

# The Onward Newsletter

Winter 2025

## WELCOME.

Welcome to your final Onward newsletter of 2025. In this newsletter we set out how we can support you over the winter. We know that the colder months can be challenging for some of our customers and we are here to help. In the coming weeks and months, we will be holding events across our neighbourhoods where we will be on hand to offer advice and guidance around financial support, and health and wellbeing. We would love to see you there.

If you are worried about your finances, our Money Advice Team can offer free, confidential advice around getting on top of your bills. In this edition, we also share updates around how you can report repairs and damp and mould to us. If you need anything we are a phone call away so please get in touch.

This marks my last newsletter as Chief Executive. It has been an absolute privilege to serve Onward over the last decade. I am leaving a great team in place and I know that they will continue to strive to deliver the best homes and services they can. The Board is now in the process of recruiting a new Chief Executive and we will share updates with you in due course.

Finally, thank you to all the many customers who have helped to build Onward for your honest feedback and your willingness to work with us. Too many to mention, but you know who you are!

I hope you enjoy the festive period and wish you well for the new year.



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

Bronwen Rapley,  
Chief Executive

If you usually contact us using WhatsApp, please note our number has changed to **07418 344 603**. More information on the ways you can contact us can be found on our website ([onward.co.uk/contact-us](https://onward.co.uk/contact-us)) or by giving us a call on **0300 555 0600**.



# GET SUPPORT THIS WINTER.

Winter is here and we know that freezing temperatures can increase the chance of things going wrong around your home. We also understand that the cost of living can become more challenging during this period, and all of this can have an impact on mental health and wellbeing. Below we have included some helpful information on the support available. For more support, please visit our website ([onward.co.uk/winter-support](https://onward.co.uk/winter-support)) or get in touch.

## Reporting emergency repairs and damp and mould.

If you need help with an emergency repair, such as a flood or leak that can't be controlled, our emergency phone line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We're here to help if you need us, so please call us as soon as you can on **0300 555 0600**.

If you're concerned about damp and mould in your home, please get in touch with us straight away. We recently worked with customers to create a visual damp and mould guide to help you spot anything in your home that needs attention. You can find this by visiting our website ([onward.co.uk/damp](https://onward.co.uk/damp)) or if you would like it in another format, please get in touch.

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. This is especially important for those with health conditions during the winter months.

## Check your heating before it gets cold.

Please check that your heating works before the cold weather arrives. If your boiler stops working when the temperature drops, the pipe outside (called a condensate pipe) might be frozen. Please try these steps before calling us, **but only if it is safe to do so**.

- Look for the white plastic pipe outside that is connected to your boiler. It should go to an outside drain.
- Pour warm (not boiling) water over this pipe.
- Press the reset button on your boiler.

If the pipe is no longer frozen, your boiler should now work. If not, please give us a call.

## Support with finances and energy bills.

If you are worried about your finances over the festive period, our Money Advice Team are here to help. They can provide free, confidential advice on managing household budgets and accessing additional support you might be entitled to, including help with energy bills and the Warm Homes Discount Scheme. Please get in touch with the team by emailing [moneyadviceteam@onward.co.uk](mailto:moneyadviceteam@onward.co.uk) or giving us a call.

## Help with health and wellbeing.

If you need support with health and wellbeing, or accessing food over the winter, we're here to help. Over the coming months we'll be hosting events across our neighbourhoods where advice will also be available. To find an event near you, please visit our website ([onward.co.uk/winter-support](https://onward.co.uk/winter-support)), email [socialinvestment@onward.co.uk](mailto:socialinvestment@onward.co.uk) or give us a call.

# AN UPDATE FROM THE ONWARD SCRUTINY BOARD.

We're always looking at how we can improve your experiences and provide plenty of opportunities for customers to share their views and influence how we deliver our services. Here's an update from the Onward Scrutiny Board, a group of customers who volunteer their time to help make our services better and hold us to account.

*“ As members of the Onward Scrutiny Board, we dedicate our time on a voluntary basis to take a close look at the services you receive. We highlight what's going well and ask questions on your behalf where services are not meeting their targets.*

*We love what we do and work well as a team. We're a diverse bunch from across the North West and we all bring our experience and ideas together to help Onward make positive changes. You can find out more about our members on Onward's website.*

*Since our first annual review a year ago, we have continued to meet regularly to hold Onward to account for the quality of the services they provide. Some highlights from 2024/25 include our review of the communications Onward send to customers about rent and service charges, the quality of services you receive, as well as looking closely at areas such as grounds maintenance and cleaning now that these have been brought in-house.*

*We've also worked closely with Onward to offer positive, practical ideas for improving services. We have developed a collaborative relationship with Heads of Service and*

## OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE.

- ✓ Attended **2** national conferences
- ✓ Took part in **5** workshops with Onward's board members and directors
- ✓ Attended **5** Customer Committee meetings
- ✓ Made **16** detailed recommendations to improve rent and service charge information, transparency and value for money
- ✓ Held **18** working meetings and 4 quarterly meetings to review performance
- ✓ Asked over **40** questions about service performance
- ✓ Volunteered over **400** hours to help improve services for customers

