



# Key News



**Award winner**  
Find out how Neil is helping people

**Making things easier for you**  
Our digital sign-up platform has launched

**February 2021**

## It's been a busy start to the year with lots of work and support taking place.

It's almost a year since the first lockdown began but the way that our tenants, staff and communities have **helped one another** during this time is inspiring.

Though it has been tough for everyone, the last 12 months has helped many to **learn new skills** that we never thought we could do, it has reminded me of how supportive people and communities are, and it's made us all **appreciate the seemingly smaller things in life**.

At Ongo we are continuing to offer **essential services and support**, which is something we're very proud of, and keeping the **safety of tenants and staff as a priority**. We are continuously reviewing the government and health guidance – check out some updates to our services on page four.

It was heartening to see the amount of **festive cheer** that we could help give to people at Christmas, and the full story is available on page 15. We will continue to support you, offer opportunities and re-invest in homes and communities throughout this year as part of our three strategies – **to offer quality homes, to be a great landlord and to create opportunities**.

We're continuing to develop our digital services, whilst making sure no one is left behind. We've just launched our **digital sign-up platform** on the My Home website, and you can read more about this on page nine.

Finally, our work on the **first dementia scheme in the region** is progressing well. These homes will make a life-changing difference to many people and their families, and we are now taking applications. Find out the full details, including how much we'll also be investing in our current homes, on page 10.

**Take care, stay safe, and we shall get through this together.**



# You said, we did

**Check out how much of a positive impact you're already having on our services so far this year**

## Improving neighbourhoods

Two of our tenant groups, Tenant Inspectors and the Property Services Panel, have recently been involved in digital workshops to review the low and high-rise flats cleaning standards.

Such examples of tenant input and involvement has led to an increase in the customer satisfaction levels on neighbourhoods over the last few months.

Find out how you can help to influence improvements by visiting [ongoco.uk/customerengagement](https://ongoco.uk/customerengagement)



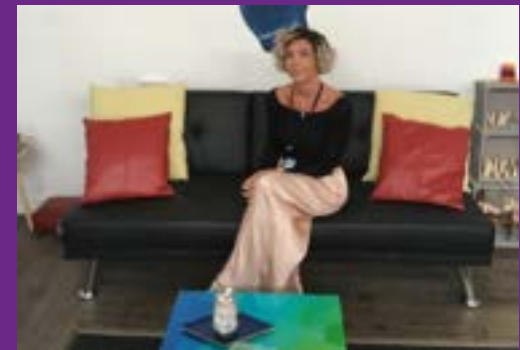
**Shaping service standards**

## Engaging with leaseholders

We recently conducted a survey with our leaseholders to see how they would like to engage with us.

**We had 39 responses in total - click here to find out what was said**

From now on, two digital newsletters will be produced for leaseholders and sent out each year.



**One of our leaseholders**

We have a range of opportunities for our customers that gives you new skills, increased confidence and positivity knowing that your voice is making a difference to yours and fellow people's lives.

**Complete our online form at [ongoco.uk/involvedwithongo](https://ongoco.uk/involvedwithongo) to express your interest.**

# Being there for those in need

Since the latest lockdown began, we have been asking you to only report essential repairs. This measure was taken to keep you and colleagues as safe as possible, and so we could prioritise those most urgent and in most need.

We are continuing to offer our other essential services following our 'safe systems of work' practice. Our buildings remain closed for now but our digital platforms, including My Home, are developing every day with more features than ever before. This has led to us being recognised as number 11 in the 'Top 30 Digital Housing Providers' by Housing Digital.

Click on the boxes to see just some of the ways in which we've been supporting you:

## Financial help

We continue to support our tenants to sustain tenancies through Covid-19 and to make sure you're not on your own.

## Lettings and empty homes

Homes are still being let to those in most need, and the number of empty homes has been reducing.

## Housing Management

Our Housing Officers are now working flexibly instead of being restricted to a specific area.

## Complaints and feedback

This new policy has been revised to ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.



Check out the latest updates on our services at [ongo.co.uk/coronavirus](https://ongo.co.uk/coronavirus)

The latest government and health advice can be found at [gov.uk](https://gov.uk) and [nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk)



# Reaching out to the community

**“It's made me a much better person.”**

A local man has received a Covid champion award for his voluntary work helping with our food parcels, and giving up his time to make a difference to the people within our communities.

