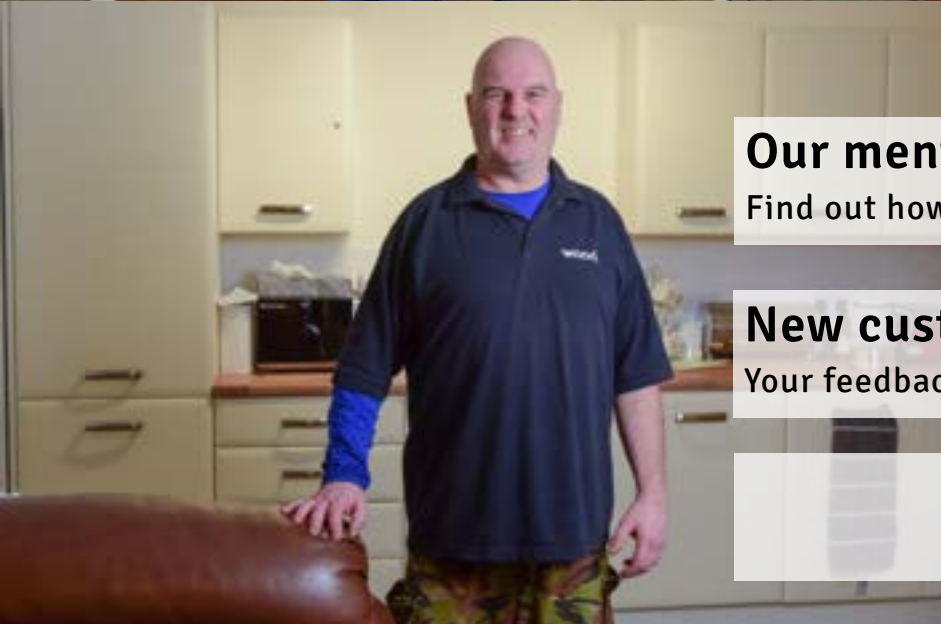




Key News



Our mental wellbeing service
Find out how we can help your self-esteem

New customer charters
Your feedback influencing our standards

December 2020

The year is almost over and, though it's been challenging, there have been many inspiring examples of people helping each other in 2020.



I'm delighted that following our downgrade in February 2019, we have succeeded in returning to a **compliant governance rating**. I'm so grateful to everyone that has been involved in the hard work to deliver the voluntary undertaking agreed with the regulator, and we will remain focused on you and our communities as we hope to re-attain the highest G1 rating in the future.

It's also really pleasing that we've been awarded an extra **£100,000 to continue supporting** those of you most in need. We've delivered 11,184 food parcels and made 37,778 wellbeing calls so far this year, but this grant will allow us to continue the extra support into the start of next year. Check this out, and a couple of heartening community stories on page four.

The Social Housing White Paper was published last month, which sets out some key changes to how housing associations will operate. We are already well-placed to deliver these changes, and will be keeping you updated along the way. Have a look at the document in full on the **gov.uk website**.

One of its main aims is to give residents a stronger voice. **Tenant involvement** is crucial for us to make sure your homes, communities and services are the best they can be, and this last year has opened up new, digitalised ways of involving you. Have a read of some of these opportunities on pages 12 - 15.

Finally, I want to wish you all the **happiest and best holiday season** possible. In many ways it will be different, but I've been so proud of how tenants and staff have remained strong and supported each other under the circumstances - I know that will continue.

Stay safe and take care.

In the know

Keeping you up to date with the latest news

Safety checks and fire alarm testing

We are still carrying out our essential gas and electrical safety checks. Our legal responsibilities to do these checks hasn't changed and, with people spending more time at home recently, it is even more important to make sure that you're safe in your home.

We have a safe system of work in place, and all our engineers have the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when carrying out the checks.

The fire alarm testing for our high-rise flats has also continued, but the date we do this will change for the festive season.



Find out more...

Protecting your home

We insure the structure of your home, but you are responsible for protecting your personal belongings. It's important to take out house contents insurance to cover them, otherwise you would have to replace any damaged personal items if you had a fire, flood or burglary.

We work in partnership with Marsh, a contents insurance provider, who offer a flexible and affordable policy to protect your possessions.

To find out more, **visit our website** or **download an application form**.



Check out seven top tips on how to protect your home and possessions

Being there for those in need

We have been awarded a further £100,000 to continue providing support to you during Covid-19.

The funding, donated from the Barclays Community Relief Programme, will allow us to provide more safe and well calls, deliver more food parcels to those in most need, and offer more mental health improvement sessions.