*other senior employees across Onward and have had opportunities to influence at governance level through our attendance at Customer Committee (a sub-group of Onward's Board who oversee all services that customers receive) meetings.*

*In our 2024/25 annual review, we've provided a more detailed look at the work we've been doing to help make services better for our fellow customers. To take a look, please visit Onward's website ([onward.co.uk/osb](https://onward.co.uk/osb)) or get in touch by emailing [customerengagement@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerengagement@onward.co.uk) or calling **0300 555 0600** to request a paper copy. We currently have vacancies for more customers to join us, so please get in touch with the team to find out more.*

”

**The Onward Scrutiny Board**



# THE IMPORTANCE OF ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION CONDITION REPORTS.

Our number one priority is the safety and wellbeing of our customers and colleagues. To keep your home safe for everyone, we need to inspect items in your home that could pose a risk to your health, including your electricity supply.

*Did you know? 43% of all accidental house fires in 2024/25 were caused by an electrical item.\**

From May 2026, all housing associations must complete an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) for their social rented homes, at least every five years.

The EICR is important as it will alert us to any problems with your electrical system and any repairs that need to be carried out. We will also check the safety of any appliances that we own.

If you have been contacted about your EICR, please help us arrange a visit on a date that works for you. As an EICR is a legal requirement and needs to be completed in a timely manner, if you don't work with us to arrange access we may need to apply to a court to gain access to your home to carry out the work. The purpose of this is to keep you and your family safe.

To book your EICR inspection, please call **0300 555 0600**.

\*Source: gov.uk

# HOME SAFETY.

To keep you and your loved ones safe at home, please be sure to follow the guidance below.

- ✓ Test your smoke and heat alarms every month.
- ✓ Never leave fires or heaters on when you're not watching them. Always turn them off before going to sleep.
- ✓ Don't use gas canisters or open flames to heat your home.
- ✓ Keep things away from radiators and heaters. Don't dry clothes on them.
- ✓ Never tamper gas or electricity meters.
- ✓ Keep shared spaces clear and tidy.
- ✓ Watch out for damp or mould and contact us if you spot it.
- ✓ Check plugs and wires. Don't use them if they look broken and never plug too many things into one socket.
- ✓ Never leave things charging if you're not home, and don't overcharge things like e-cigarettes or e-scooters.
- ✓ Keep e-bikes and e-scooters in cool places, always follow manufacturer instructions, use the correct charger, and never leave them charging unattended or overnight.
- ✓ Keep festive decorations away from heaters and radiators.
- ✓ Don't leave cooking pans alone on the hob.
- ✓ Keep flammable items away from your cooker.
- ✓ Turn off all appliances before going to sleep.

For more information on home safety, such as guidance on fire, gas, lift, and water safety, please visit our website ([onward.co.uk/safety](https://onward.co.uk/safety)).

# The Onward Difference

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

## Enabling people to be their best.



### GREATER MANCHESTER

In Salford, we supported a free training programme for young people interested in media and podcasting led by The Reporter's Academy.



*Awan, who took part, said: "It was an amazing opportunity that gave me the chance to explore my creativity and build confidence in a supportive environment. I got to work with professional cameras and equipment, and one of the highlights was getting to interview Olympic athletes."*



### LANCASHIRE

Our 1st Call Team is working closely with people in Preston whose health conditions are impacting their ability to work as part of the UK Government's Work Well project.



*A participant said: "My mentor has been so helpful and informative. Their support throughout the process gave me confidence to return to work and they've also helped me apply for funding to get special equipment which will make my job easier."*





## MERSEYSIDE

We partnered with Job Centre Plus, Everton in the Community (EitC) and our suppliers across the trade and construction sectors to deliver a Meet the Employer event in Liverpool.



AA Molyneux, a local builder, who employed an attendee said: *“We have employed Jake who was made redundant by his previous employer and was unable to complete the final part of his electrical apprenticeship. We are hoping to get his apprenticeship completed in the coming months, which will allow Jake to become a fully qualified electrician.”*

## Providing homes our customers love.



## GREATER MANCHESTER

The opening of Birch Lea Park, our specialist housing with care scheme, marks the completion of our 161-home Hattersley Central development.



Customers are already settling into their new homes here and Mike told us: *“We loved Birch Lea Park straight away. It’s magnificent. If we need somebody, we just ring the bell, and somebody will come and help us. Although we’ve not needed them so far, having people available 24-7 just gives us peace of mind.”*

To learn more and register your interest, please visit our website ([onward.co.uk/birch-lea-park](https://onward.co.uk/birch-lea-park)) or get in touch.



## MERSEYSIDE

In Knowsley, our Lyneham Road development of 19 new homes in Whiston is almost complete thanks to our contractor Built Group. The mix of stylish two- and four-bedroom homes, and two-bedroom cottage apartments will be available through Property Pool Plus ([propertypoolplus.org.uk](https://propertypoolplus.org.uk)) soon.



