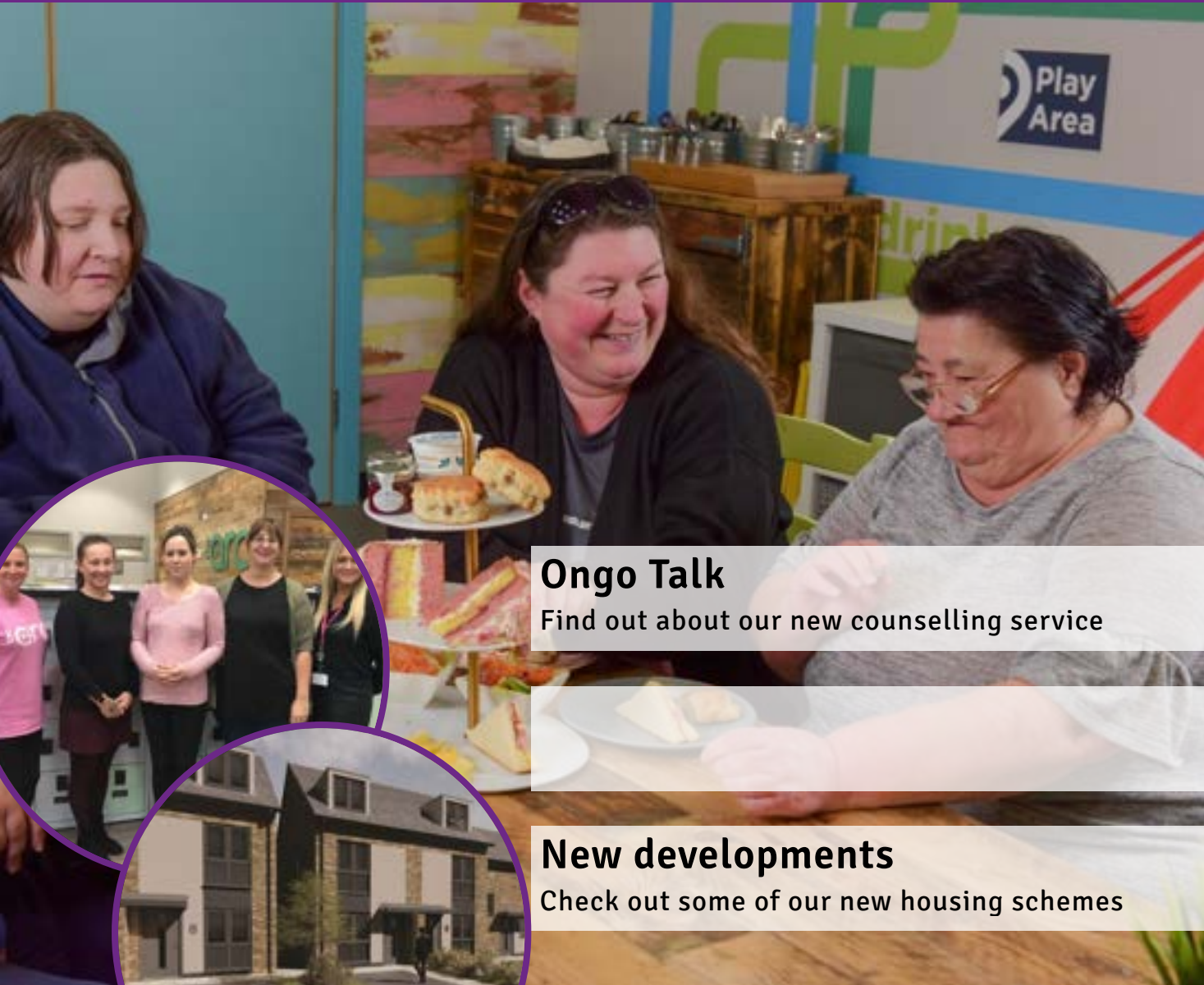




Key News



Ongo Talk

Find out about our new counselling service

New developments

Check out some of our new housing schemes



February 2019

Even though January seems a long time ago, this is the first Key News of 2019 so I'd like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy New Year.