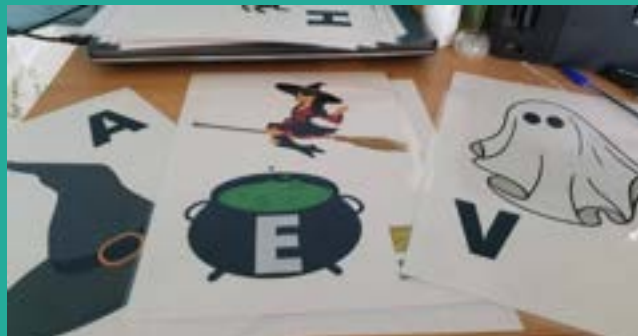


The community groups we support have also been helping local people – check out a couple of inspiring examples:

Bringing a smile

Grangefield Committee, based in Winterton, has hosted a range of different events and competitions in recent months for their local neighbourhood.

Secretary Georgina takes up the story...



Festive donations

The Westcliff (and surrounding areas) Association has donated £100 to The Arc so more local people will be helped at Christmas.

Read about what else they're doing...



£20,000 worth of support

On 1 January, we'll be launching our next round of community grants

A total of £10,000 will be available for any local group in North Lincolnshire to help them support the community.

There will also be a separate £10,000 Community Chest scheme as part of the Safer Streets project to improve the safety and security of the Westcliff Closes. The overall funding for the project was awarded by the Home Office, and included is the Community Chest for any group to bid for who will invest the money into benefitting the Westcliff area.

Groups can bid for up to £2,000 from either fund, and will have four weeks to apply. A panel of staff and board members will then judge the entries and decide which groups will receive the funding.



Last year's successful groups

If you're interested, all you need is a short video explaining your group and what they do, and how the money would be spent on helping local people.

You can then upload the video directly to us via our website.

Get the latest updates on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

Apply from 1 January at ongo.co.uk/communitygrant

Somebody to talk to

We can help you feel good about yourself

If you are feeling low, stressed or not knowing where to turn for help, Ongo Talk is here for you.

We provide one-to-one support and counselling, offer life coaching, and give you the chance to improve your outlook on life and create a brighter future.

A vast range of courses are available for all ages through the project. Take a look at these:

Click on each for further details

If you would like some support to create a brighter future:

ongotalk@ongo.co.uk

ongo.co.uk/ongotalk

01724 844848



Some of our Ongo Talk team

Wondering what difference this support can have on your life?

Check out Susan’s story on the next page...

A life-changing moment

“I was in such a low place – I just wanted my old self back.”

Last year, Susan’s confidence and wellbeing was non-existent. Trying to summon the motivation to leave the house became a battle, the thought of trying to get back into work reduced her to tears, and such was the depth of her despair that she even began to contemplate taking her own life.

Understanding that something needed to change, and finding her last bit of emotional strength, she visited The Arc to see what help and support was available.

That was where everything changed. Click on the statements below to find out what help she has had, and the positive impact on her mental health.



Emotional support and wellbeing courses

“It’s helped me in so many ways...”

“That day I went to The Arc was the best thing that I ever did – I’ve found myself again.”



European Union
European Structural
and Investment Funds

A day in the life of...

Grace Fixter, Lettings Officer.



Our new retirement scheme where Grace has recently let the final home

Click on each of the questions to find Grace's answers.

When did you start working for Ongo?

What does your role involve?

How has the current situation changed things?

What is your favourite part of the job?

About me

What is the main thing that lockdown has taught you?

What do you like to do in your spare time?

What will you be doing for the festive season?

Enhancing your environment

Our Neighbourhood Services team have been working hard to improve estates, making them places that you can be proud to call home.

Check out just a couple of recent examples: **(click here for more before and after photos)**

Shrubs tidy-up

The team have been cutting and pruning hedges during the autumn season to make them look tidy.



Leaf collection and recycling

The team have also been collecting leaves over the last couple of months.

Find out what else they do with the leaves

Our cleaning team have also been working hard, ensuring that our buildings and communal areas are all clean and safe.

We are looking to do some neighbourhood pride events again next year, subject to government and health advice.

If you would like to nominate your area, email customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk or message us on [Facebook](#).

New homes

Owlet Mews anniversary

We recently celebrated one year since our first site containing homes for outright sale was completed.

Based in Blyton, 19 new homes were built in November 2019. 14 were for outright sale, and five for affordable rent.

Check out more from two residents...

(click on each of the photos to see more)



Being part of a new community

Increasing bio-diversity

Work on an eco-friendly development has recently begun at Station Road in Scunthorpe.