## LANCASHIRE

Our partnership with Ring Stones, part of Calico Group, has seen work restart at our Cabin End development of 20 new affordable rent homes near Blackburn.

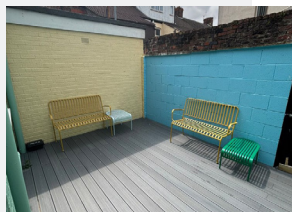


# Creating places people are proud of.



## MERSEYSIDE

We worked closely with EitC and our contractor Novus Property Solutions to transform 41 Goodison, a dedicated safe space for participants living with a variety of complex challenges.



Jenny Harden, EitC's Youth Inclusion Manager said:  
*"We're grateful to both Onward Homes and Novus Property Solutions for their generous donations. The digital resources and the revamped garden space will massively benefit the young people we work with."*



## LANCASHIRE

We run an annual competition to celebrate customers who make their gardens special and help bring the community together. This year, the customers at Merlin Court, our Older Persons scheme in Oswaldtwistle, won the Bee Friendly award for the beautiful arrangements created in their communal garden for everyone, including the bees, to enjoy. Well done to everyone at Merlin Court!



## GREATER MANCHESTER

Eden Gardens, a community allotment in Bury, has been transformed into a thriving green space the local community can be proud of thanks to our collaborative efforts with several contractors and partners who donated their time, expertise, and resources to improve the site and make it more environmentally friendly.



Wayne Warburton, Project Lead and Committee Member at Eden Gardens, said: *"We're incredibly grateful to Onward, their dedicated contractors, and suppliers who have made this transformation achievable."*

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

# KEEPING YOU SAFE.

If someone does or says things that are wrong, makes you upset, frightened, or you don't agree to what is happening, this is abuse. Abuse can happen anywhere and by anyone. It may happen on purpose, or by someone who may not realise what they are doing is wrong.

There are eight different types of abuse: physical, domestic, sexual, financial or material, emotional or psychological, neglect or self-neglect, modern slavery, radicalisation or extremism.

If you are experiencing abuse, we will listen, take what you say seriously, and get you the help and support you need to stay safe.

## One customer who received support from Onward said:

*"I'm now in a home I love, I feel safe and can't wait to make it my own. I can't thank Onward enough. Their help throughout the process made such a big difference and I'm so grateful for their support. It was the best thing that could've happened to me."*

To report abuse, please call **0300 555 0600** (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), message **07418 344 603** on WhatsApp between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday and 10am-6pm on Wednesdays, or email **[customerservices@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk)**.

If you need help in an emergency, please call **999**.

# HELP TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

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.

Sandra, an Onward customer who had adaptations in her home, said:

*“The operative was absolutely fantastic and did a great job. They took the time to listen and understand my condition, which I really appreciated. The service and work were 10/10.”*

To learn more about our adaptations service, please get in touch or visit our website ([onward.co.uk/adaptations](https://onward.co.uk/adaptations)).



# MAKING A COMPLAINT.

We know we don't always get things right first time, so if you do have any problems, please get in touch with our Customer Service Team using the details below and we'll do our best to solve things quickly.

Ms H, an Onward customer who made a complaint regarding her kitchen, flooring and boiler which all required urgent attention, said:

*"When Karen (Customer Resolution Specialist) stepped in to help, I could tell straight away she truly cares about helping customers. She put my mind at ease and explained everything step by step, which was so reassuring. She listened, took everything on board, and within days, repairs were underway."*

If you ever feel our services haven't been up to standard and you wish to make a complaint, please head to the website for more information ([onward.co.uk/complaints](https://onward.co.uk/complaints)) or get in touch by:

- visiting the My Onward Portal ([my.onward.co.uk](https://my.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
- emailing [customerservices@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk)
- writing to **Renaissance Court, 2 Christie Way, Didsbury, Manchester, M21 7QY**

You can also get in touch with the Housing Ombudsman, an independent organisation that investigates complaints, for support at any stage by visiting [housing-ombudsman.org.uk](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk), emailing [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk), calling **0300 111 3000**, or writing to **The Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET.**

# OUR HOME STANDARD.

We want you to feel happy, safe and secure. We know that the quality of your home can have a big impact on your life. Our Home Standard was created in collaboration with our customers to explain what you can expect when we look after your home and make improvements.

You can find this on our website ([onward.co.uk/policies](https://onward.co.uk/policies)), or by getting in touch using the details below to request a paper copy.

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](mailto: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](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk).

0300 555 0600، أو أرسل رسالة إلينا على رقم الواتس  
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এই নথিটি বুঝতে আপনার যদি কোনো সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে  
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[customerservices@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk).

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07418 344603 [customerservices@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk) 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](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk)。

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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](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk).

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contacte-nos para o número 0300 555 0600, envie-nos uma  
mensagem para o WhatsApp para o número 07418 344603  
ou envie um email para [customerservices@onward.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@onward.co.uk).