



Key News

February 2018



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Could you be entitled?

Our new CEO

Steve Hepworth has been appointed as our next Chief Executive, and will follow in the footsteps of Andy Orrey, who is retiring after 10 years working here at Ongo.

“I’ve said: “I feel really honoured to be given the responsibility to lead Ongo on the next stage of our development. Our teams provide homes and services that make such a difference to so many people’s lives and I’m looking forward to working with tenants to continually improve on the work that we do. We have some exciting opportunities ahead as we extend our commercial arm to include a heating & plumbing company and an estate agent on top of our existing portfolio. These commercial ventures will provide extra revenue to deliver projects to put back in to local communities allowing us to do more projects like the Viking Centre in Barton which provide much needed services for residents.

“I am also looking forward to being able to provide more homes as we extend our new build activities both in Scunthorpe and the surrounding areas. As well as homes to rent we also want to provide some new homes for people to buy as we recognise that there are not enough affordable homes to go around. However, I can promise that despite these new activities we will continue to put tenants at the heart of what we do and we will stay true to our vision of building and sustaining vibrant communities.

“Andy has done a brilliant job in his time as Chief Executive and whilst he is a hard act to follow I’m looking forward to working with you all to make sure that Ongo continues to be successful in the future.”



High-rise fire safety

If you live in one of our high-rise buildings, you'll have a fire evacuation plan. It sets out what to do in the event of a fire.

Have you read yours?



To read more about keeping your home safe from fire, click here.



Sprinkler installation

Princess House, Sutton House and Crosby House, on Market Hill, Scunthorpe, and Trent View House, on Bridges Road, Scunthorpe, will all have sprinklers installed as part of an £800k investment.

Installation work started on 15 January at Trent View House and Crosby House, and is progressing well.

The decision to fit sprinklers was taken voluntarily by our Board members immediately after the fatal fire at Grenfell Tower, in London, in June 2017. The programme is being funded by us. They will be installed in to each individual flat and all communal areas.

Andy Orrey, Chief Executive said: "Along with the rest of the country, we watched with horror as the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower claimed the lives of so many people.

"While immediate checks on our buildings confirmed the cladding differed from that on Grenfell Tower, and we have lots of fire prevention measures already in place, we can't take any risks with the safety of our tenants."

[Read more here](#) >>

Development updates

The Arc

Work is on-track at the £9 million Westcliff regeneration project.

The Arc, which will feature a pre-school nursery, a cafe, and retail outlets including a One Stop shop and a pharmacy among others is expected to be completed in Spring this year.

Westcliff drop-in will also be moving to the new premises, from its original site in the precinct.

To keep up to date with progress at The Arc, follow them on Facebook and Twitter.



Henderson Avenue

Four brand new one-bedroom homes have been completed and are now ready to let on Henderson Avenue.

With dedicated off-road parking spaces, modern kitchens and spacious bathrooms, the homes are likely to be let quickly via Home Choice Lincs, so make sure you register your interest quickly.

Ashtree Close, Belton

16 affordable homes are being built in the Ashtree Close area of Belton. The homes are a mixture of one bedroom bungalows, and two, three and four bedroom houses.

Although considered rural, Belton is a popular village and it's likely these homes will be in high demand, and it's expected that they'll be available to let on the Home Choice Lincs website from April.

Housing news

Back in November, we told you about a new Shared Housing initiative, Share First. There have been some important updates to the scheme which you need to know about.

Our Share First scheme has now been opened up to any single applicant over the age of 21.

Here are the facts:

- We have three, two bedroom flats available in the Westcliff area, offering six rooms in total.
- The flats are fully carpeted and furnished in the lounge, with white goods including a fridge freezer, washing machine and cooker in the kitchen.
- The rooms are available to single people over the age of 21, and are available to view on Home Choice Lincs, and also on www.spareroom.co.uk

The rent cost is £75 per week, including utility bills and Council Tax.



Scams

More and more people in the area are falling victim to scams. Scammers are becoming smarter in how they target their victims, so it's important to remain vigilant and remember that if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

Click here to see some tips from Humberside Police to help prevent you from being a victim of a scam. Speak to Action Fraud if you're unsure of any communication you may have had which you're not sure of.

Welfare Reform updates



Paying your rent - is it your top priority?

The pressure to juggle your money and bills has never been harder. Unfortunately, we know of some tenants who are choosing to put other bills before paying their rent. There is a real risk that if you don't pay your rent, we can take you to Court, and you could face eviction.

If you claim Universal Credit, you need to let us know. Under UC, you're now responsible for paying your rent, it will now not be paid to us automatically.

