



Community Voice magazine

Keeping you in touch with the latest news



COMMUNITY VOICE



Issue four

January 2021

Welcome from Chief Exec Steve

Can I wish you all a healthy and happy 2021 even as we move into another lockdown, and I hope that you and your families are all safe and well.

I am sure we can all remember the first lockdown in March of last year when we closed many of our service areas down following the Government advice at the time. This time the circumstances are slightly different as the government guidance is that services such as maintenance, lettings and developments have all been given the go-ahead to continue and we have systems of work to minimise the risk to yourselves and our colleagues. We also established three principles last year at the start of the pandemic and we will continue to follow these – click on each link to find out more:

★ Health

★ Services

★ Our business

At this stage we expect to continue offering all our essential services following safe systems of work and whilst keeping face-to-face contact to a minimum. Check out our updated renewal & recovery plan [here](#). 

We will be asking tenants only to report essential repairs until the lockdown ends. We will also be text messaging tenants with repair appointments booked and asking them to cancel unless the repair is essential. We believe that each tenant is the best person to decide what is essential for them and their family and, unless the situation changes, then we will continue to work in this way. As previously we will follow the safe systems of work and check if households have any Covid symptoms before carrying out visits.

All our latest updates are available at ongo.co.uk/coronavirus, and all the government and health guidance can be found at gov.uk and nhs.uk. I know this lockdown is going to be tough, but I know that by working together and keeping in touch with each other we will get through it together.



Executive update

Dear CV members,

I want to start by wishing you a happy New Year, and I am looking forward to working with you in 2021. With a third lockdown now upon us I know things are tough, but please take care and stay safe. In this article I wanted to provide you with the latest position around our services and some operational highlights.



From a tenant perspective, we continue to carry out essential tasks as the property market and trades remain open to business. Our teams continue to work from home in the main and are only completing essential visits or tasks where these cannot be completed from home.

Check out some further updates below:



If you have any questions about how we are delivering our services or about this update, then please do get in touch. Feedback on how our services are working is always really useful and helps us improve as an organisation.

A message from Wendy

Firstly, on behalf of the Customer Engagement team, I would like to wish you all a happy and safe New Year. The team look forward to working with you during 2021 and for the time when we are able to meet with you face-to-face. For the time being it's important that we continue to follow Government guidelines and stay safe.



As you know we recently informed members that Tpas are conducting an independent investigation into the culture of the Community Voice group. To enable them to do this piece of work the decision was made to replace the Microsoft Teams meeting with this digital newsletter. This will help us continue to keep you informed and involve you in gaining feedback and approval for decision items.

This newsletter includes various articles, some of which are for information only and others that we need feedback from you as a member of the group and your approval. As you read through the document you will be provided with details that ask you to vote on those items that require your approval.

The Customer Engagement team will continue to work from home, keeping in contact with our volunteers and working with the different groups.

If you have any other questions in relation to the information included in the newsletter, please email customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk or post on the Community Voice Facebook group.

Customer Engagement activities

Even though we are in another lockdown and restrictions remain, there has still been lots going on within Customer Engagement and plenty planned for the near future.

Check out some of the plans and recent work below - click on each one to find out more.

**Property
Services Panel**



**Consultation
session**



**Resident
Scrutiny Panel**



**Attracting new
volunteers**



**Membership of
groups**



Key News



**Environmental
Champions**



**Festive
competition**



Complaints & Feedback Policy

The Ongo Homes Complaints & Feedback Policy has been reviewed to be compliant with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which was published on 7 July 2020.

This policy review has been included in the self-assessment against the code that the Housing Ombudsman required us to share with our Board.

This has now happened at the December Group Common Board meeting. The Leadership team have signed off this policy at their meeting held on 22 December 2020.



You can check out the policy in full [here](#). Click on the statements below for further information:

[Main policy changes](#)

[Who's been involved?](#)

[Impact assessment on cross cutting themes](#)

Please decide on the proposed changes by clicking one of the options below:

[Yes, I approve](#)

[No, I do not approve](#)

We need your decision and feedback by lunchtime on Thursday 14 January - if we haven't heard from you by then, we will take no response as approval. You can also email the **Customer Engagement team** with your decision and feedback.

If you have any questions, you can contact me on becky.johns@ongo.co.uk

Rent to Buy Policy

This policy was written last year to provide the rules for delivering the Rent to Buy scheme at Ongo and our approach to the scheme.

The Rent to Buy scheme allows first time buyers the opportunity to rent a home at an intermediate rent (80% of market rent) with the opportunity to save for a deposit to purchase their first home five years from the tenancy start date.

The policy has been revised to ensure it is clear and easy to read and has been thoroughly checked by our Consultant Solicitor to ensure compliance with all legislation and regulation.

The policy has been signed off by the Heads of Services and formally approved by the Executive Leadership team.

If you have any questions or want to know more about the Rent to Buy policy or the scheme, get in touch with the **Customer Engagement team** and they will make sure the query is sent to the right team.



You can also find out more by visiting our website at ongo.co.uk/renttobuy

Take a look at
the policy in
full



Minutes from last meeting

These have been emailed and posted to all members, and have also been shared on the CV Facebook group.

You can check them out by clicking [here](#). 

Treasurer update

The CV bank balance currently stands at £2,793.87

Board observers

The next Board meeting is taking place on Tuesday 26 January at 2.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

If you would like to observe, please contact the Customer Engagement team.

Stay safe, take care, and just remember - we will come through this difficult time for the stronger.