There have been regular stories in the national media about Universal Credit and the difficulties it can cause for people. I know tenants are trying hard to manage their rent payments under the new system and all of us at Ongo recognise how hard it can be. I also want to recognise all the hard work that our Income Team and Benefits Advice Team are doing to help tenants through any problems – take a look at the Money Matters stories on pages eight and nine for more information.

We have **a number of new developments this year, including our first set of Rent to Buy properties in Ashby, Scunthorpe**. Our Shared Ownership scheme is also progressing, and there are many other builds that will be carried out this coming year that I am excited about - check out pages 10 and 11 to see more.

As mentioned in the last edition, our aims for this year will focus on the three core elements of the new Corporate Plan – **to be a great landlord, to provide quality homes and to create opportunities for people**.

A recent report by the homeless charity Shelter into social housing featured a call for 3.1 million new social homes. As well as expanding our build programme, **we are very aware of the benefits from involving tenants in how Ongo works**. Tenants have the majority votes at our annual general meetings, Community Voice has full decision-making powers over our policies, and there are a range of different ways that all tenants can choose to get involved in how we operate.

Furthermore, our **Employment Support Team are helping more clients develop their skills and enhance their CV's**. We are working with the Community Safety Partnership Stronger Communities group to increase opportunities, and we have already achieved 75 of our 80 targeted work placements in this year to date - 33 of these were for Ongo tenants. Have a look on page 17 to see what else they are doing.

So there are lots to look forward to for all of us in 2019, and **we can all help make this year the best that it can be**. Enjoy your latest Key News!

editor@ongo.co.uk

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Counselling service



[Read more here](#)

Computer course



[Read more here](#)

Tesco grant



[Read more here](#)

In the Know

What's been happening and what's coming up

Homeownership Expo

An event will be taking place on Saturday 2 March to find out everything you need to know about becoming a homeowner.

Find out more here...



PHASE partnership

We have come together with the Scunthorpe community interest group PHASE to further grow our furniture recycling project.

Click for more information here...



Diversity Award

We have been ranked 11th in the top 100 champions for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI).

Read more here...



Trade Watch

A voluntary Trade Watch scheme has been launched by Safer Neighbourhoods and Humberside Police for rural North Lincolnshire.

See more here...



Tenant Takeover

With Ryan North



In each edition of Key News we talk to a tenant volunteer to find out what they do for their community. This time we talk to Ryan, a 26-year-old who is the chair of Queensway Community Group and a member of Community Voice...

*"I have autism, vertigo, epilepsy that leads to fits and seizures, and I also have depression. Things used to be really difficult and still are in many ways, but **getting involved with these two groups has changed everything**. My communication and people skills have improved, it's really helped me in terms of my mental health, and it's had such a positive impact on my self-confidence too.*

*"My whole outlook on life has changed. **To have the opportunity to help out and to make a difference has given me so many proud moments.***

*"Winning the Special Recognition Award at the Ongo Volunteers Awards ceremony in 2017 was so special. However, being involved with the installation of bollards and CCTV cameras at Queensway, and all the hard work and time that went into both, was a prouder moment because it **made a difference to others.***

*"I've not looked back since becoming involved. It has improved me personally, socially and emotionally, and it doesn't matter what age you are, if you have a condition or anything like that... It might sound like a cliché, but **giving something back to the community really can be life-changing.**"*

Fancy getting involved? Let us know...

Fill out a Menu of Options form

Check out the new Customer Engagement handbook

Five things about me...

» My life in one word?

» Main inspiration?

» First thing I'd buy if I had all the money in the world?

» Something I've already learnt in 2019?

» One food I couldn't give up?

Click on each question to find out Ryan's answer...

Gas Safety

2 in 10 tenants are putting their lives at risk

It is essential that you allow our engineers access to your home once a year to carry out gas checks. We are there to keep you and your family safe.



If you do not give us access we will impose sanctions, which will result in court action.

For more info visit:
ongo.uk/gas



A day in the life of...

...Kirk Murray, a Plumber and Gas Engineer.



When did you start working for Ongo?

I started working for Ongo as a Plumbing and Heating Engineer in February 2011.

What does your role involve?

My job mostly involves repairing boilers and central heating systems.

What is an average day at work for you?

My average day consists of starting around 8.00am with a repair job which will be planned in, and then my diary is blocked to do the emergency jobs as they come in throughout the day. This is mainly uncontrollable leaks and broken boilers.