It's worth noting that there are new changes coming 1 April 2018 to Council Tax support for the majority of claimants too. This will reduce from 77% to 50%.

We're here to help, we can offer support with debt management, entitlement to benefits and managing your tenancy. Call us on 01724 279900, or visit our website.



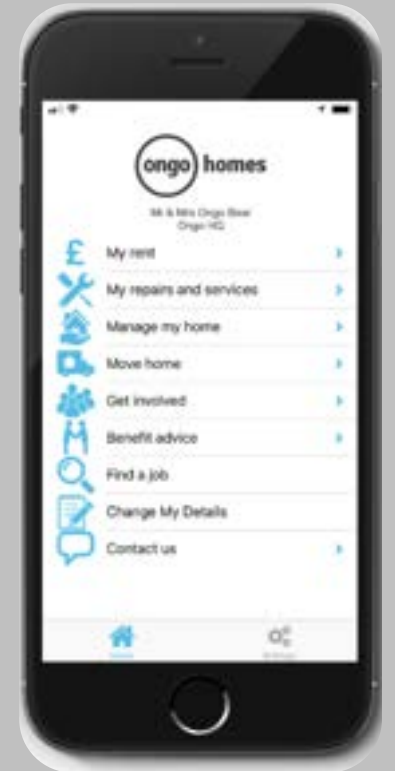
Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's)

Struggling to pay your rent? You may be entitled to a Discretionary Housing Payment.

DHP'S are a Government fund to provide extra help to people struggling to pay their rent. These payments are awarded as a short term measure to assist those suffering financial hardship.

You could qualify if you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (housing element) at an amount lower than your weekly payable rent. You could also receive assistance with Council tax if you are in receipt of Council tax reduction.

You can check whether you might be eligible using the Ongo My Home app on your smartphone, or visit the North Lincolnshire Council website.



This year we have taken 233 tenants to court and have evicted 52 tenants.

We're here to help. Call us on 01724 279900.

Community Focus

Ongo Community Grants - one year on

In March of last year, 15 local groups shared a total of £20,000 from our Community Grants Scheme. One year on, we know that these funds have supported a wide variety of community based activities that otherwise may not have happened. Examples of the difference that this money has made are many.

[Click here to read more](#) >>



Award Board

Equality & Diversity

We were announced as winners at the National Centre for Diversity Awards (NCFD) last month, in the categories of the EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Lead of the Year, and Steering Group of the Year.

But what does it all mean? We asked Karen Cowan, Head of Customer Support what this means for Ongo and you as tenants.

"This nomination is a reflection of all our hard work to make sure equality and diversity is fully considered and

embedded in all that we do.

"At Ongo, we believe everyone has the right to fair and equal treatment and recognise that people who use our services and those that work for us come from diverse backgrounds.

"This is why we encourage all our staff to challenge inappropriate behaviour and through training such as Dementia Friends and cultural awareness events we are creating a more understanding workforce.

"It's not just our employees we support in this way, our tenant volunteers and Board Members are

offered training and encouraged to take part in the events we hold.

"As a service provider, we recognise we have a moral and legal responsibility to promote equal opportunities, which is why all of our services are designed to be inclusive and meet the needs of you, our customers."

[Click here to see photos](#) >>

We need you!

The Customer Engagement strategy demonstrates our commitment to involving customers in the delivery of our services. This document helps us to make sure that customers remain at the heart of our business and can be involved in influencing and shaping our services.

There are lots of ways that you can work in partnership with us. This might be by joining a Resident Association, or by taking part in one of our many groups including Community Voice, Tenant Inspectors, Residents Scrutiny Panel and more. [Click here to take a look at our Menu of Options form \(MOO\)](#).

We need you to help us to develop our new strategy for 2018-2021. The strategy will provide details on our future vision and key objectives for customer engagement.