Over a year ago Neil suffered with high anxiety, was in and out of work and his pet dog, who he had for emotional support, passed away in tragic circumstances. He reached such a low point that he attempted to take his life on a number of occasions.

However, just when he thought there was no way out, life began to get slowly better.



Click on the buttons to find out how things have drastically improved for Neil.

Wellbeing support and volunteering

A chance to give something back

Renewed confidence for the future

A big congratulations to Neil for this award, you've done amazing!

Interested in volunteering or want some help to find work?

Visit our website or email [employmentsupport@ongo.co.uk](mailto:employmentsupport@ongo.co.uk) to start your journey.

# Creating a sustainable future

## Re-investing in the local community and environment

Our Recruitment team have pledged to plant a tree for every new, permanent role they fill within a business as part of our Growth Campaign.

As part of our promise to help and sustain the environment, trees will be planted at our allotment sites and will be maintained by our volunteer-led Growing and Learning project.



Tree planting in 2019



The Recruitment team

## Offering opportunities

Are you aged 16 to 24 and on Universal Credit but want to get into work?

As part of the Government funded Kickstart programme, we are working with a range of businesses across the region to find a suitable role for you. We can help you to apply and support you throughout your six-month employment, such as providing relevant training.

Interested in finding out more? Do you work somewhere or have a business that could benefit from an additional member of staff at no cost to you?

[ongo.co.uk/recruitment](https://ongo.co.uk/recruitment)

[recruitment@ongo.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@ongo.co.uk)

01724 844848



Kickstart can offer you...

# The sky is the limit

## One of our tenants will soon be turning her business dream into a reality

Such a dream seemed far away only a matter of months ago. Having graduated with a business degree a few years previously, Laura was struggling to find work and trying to motivate herself proved tough. She had often thought of starting her own business before, but things had always got in the way.

When Covid-19 struck, she thought it would be even harder to find a job and wondered what impact it would have on her. Little did she know that it would give her the inspiration for the next chapter in her life.



Her idea and support received so far

What she has learnt from the help

Two other exciting ventures she has

What all this has meant to her

We provide telephone or digital support to help you with things like creating a business plan, offering advice, and accessing online courses to build your skills and knowledge.

Email [sparc@ongo.co.uk](mailto:sparc@ongo.co.uk) or visit [ongo.co.uk/sparc](https://ongo.co.uk/sparc) for more info.



# A new way of letting homes

This will be influenced and decided by you

**We propose:** Half of our homes to be available through My Move, using housing need and other criteria such as under-occupancy or an exemplary history (find out other factors in the box below). The other half will be let in the same way through the local choice-based lettings scheme in place.

Why introduce a new system?

What consultation has been done?

What were your thoughts?

What are the next steps?



We'll have a further update in the next edition. Until then, find out more at:

[ongo.co.uk/news](http://ongo.co.uk/news)

OngoHomes

[enquiries@ongo.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ongo.co.uk)

We have made sure that My Move meets the regulatory standards and all relevant legislation.

# Digital sign-up launched

We have a brand new addition to My Home

We have been working on a system for prospective tenants to complete their application for a new home online. It allows you to quickly complete forms and upload relevant documents to support your application, plus you will be sent your tenancy agreement digitally so you have access to it at any time.

Going digital for new home applications provides a quicker process - it's paperless and you can track your journey through to signing your tenancy agreement. It also allows us to invest more in our homes and communities from the Value for Money savings made by making improvements to our online services.

The new digital application area of My Home is only available through logging into [myhome.ongo.co.uk](http://myhome.ongo.co.uk) when you have an active housing application.

We began a trial launch of this new process at the end of January with a number of new tenants and our Lettings team. This has given us feedback to help us continue to make improvements to our services.

If you are looking to register for a My Home account to manage your tenancy, you can visit [myhome.ongo.co.uk](http://myhome.ongo.co.uk) or download the app.



# New homes

We also aim to invest £83.1m in our existing homes over the next ten years

## First ever dementia scheme

25 homes will be completed this summer specifically for people with dementia to help them to live as independently as possible.

Named Myos House and based on Warwick Road in Scunthorpe, the development will be the first one of its kind in the region.

**Find out more and how to apply...**



**The development in progress**

## Maple Close, Kirton

We have recently completed 16 new homes in the centre of the village.

