new handbook on our website (onward.co.uk/repairs), or if you would like to request a printed copy, please give us a call.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.

If you receive grounds maintenance services, Onward Environmental will be tending to the grass across your neighbourhood throughout spring and summer. Our team uses a cut and drop method, which helps to keep weeds at bay and ensures the soil gets a natural boost of vital nutrients. Plus, this approach helps the ground retain moisture during those sunny spells, ensuring your green spaces stay healthy and vibrant.

Our Environmental Tracker is your go-to tool for the latest updates from Onward Environmental, from schedules of when we'll next be in the area and photos before and after services are carried out.

Getting started is easy – just visit our website (onward.co.uk/environmental-tracker) or scan the QR code with your mobile or tablet device. If you need a hand getting online, any Onward colleague will be glad to help. You can also reach out by emailing customerservices@onward.co.uk or giving us a call.



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 positive local impact we have made across our communities.

Enabling people to be their best.

GREATER MANCHESTER

In Salford, we supported First Kick foundation's range of free, community-based support services to help local families and individuals build resilience, access healthy meals, receive financial and wellbeing advice, and foster a sense of belonging during winter.



LANCASHIRE

Over in Hyndburn, we helped Accrington Stanley Community Trust enhance its social inclusion programme for over 50s at the Stanley Sports Hub with funding to extend its warm hub hours and offer free refreshments, wellbeing activities and support services to help older residents in the area stay connected, nourished and supported through the colder months.





MERSEYSIDE

In Merseyside, we supported Health on the Agenda's Soup N Sew, a community-led initiative in Liverpool that brings people together through food and sewing, helping to tackle loneliness, teach valuable skills for keeping homes warm, and foster lasting friendships.



Providing homes our customers love.



LANCASHIRE

Canal Point, our brand-new apartment building on the banks of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal in Clayton-le-Moors is now complete. As well as these apartments, our Lockside Walk development delivered in partnership with Watson Homes will deliver a total of 127 new homes for affordable rent, shared ownership and rent to buy.



GREATER MANCHESTER

Our second zero-carbon development on the former site of Mottram Police Station in Longdendale is progressing well thanks to the use of modern construction methods which will see 14 three-bedroom homes built in a reduced time whilst minimising waste during construction. Once complete, these affordable homes will offer low energy costs, with air source heat pumps and solar panels generating warmth and free electricity from the natural environment.



MERSEYSIDE

Construction is underway at our Dye House development in Prescot, which will see 26 one, two and three-bedroom apartments, alongside 19 two and three-bedroom houses available through rent to buy. Supported by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Brownfield Land Fund and built by our partner Tyson Construction, the 45 new homes will be built using timber frames.



Creating places people are proud of.

MERSEYSIDE

In Kirkdale, we worked with dot-art and local families to create a striking new mural on the corner of Leighton and Smeaton Street, marking an important milestone in our wider work in the neighbourhood where we've worked with partners to deliver energy efficiency upgrades to 400 homes, refreshed local green spaces, and created over £104k in social value.



GREATER MANCHESTER

Volunteers from Hattersley GreenNetwork, our Social Investment Team and colleagues from Onward Environmental came together to plant fruit trees across Hattersley, creating new orchards for the community. These new orchards will help local children learn about nature and give local people a welcoming place to meet.



LANCASHIRE

Over in Accrington, we have improved access at the site of 1st Call's Fishing for Wellbeing initiative, enabling those with disabilities to take part in sessions through wheelchair friendly jetties.





DIGITAL SKILLS & DEVICES.

The Onward Digital Connect initiative is here to help you get online and stay connected. Whether you want to learn something new, go back to school, or even start your own business, we can give you a free digital device (like a phone, tablet, or laptop) and six months of free data to help you get started.

This support is available for customers who don't have much experience using computers or the internet, can't get online easily, are aged under 25 or over 75, or have a disability.

We're also running projects in local communities to help everyone improve their digital skills. You can drop in for simple lessons or join a 16-week bootcamp to learn even more.

Stuart, a customer who was gifted a laptop, said:

“I'm very grateful for the laptop. It has helped me get online, search for more things to do and improved my wellbeing as I suffer from mental health.”

To learn more, please get in touch with our Social Investment Team by emailing socialinvestment@onward.co.uk, or giving us a call. You can also head to the website (onward.co.uk/digital-skills) to access easy guides on staying safe online, using social media, making your business digital, and lots more.

ADAPTING OUR SERVICES.

We know that all customers have different needs and we will sometimes need to change what we do so that everyone can use our services fairly. If you think we need to do anything differently to support you, such as visiting you at home instead of using the telephone, you can let us know by using the contact details below.

You can also learn more about this in our vulnerabilities and reasonable adjustment policy which you can find on our website (onward.co.uk/policies). If you would like a printed copy, please give us a call.

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, zadzwońdo 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.

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