Any other plans moving forward?

I have been very lucky to be selected on the Aspire course at work which is a Leadership and Management Diploma. I was first worried about the amount of work that may be involved but the more time I have spent studying, the more I have started to enjoy it. I feel it's making a real difference in how I go about my day-to-day work.

Kirk's top gas tips

Five things about me

- » What do I like to do in my spare time?
- » Favourite TV show?
- » Tea or coffee?
- » Fictional place I would most like to go to?
- » If I could turn any activity into an Olympic sport, what would I have the best chance of winning a medal at?

Click on each question to find out Kirk's answer...

Rent rates

An annual rent report for 2019/20 was presented at a Community Voice meeting in January.

The report focused on changes to rents for the coming financial year (beginning 1 April), and asked the tenant representatives' views on the current garage and store shed rents.

Click on the statements below to find out more.

» 95.9% of tenants...

» All social rents will...

» All affordable rents will...

» All garage rents...

» The store shed rent rate...

Tenancy First update

The previous edition of Key News featured details of the Tenancy First scheme.

There has since been an update which will affect tenants who are not in credit with their rent account when they request a non-emergency repair.

Click on the steps below for further details.

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

This initiative has been put in place with the intention of supporting you to maintain a healthy rent payment plan, and in turn to help sustain your tenancy and home. You can expect a professional, non-judgemental approach, and every effort will be made to support you through this process.

A word with Matt Kelly, Income Manager

At the end of 2018, overall arrears were at their lowest point since 2014. This was due to factors including our continuous support of tenants receiving Universal Credit who have an average debt of below £200, which is significantly below the national average, and also the new Rent First approach.

Ongo Homes is funded purely through rental income. This enables us **to provide the services that we do, to build more homes, and to further develop the work that we have done in the community** over the last 12 years.

However, if every tenant failed to pay one week's rent, it would equate to £1 million worth of lost revenue and would **significantly risk what we aim to provide for you and the community for generations to come.**

We understand that tenants face difficulties and financial pressures, so our aim is to promote anyone who is struggling with rent payments to come to us. We will help people to overcome any situation, and we are not here to judge – **we are here to support you to sustain your tenancy.**

A change to pension credit rules

Pensioners who live together as a couple will only be able to make a new claim for pension credit when **BOTH** partners are over the State Pension age.

This change comes under new rules that will come into effect in May - a change which may lead to a loss of income for some.

What is pension credit?

What are the current rules?

What are the changes?

Where can I get help and support?

New developments

Care and supported housing

Plans are underway to build supported housing for people with physical and learning disabilities across various sites in North Lincolnshire.

Find out more details here...



Ivor Grove, Balby

50 new homes for rent have recently been completed in Balby, a suburb of Doncaster.

They are a mixture of bungalows plus two-bedroom and three-bedroom homes. Completions have been phased since December, with the last group of new residents moving in at the end of February.

Read more here...

Albert Marson Drive

The development of 27 new properties in the Albert Marson Court area, near Cottage Beck Road, of Scunthorpe is well underway.

The plan consists of 23 three-bedroom and four four-bedroom homes, and they are expected to be completed by June of this year.

Check out further updates here...



Rent to Buy

Do you dream of being a homeowner but don't have a deposit saved? Rent to Buy could be for you.

We're launching a scheme to help you get on the property ladder. We're building 14 brand new homes in Ashby, Scunthorpe, available for people who aspire to own their own home but don't have a deposit.

The idea of rent to buy is that you rent the home with us for five years, at 20% less than market rent so you can put the money you're saving away to build up a deposit. At the end of the five years, ideally you would be in a position to buy the home.

However, if this isn't the case, there are other options we can look at – such as Shared Ownership or extending your tenancy to rent with us so you can save the remainder of your deposit.

They're really great homes too, with two and three-bedroom houses available in the heart of Ashby. They're near local schools, shops and on several bus routes making it easy to get around the town.



If you'd like more information, visit our website ongo.co.uk to register for updates.

You can also get further details and updates via our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

Our [Shared Ownership](#) scheme is also growing with properties available for sale in Lodge Lane, Nettleham, and in Burdock Gardens, Scunthorpe. Check out some [pictures](#).