The site is on a former transport depot which we have invested in to build 37 new homes. They are due for completion by December 2021.

Find out more details...

Station Road development site

Chesleigh House scheme

Last month, a tenant moved into the last remaining home available at our new retirement scheme in Gainsborough.

24 modern one and two-bed flats were completed in March earlier this year for people over the age of 55.

Read more from this new tenant...



David in his new surroundings

New horizons

One of our tenants has recently been supported to set up her own business

Jo is a single parent and suffers from a spinal condition that limits her mobility. One thing that brings her solace is her love of knitting, and this soon inspired her dream of creating unique knitted baby accessories.

However, with self-employment completely new to her and Covid-19 affecting many businesses, she didn't know where to turn for help.

That's where our Sparc Enterprise team got involved. Before long, Made For Little Ones went from a hope to reality.

Click on each button below to find out:

What support Jo received

What it has meant to her

Check out Jo's collection of baby and festive knitwear on Facebook

If you have your own business idea or want some self-employment support, visit ongo.co.uk/sparc



Click on both photos to see some of Jo's other collections

You said, we did

You've influenced a number of services recently

Digital communication

In their latest feedback session that took place during Get Online Week, our Digital Tenants group were asked about using our online platforms during Covid-19. This includes the My Home app, our website, social media pages, live chat and email.

Every member said they had been happy with their experience of these, the clarity of updates, and had been able to easily find the information that they needed to.

They also suggested some improvements which included...

Ongo digital tenants



Website navigation



The next stage of improving our website's accessibility took place in November.

Following several tenant workshops, your feedback led to us changing the layout and design of the site to make it easier to browse. This includes updating the search function so that it's simpler and quicker to find what you're looking for.