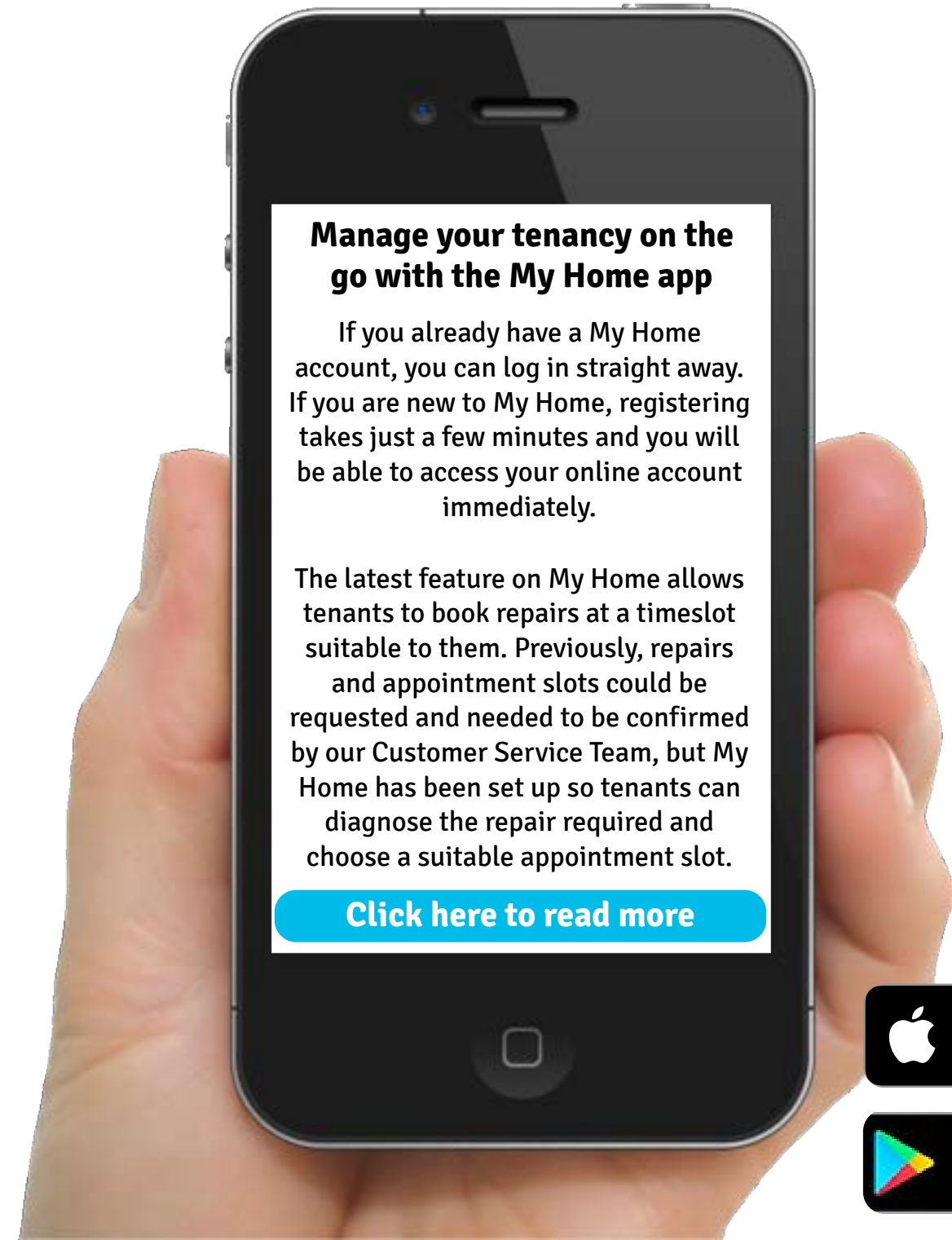
It's important that we include customers in the formal consultation process and would love to hear your ideas on what more we can do to listen and involve you in important decisions we make.

A survey has been produced to capture your views and we ask if you can spare five minutes to complete this on the link provided.

Your feedback is important to us and will be used to create a brand new plan to enable us to work better with our customers in the future.

Survey closes 9 March 2018.

[Click here to take the survey](#)



Manage your tenancy on the go with the My Home app

If you already have a My Home account, you can log in straight away. If you are new to My Home, registering takes just a few minutes and you will be able to access your online account immediately.

The latest feature on My Home allows tenants to book repairs at a timeslot suitable to them. Previously, repairs and appointment slots could be requested and needed to be confirmed by our Customer Service Team, but My Home has been set up so tenants can diagnose the repair required and choose a suitable appointment slot.

[Click here to read more](#)

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App Store

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Mutual Exchange

A mutual exchange is a home swap with another social housing tenant. People may want to move for a number of reasons, maybe your current home is too large or small or you simply want a change of scene. It can be a quicker alternative for tenants who do not have a high enough priority and are not being able to access a home through the normal allocation process.

You can swap homes with any council or housing association tenant in the UK, providing all parties have the right to mutual exchange and both parties wish to swap. You can swap locally or to another part of the country.

Ongo Homes recognises that mutual exchange is a useful way of satisfying housing need and aspirations and would like to ensure we can provide our tenants with a mutual exchange service that can assist them in finding someone to swap with.

From 1 March you can register free with Homeswapper to advertise your home and look for a home swap. Tenants who are registered with our old provider, Swap and Move, will need to register with the new provider. Need help? Contact us on 01724 279900.



Your next Key News is
due:

June