Interested? Find out more [here...](#)

Tenants Talk

A focus on your feedback

We are continually looking to learn and improve our services when things go wrong. Here are a couple of examples on how your feedback has led to improvements in our services...

You said...

We did...

We act on issues that are affecting lives, and change our policies and procedures as a result.

We want your feedback and content for the next edition. Get in touch...

customer.engagement
@ongo.co.uk

Visit our website

Check out our updated
Complaints Policy

Did you know?

We have a tenant group called the **Complaints Monitoring Panel**. This group focuses on how complaints are dealt with, and they give valuable insight that helps to influence whether actions and procedures should be carried out differently.

Tim Mills, a tenant who attended the last meeting, said: "It was a fascinating meeting. We not only discussed the best ways to resolve complaints, but we also proactively learnt from where they may arise and the best way to take action to help prevent further complaints arising.

"I am loving the way this panel is growing and forming."

Good Deed Feed

A look at what's been happening in the community



Derek's fundraising efforts

Tenant volunteer Derek Cartwright raised £9,000 in late 2018 by completing a sponsored swim in memory of a close friend.

He swam 40 lengths at Riddings Leisure Centre to raise money for the road charity Brake, and he was sponsored and supported by a host of local companies.

Derek was also honoured with the Male Volunteer of the Year award at the North Lincolnshire Community Champion Awards held in November. Furthermore, he received a certificate of merit from the Pride of Britain Awards after being named as a finalist for the local region.

A huge well done to Derek on all of his achievements!

Check out Derek's reaction here and some photos of his awards



Award for Angel

A volunteer at The Arc has won a 'Going Above and Beyond' award for contribution to her community, and has since been offered a job.

Angel, 20, began volunteering at her local community hub to help give her experience for the level three catering course that she studies at North Lindsey College. She has since received a part-time job offer to work at a new coffee shop run by The Arc in the Bottesford Beck area.

Janis Carter, Cafe Manager, said: "Angel thoroughly deserves this award and job offer. She is a dedicated, caring person who has truly flourished, and it shows that hard work and enthusiasm has its rewards."

A big congratulations to Angel!

Read Angel's thoughts here

Have you done something great to help people, to help your community or to make your area a better place to live? Let us know...

editor@ongo.co.uk

OngoHomes

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Resident Scrutiny investigates...

The latest Scrutiny Panel report focused on the change in heating charges at Market Hill, Wold Court and Ancholme Gardens.

The investigation began in May 2018, and centred on the change from a communal heating system where residents paid a weekly heating service charge alongside their rent, to an individual one where they control their own heating usage and spending.

What did the report find?

What recommendations were made?

What ranking was awarded?

What will the next investigation focus on?

Leasehold satisfaction survey

A telephone and internet survey for leaseholders was carried out by the Customer Service Apprentices in 2018, and the results were collated back in December.

 Results of the survey

 Tables of figures

The feedback from the survey focused on three main areas:

Affordability of bills

Having no choice with major works

Irregularity of leasehold forum meetings

Click on each one to find out what is being done...

Have your say

Did the previous page make you want to be involved? If so, there are loads of ways in which you can do so.

Getting involved allow you to....



Learn new skills and increase your knowledge



Meet like-minded people and make new friends



Make a difference and influence your home and community



Feel proud and be recognised for your work

There are vacancies on some of our involvement structures, including on the Resident Scrutiny Panel. To find out more information about becoming involved...

Check out the Customer Engagement handbook

Fill out a Menu of Options form

Have a look on our website

Pet Policy refresher

Following review and consultation, Community Voice approved that the current Pet Policy will remain largely as it is, but that it will feature one change.

The only alteration is that pet contracts, which previously had to be signed by all new and existing tenants, will now only be signed where an issue has been raised and an Acceptable Behaviour Contract has been put in place.

Click on each statement below for a quick reminder of the policy.



Tenants who signed a tenancy agreement before September 2012... Tenants who signed a tenancy agreement after 1 April 2015...

All tenants...

[Check out the full updated policy here...](#)

We always want to hear your feedback about our policies and procedures.

So if you want to have your say, then let us know...

ongo.co.uk

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@OngoUK

Employment Support

Grant received to deliver training for single parents

Our Employment Support Team has been awarded £30,000 of funding to provide training for 60 single parents.