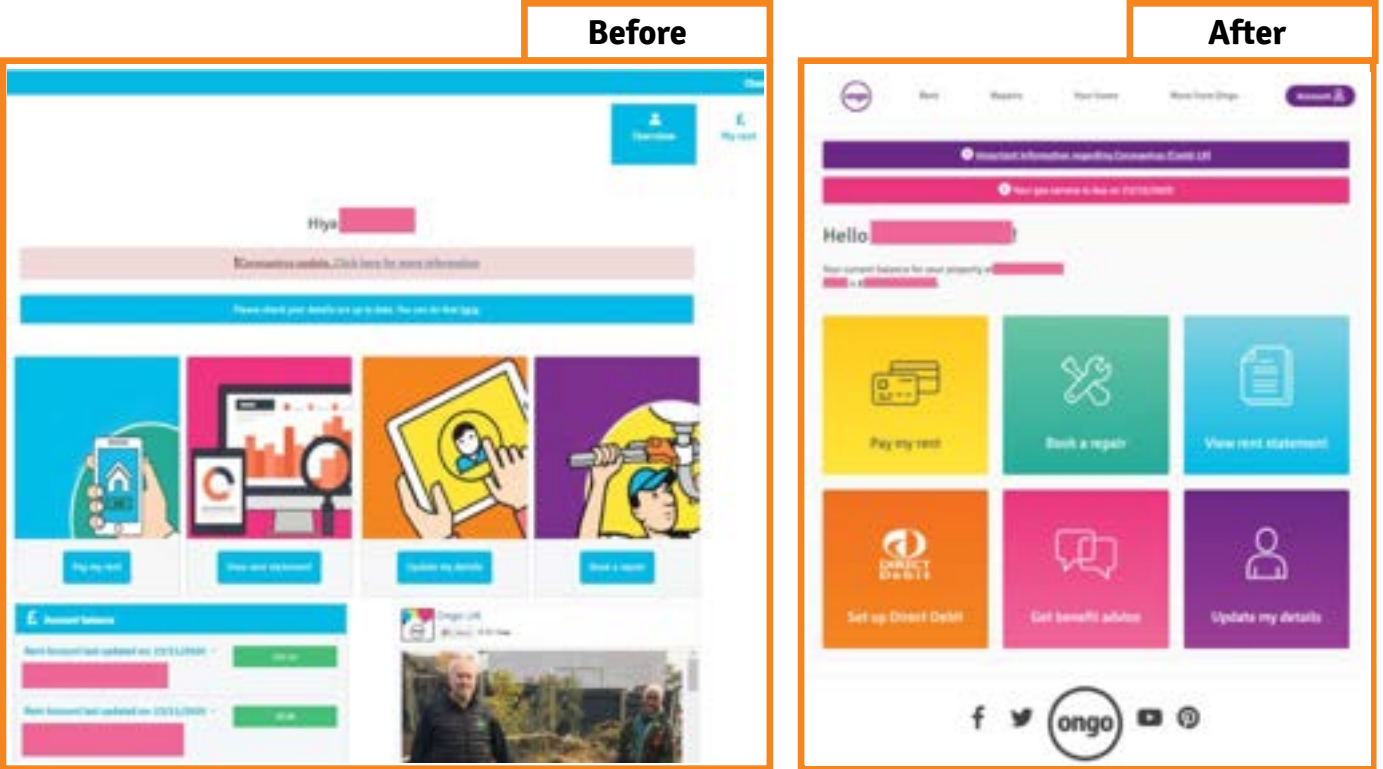
Check it out at ongoco.uk

See how you could be part of change and make a difference

My Home improvements

Our web portal has been revamped


Logging into your My Home account can be done either via the Ongo website or by downloading the app. You have told us that our web portal could be a lot clearer, so we've made changes to follow the new look of the Ongo website to make it similar and simplified.




Over 50% of you are now My Home users, which represents a large increase from this time last year. Make sure to keep a look out in the coming months for a number of exciting updates for the web portal - **these include...**

My Home allows you to check your balance and transactions, pay your rent, book a repair and much more, anytime and from anywhere at the touch of a button. Waiting to speak to us on the phone could mean you are in a long queue - using My Home takes only a few seconds.

Visit myhome.ongoco.uk, or download the app through the Google Play or Apple app store.

 GET IT ON Google Play

 Download on the App Store

An influential impact

Board members and one of our tenant groups

These two both help to make a major difference to homes, communities and services, but in different ways.

Find out more about them by clicking on each statement below:

Boards and committees

- The board structure is...
- The Group Common Board...
- Their remit is...



Community Voice

- The group is...
- Their purpose is...
- They discuss and debate...

For more on how you can get involved, take a look at our [Customer Engagement handbook](#) and complete an [#InvolvedWithOngo](#) form on our website.

#InvolvedWithOngo

Even though we can't meet face-to-face, there's still a vast number of ways in which you can have a say and make a difference.

Read more about a couple of these:

Tenant workshops

Over the last two months, Community Voice members have taken part in several digital sessions to discuss and influence a range of matters.

Click on each of the buttons for more information:



Younger tenant representation

Our second monthly text survey to tenants aged 30 and under was sent out in November.

This focused on the environment, and we received 147 responses in total. 90% said that they consider improving the environment to be important, and a majority of over 40% stated that recycling was most crucial to them.

All the feedback will be added into our ongoing work on carbon reduction and environmental factors.

If you are aged 30 and under and would like to find out more, email our Customer Engagement team.

Home comforts

Your rights and responsibilities on anti-social behaviour

Everybody has a right to feel safe and enjoy living in their home. That's why we take anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues seriously, aiming to resolve them quickly and work with you and partnership agencies to prevent further cases. Click on the buttons to find out more:

What does anti-social behaviour mean?

What behaviour can be classed as ASB?

What are my responsibilities as a tenant?

Where can I find further information?

We have seen a recent increase in verbal abuse towards our staff. We are taking appropriate action to support colleague welfare, and such behaviour represents a breach of tenancy conditions.



Safeguarding the local community

A recent project has been completed in our Bircotes neighbourhood near Doncaster.

Our Housing team noticed that some children were climbing onto a wall and walking along it risking serious injury.

Following some partnership work with fellow teams and the local police, the wall was extended to eliminate any potential danger.



Keeping you safe



Humberside Police
Serving our communities to make them safer and stronger

A message from Humberside Police

“We at the Neighbourhood Team within Humberside Police work closely with partners - no more so than with Ongo. We have achieved many positive results together tackling drug, crime and anti-social related behaviour.

“We receive information from a number of sources, but we really value information we receive directly from you out in your community. This can be directly phoned in to 101, passed to Crimestoppers anonymously or reported to Ongo.

“The information received often forms key pieces of the larger ‘jigsaw puzzle’. Whilst we cannot always work just on that one piece of intelligence, sometimes we are just missing the final piece that enables us to then act.”



If you would like live email updates on your local area, you can sign up to ‘My Community Alert’ at mycommunityalert.co.uk

An increased area of concern is fraud. You can find out further information, and how you can protect yourself, at actionfraud.police.uk

What you can expect from us

We're in the process of creating our new Customer Charters to replace the Ongo Commitments

As some of you may have seen on our website or social media platforms, we asked you to be involved in the development of these Charters by telling us what is important to you and what you think is most relevant to include.

