

Changing to Onward Homes: Frequently asked questions

We are getting lots of feedback about our proposal for the amalgamation of LHT, Contour, Ribble Valley Homes, Peak Valley Housing Association and Hyndburn Homes into Onward Homes. Tenants have raised a number of questions and we have captured these together with our responses below.

Why is my landlord changing?

Our main aim is to create a more efficient business that is better placed to deliver a consistently high standard of landlord services to our customers now and in the future. We feel that we will be better able to achieve this by bringing together the organisations that make up the Group.

Will the name of my landlord change?

Following legal amalgamation the name of the landlord will change to Onward. All other terms of the tenancy will remain the same.

Is bigger better?

Creating one organisation that owns all of the properties will strengthen our position as a major regional business able to invest in growth, regeneration, improved services and new opportunities across the North West.

By moving to one organisation we will increase our financial resilience and our ability to carry on providing homes, despite the challenging economic, political and social climate.

Will my rent go up when we become Onward Homes tenants?

No, rents and service charges will not be affected by the amalgamation.

Will my tenancy or lease change?

Your existing tenancy conditions (rights and responsibilities) will remain the same. Any statutory rights such as the 'preserved right to buy' and 'right to succeed' will be unaffected.

Will I still be able to contact you in the usual way?

Yes, there are no plans at present to change the way in which you usually contact us.

Will the repairs service remain the same?

Existing repairs arrangements will remain the same until the existing contracts come to an end.

As specific repairs contracts come to an end, we will re-procure in line with customer feedback to ensure we can meet future service requirements and customer expectations. .

Will there still be opportunities to get involved?

Yes, we want to make it easier for tenants to get involved and we will be creating more ways for you to give us your feedback, both at a local and regional level. We will be developing a new customer engagement strategy and scrutiny framework that will shape and support our engagement approach going forward.

Is everything going to become digital?

Over time we plan to automate some of our key services by investing in and taking advantage of new technology. This will give greater choice about how you are able to interact with us, providing greater access and flexibility. Our systems will be much simpler and faster, and will enable us to be more cost effective. However we recognise that some of our tenants will either need or prefer a more personal service, we will therefore continue to offer this alongside any new digital services.

Will you be closing local offices?

We have no plans at the present time to close any of our offices.

When are the changes taking place?

Our consultation and communication period will run from 6th November until 15th December, after which time we will be collating all of the feedback that we have received. We will provide feedback on the consultation to tenants via our website in the New Year. The Boards of the existing housing associations will consider the feedback and make the decision to amalgamate or not. If the decision is to amalgamate then we would start to operate as Onward from April 2018.

Will staff lose their jobs as a result of the change?

The organisation is already operating under a single operating model and is in the middle of a restructure that is not dependent upon amalgamation. This review of staffing structures is to ensure that we can deliver consistent services to our customers. This will result in some changes and in some cases may lead to people moving on from their current role. The re-structuring is intended to make us as effective and efficient as possible, enabling us to deliver the best possible service to our tenants

Do you envisage any sales of tenanted properties, at any stage, before, during or after the envisaged takeover, by Onward Homes?

No tenanted properties will be sold as a result of the move to Onward Homes.

Will current tenants' rights, be fully protected, in law, at all times before, during and after the takeover by Onward Homes?

Yes

Why can't tenants be balloted?

We are required to undertake a tenant consultation in line with the guidelines set out by the Homes and Communities Agency. The feedback from this consultation is used to inform the Boards of the individual organisation to enable them to make a decision.

Take part in the Onward Conversation...

Your views are important to us, we want to hear from as many of our tenants as possible. Doing so is easy and can be done by either :

- Completing the paper survey that has been posted out to you
- Completing the survey online [HERE](#)
- Attending a coffee morning with your scheme manager (sheltered housing tenants)
- Attending one of the Onward Roadshows that will be visiting an area where you live... the Roadshow Roadmap can be found [HERE](#)