The Lone Parent Stepping Stones programme, which was first launched in 2018, has been awarded funds by the Building Better Opportunities project to fund six more courses. The first one will begin in March 2019, and it will be delivered throughout Scunthorpe. It includes travel and childcare costs, and also a range of activities, courses and visits.



[What exactly is the course?](#)

[What did a trainee of the last course learn?](#)

[How can you sign up?](#)

Next Level project

This project helps to train those who have successfully found employment to further enhance their skills and qualifications, and to build a long-term career.

The programme is part-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), and offers a range of training including food hygiene, numeracy and literacy, ICT and social development amongst much more.



[The project is looking for new people to sign up. To find out more information, and to see if you're eligible to apply, then click here](#)

Communities in the spotlight

Have a peek at some events that some local community hubs have to offer

The Arc, Westcliff

Weekly bingo

Taking place every Wednesday between 2.00pm and 3.30pm.

Each week will include a charity raffle with all proceeds going to Scunthorpe Samaritans.

Check out [this poster](#) for more details

arcwestcliff.co.uk

[TheArcWestcliff](#)

Meal Deal

For just £3.50 you can get a sandwich, sausage roll or crisps, and a soft drink or tea/coffee at the Arcafe.

Why not head down and try it out?

Take a look at [a picture here](#)

[@ArcWestcliff](#)

[@arcwestcliff](#)

Reaching Riddings Youth Club

Chat and Chill Tuesdays, Activity Hub Thursdays

For years 9, 10, 11 on Tuesdays and years 7 & 8 on Thursdays.

This provides a place to hang out with friends. There are lots you can do, and plenty of fun to be had.

See [what's available here](#)

reachingriddings.co.uk

[RiddingsYC](#)

[@RiddingsYC](#)

Easter Fair

An Easter Fair will be held at Riddings Youth Centre on Saturday 13 April between 12.00 noon and 3.00pm.

All profits from the day will be split equally between the Youth Club and Lindsey Lodge Hospice.

Get in touch [here](#) to book a stand



The Viking Centre, Barton

Youth Club

On every Thursday between 5.30pm and 7.00pm for children aged 8+.

Kids can relax, enjoy a range of activities, and play and socialise with others completely free of charge.

See [a picture here](#)

ongo.co.uk/the-viking-centre

Weekly cafe

Held every Thursday between 10.00am and 1.00pm.

Providing quality food and drinks with nothing costing more than £3.50.

Have a glimpse at an [exclusive discount code](#)

[OngoVikingCentre](#)

Winterton 2022

Credit Union

The group work in partnership with Hull and East Yorkshire Credit Union to promote affordable saving and borrowing.

Every Wednesday between 12.30-1.30pm, one-to-one sessions are held to help you manage your cash.

See the [list of sessions here](#)

winterton2022.org.uk

[Winterton2022](#)

[@Winterton2022](#)

Grangefield Residents Association

The local group improve community spirit through a range of different events.

They hold a weekly coffee morning every Tuesday between 9.30am and 11.30am at the Wellbeing Hub, Sir John Mason House.

Have a look at their [Facebook page](#)



Something happening in your community? We want to hear about it...

customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk

[OngoHomes](#)

[@OngoUK](#)

A final message

Governance: what is it and why is it important?

Ongo Homes is governed by a board of nine non-executive directors. These are people with a wide-range of skills and experience, from tenants to housing and business professionals.

It is their job to set the strategic direction of Ongo Homes, ensuring the business remains financially secure and complies with the law and the standards expected from the Government.

Checking on this is the Regulator of Social Housing. The regulator assesses and grades social landlords for their financial viability and standards of governance.

Ongo Homes has achieved grade V1 for its viability, meaning it is financially secure and can deliver all its plans.

Following a recent assessment, Ongo Homes has been given a G3 grading for its governance. This means improvements are required.

Matthew Spittles, chair of Ongo Homes, said: “As a result of this, a full review of governance is being carried out. However, we want to reassure our tenants that this will not impact on the quality of services and support we provide to you.”

To find out more about the work of the regulator, visit gov.uk and search for Regulator of Social Housing.

**The next printed edition of
Key News will be out:**



**We always appreciate
your feedback...**

editor@ongo.co.uk

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