A mixture of two-bed houses and bungalows have been built, with new tenants already moving and settling into their new surroundings.

**Read from one of the new tenants...**



**Judith with the keys for her new home**

## Doncaster development

Work will soon begin on 41 new homes at Broadwater Drive in Doncaster.

They will be a mix of two and three-bed houses and bungalows, with the development due to be completed early next year.

**Check out further details...**



**Part of our aim to build 225 new homes every year over the next ten years**

# Rent to Buy

**We have recently updated this policy to ensure it is clear and easy to read**

Rent to Buy allows first-time buyers the opportunity to rent a home from us at 80% of market rent. This allows people to save the remaining 20% for a deposit to purchase the home within five years.

The revised policy has been thoroughly checked by our Consultant Solicitor to ensure we are complying with all legislation and regulation, and to make sure it's easy for people to understand.

Last month, we completed the final two homes of our Rent to Buy development on Lancaster Road and Rochdale Road in Scunthorpe.

To find out more, visit [ongo.co.uk/developments](https://www.ongo.co.uk/developments)



**Check out our new, revised policy to understand what this is**

## Shared Ownership success

In December, a young couple successfully achieved full ownership of their home.

Shared ownership gives you the opportunity to buy a share of your home (between 25% - 75% of the market value) and pay rent on the rest. You can then buy bigger shares when you can afford it, and eventually own all of the home (unless rurally exempt).

The couple moved into Ennerdale Lane in June 2017, buying an initial 30% share. After building the share over time, they were ready to move up to 100% ownership at the end of last year.



**Ennerdale Lane**

**Visit our website or email [homeownership@ongo.co.uk](mailto:homeownership@ongo.co.uk) to discover more.**

# A day in the life of...

**Libor Baros, Income Collection Officer.**

(Click on each of the questions to find Libor's answers)

**When did you start working for Ongo?**

**What does your role involve?**

**What support is available to me as a tenant?**

**What is your favourite part of the job?**

**What would you say if I need some support?**

## About me

What is the main thing that lockdown has taught you?

What is your favourite hobby?

What is the most recent thing that you've learnt to do?



**Some of the Income Collection team**

# Going the extra mile

**A member of our Support team is also supporting tenants in their spare time**

Tracey, one of our Support Officers, supports vulnerable tenants who are in challenging situations, and can help them to claim the benefits that they are entitled to.

One recent example saw her help a tenant to get an extra element of Universal Credit and the disability benefit Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This was done outside of normal working hours, with Tracey volunteering for a support group to help local people.

## Initial struggles and how Tracey was able to help

Over £700 per month was secured in total, which RL admitted means they 'don't have to worry or struggle any more'.

## How much a difference the support has made



**Tracey (second from right) with the Support team**

From offering financial and housing support to giving personalised guidance, our Support team can help in a number of ways.

Visit our website for more on this range of support.

# Win an Easter gift

There will be four categories for you to enter - best children's decorations, best colouring/picture, best Easter bonnet/hat and best Easter baking.

The competition opens on Monday 1 March, and all you need to do is complete our online form and send us a photo.

Visit [ongo.co.uk/easterfun](http://ongo.co.uk/easterfun) to enter.



Terms and conditions can be found on our website



## Festive winners

In December, we asked you to send us your festive photos for the chance to win a gift voucher and certificate.

We received 39 entries in total, and a judging panel chose the winners and runners-up in each category.

Adrianna Balcerowska, Kirton Lindsey, and her family won the best decorated festive tree. She said: "Me and my 11-year-old daughter saw the competition online, and we immediately decided to take part.

"It was such a nice surprise when we opened a letter soon after and the £50 voucher and certificate were inside telling us we'd won. My daughter loves to paint so the money will go towards buying some art & craft gifts for her."



Check out the winning entries

# Spreading positivity

We did a lot over the festive season to make sure as many people, families and communities had a happy Christmas and New Year.

Click on each of the buttons below for further details:

Local funding

Festive hampers

Retirement schemes



Viking Centre

The Arc

Extra donations

Find out more about the number of ways we're supporting people and communities on our website, Facebook and Twitter pages.



# 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. For the December edition, we had over 155 responses to the satisfaction survey.

Congratulations to Karen Marshall 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 contact details at the end to be entered into the prize draw.



Entries must be in by Friday 26 March 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. 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!

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**Email our Customer Engagement team**

