

A woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a white ribbed top, is sitting on a light-colored couch. She is smiling broadly and looking down at a tablet computer she is holding with both hands. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting. The overall image has a soft, warm tone.

Onward

Creating positive spaces

Simplifying Onward Homes

Be part of the conversation



We are proposing to simplify the structure of Onward Homes (previously Symphony Housing Group). To help us do this, we would first like to hear your opinion on our proposals.

Simplifying our organisation

At the moment, Onward Homes is made up of five landlord associations - Contour Homes, Hyndburn Homes, Liverpool Housing Trust, Peak Valley HA and Ribble Valley Homes - each with their own board, processes and procedures.

What do we want to change?

The current structure means there is a lot of duplication, which ultimately costs money and means the Group is complex to manage and not as cost effective as we would like it to be. We want to simplify the way our organisation is set up and the systems and processes we use to do business.

A single organisation

Our aim, subject to hearing your views, is to bring the five landlord organisations together to form one single organisation called Onward.

A single brand

To help us get there, we would like to adopt a single “Onward” brand for all landlords in the Group so that we operate under one shared name and identity. We chose Onward because it reflected our desire to be forward looking. What this means for you is that you will start to see a change of name and logo on our correspondence to you and our vans that you see around.

A single board

At the moment we have a “common board” in place for Onward Homes, Liverpool Housing Trust, Peak Valley and Contour Homes where the same individuals sit on the board of each organisation. If we secure agreement to become one organisation, as a step along the way, we may expand the common board to include Ribble Valley and Hyndburn Homes.

As Onward covers nearly 30 local authorities, there are no reserved places for tenants or councillors on the common board. It is very important to us to find different ways for tenants to influence us. We will continue to support and encourage strong tenant scrutiny of our services and we will make sure we seek and listen to all customer feedback. We will also make sure we maintain strong partnerships with our local authorities.



Benefits of the change

Working as one organisation would help us remain a strong organisation and allow us to:

- Be more efficient in the way we deliver services.
- Improve our focus on and investment in each neighbourhood with dedicated neighbourhood teams and plans.
- Make key decisions quickly and easily and make sure your feedback can help us improve our services.
- Make significant cost savings, which will be invested in our homes and neighbourhoods.
- Invest in technology to provide new and easy ways for you to access our services.
- Build up to 1,600 new homes in the North West.

Disadvantages of the change

There could be a concern that we would be unable to deliver responsive services as one organisation. However, our neighbourhood model enables us to continue to provide locally responsive services as usual. There may also be concerns regarding the protection of investment in local areas. A single organisation will in fact generate more capacity to invest in local services and the communities we serve.

Timing

There are many steps involved in achieving all of our proposals, and to minimise any potential disruption, we would gradually implement the changes over a two to three year period. We believe that this gradual approach will allow us to achieve our proposed plans within a realistic timetable, and in a way which is most cost effective.

Should we choose to move forward, in 2018 we would look to implement the single brand for the Group and to include Ribble Valley and Hyndburn Homes in the common board.

Moving to a single organisation would take longer, and might need to be achieved in stages. For example, this may mean that some landlord organisations would combine together first, with others combining at a later stage. You would still see us operating under our single Onward brand until then and so you might not actually notice any difference. We anticipate that this part of our proposals would take place over a longer two to three year period.



What would these changes mean for you?

- There would be **no change to your tenancy or lease.**
- Where rent payments are applicable, **it will not affect your rent and the basis for future rents.**
- Payments would be made to Onward, rather than your current landlord.
- Local services would, in most cases, still be provided by the people you currently deal with.
- We would continue to work within the terms of existing contracts for services, such as repairs and grounds maintenance.

Have your say

Your views really matter to us. We would like to hear your comments about our proposals to simplify our organisation and we will not make any final decision until the Board has considered your feedback.

Email us:

haveyoursay@onward.co.uk

Call us:

0151 482 2275

Write to us:

Customer Insight Team
Renaissance Court
2 Christie Way
Manchester
M21 7QY

Take our survey:

Complete the enclosed survey and send it back to us using the Freepost envelope provided.

Alternatively, you can complete the survey online by visiting your current landlord's website.