Our new Charters will set out our service standards explaining what you can, and should, expect from us as a landlord. The charters will be:



Publishing these standards is a requirement of the Regulator of Social Housing, and makes sure we're really clear about the level of service we will provide.

The Charters will incorporate similar information to our previous Ongo Commitments and will link to our strategies that were launched earlier this year. [Click here](#) to take a look at these.

Thank you to everyone who gave their thoughts, we have now received all the feedback from you and our colleagues from across the business. The next step in the process is to analyse the feedback we have received and agree the final Customer Charters and services standards for each ready to go to Community Voice for sign off. They will then go to our Group Common Board for formal approval.

Watch this space for the approved Charters early next year...

Offering new opportunities

Ten people have recently been awarded tablet devices through our Employment Support team

Part of an ongoing project called 'Everyone Connected', this initiative aims to ensure people can keep in touch with loved ones, and can still access a range of services and support.

George, 63, had only ever known getting help through face-to-face appointments, but with the Covid-19 situation limiting this form of contact, he wondered how he would be able to still get the support that he needed.

Little did he know that it would open up even more opportunities and give him a whole new range of skills.



George at The Arc pre-lockdown

He has been using the Android device to complete some e-learning courses as part of his search for work. He has also had support to learn a host of digital skills, something that has resulted in him winning a 'Most Digitally Improved' award.

Check out George's thoughts, and how having the tablet device has helped him

If you would like help to get into work, to learn new skills and to improve your confidence, our Employment Support team are here for you.

Contact employmentsupport@ongo.co.uk or visit ongo.co.uk/employmentsupport to find out more.

Competition corner

Be a part of the festivities

We currently have a festive competition for a chance to win a shopping voucher.

Running throughout December, all you need to do is complete an online form and submit a photo from a list of different categories.

All entries received will be shortlisted for final judging, before a panel will decide the winning entries in each category. Each winner will receive a £50 shopping voucher with a certificate, and each runner-up will get £25 and a certificate too.

The categories include:



Best decorated festive tree



Best festive decorations



Best festive lights (indoor)



Best festive lights (outdoor)



Best festive decorations (children)

Terms and conditions for the competition can be found on our website.



It's a great opportunity to get into the festive spirit and to spread some cheer, so why not get involved?

Enter the competition at ongo.co.uk/festivefun



Supporting the community

Various activities, a lunch club, support groups, free street-dancing sessions for youngsters...

These are just some of the examples of what two tenants, Glenda and Brian, are offering to their local community. They have helped to run the Westcliff Community Centre for 13 years and, despite being closed for the two national lockdowns, they were allowed to open the community hub in between and still reach out to a number of local people. Glenda said:

“

For example, one lady attended our lunch club for the first time and really enjoyed it – since then, a couple of our volunteers have been checking to make sure she has the appropriate support.

We've just wanted to offer as many outlets as we can, even more so in recent times. We have a lunchtime club twice a week, table-top sales, different support groups for a range of needs, games including bingo, bowling and curling, and fun sessions such as music, street-dancing and drama.

”

Though the centre remains closed for now, Glenda is excited to start 'getting back out there' within the community again soon.



She explained: “We want anybody to be able to visit, take part in activities, feel happy and comfortable, make new friends, and to know the support is always there for them.

“All the work and time is well worth it to be able to give something back to the community, and to help people in any way that we can.”

Call 01724 845936 or visit the centre at 7 Newbolt Avenue, Scunthorpe, DN17 1PE.

Fancy winning a £30 voucher?

We hope you enjoyed this edition of Key News.

Your feedback is really important in shaping how your future Key News looks.

In the October edition, we had over 120 responses to the survey competition. This helped to influence the content and layout of this issue.

Congratulations to Laura Gazi who was selected at random as the winner of a Love to Shop voucher.

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning a £30 gift card, **complete this survey** and include your email address at the end to be entered into the prize draw.

Alternatively, you can complete the survey at **surveymonkey.co.uk/r/keynewsdecember2020**

Any personal information you provide to us will be treated in accordance with current UK data protection law and our data protection policies, procedures and privacy notices in place from time to time. For full details visit our website.

Entries must be in by Friday 15 January 2021.

The winner will be drawn from all completed surveys. The Editor's decision is final.

You can find terms and conditions on our website.

Want to help decide the content for future edition of Key News, and to make sure all documents available to tenants are easy to read and relevant?

We have a Publications Panel, a largely digital group, who review and influence all publications. Why not express your interest to join? Being a part of the group could boost your CV, help you to learn new skills, give you the chance to make a difference and much more!

Visit our website

Email our Customer Engagement team

