



Customer handbook

Building thriving communities



building
communities

orbitcustomerhub.org.uk

Our Customer Promise

Helping you and your community to thrive



Key

Look out for the symbols below:



**Our
responsibility**



**Your
responsibility**



Welcome to your new home

We're delighted to welcome you as a new customer and we hope you'll be happy in your new home. We hope you will settle in quickly and enjoy being part of your new community.

We've put this handbook together with some useful information that we hope will help to get you started in your new home. It contains all the practical information you need to successfully manage your new tenancy.

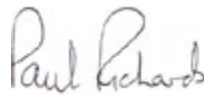
This handbook will also help you to understand what responsibilities are ours as the landlord, and what responsibilities are yours, as the tenant.

The information in this handbook should be used alongside your tenancy agreement, which is the legal document that covers the terms and conditions of your tenancy. Please keep this handbook in a safe place, so you can refer to it when you need to.

By working together, we can help to ensure that you have a home where you are happy to live and can be proud of.



Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Richards". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Paul Richards

Group Director of
Customer and Communities

Did you know that we offer new customers group or individual sessions on 'Keys to an Orbit tenancy'?

These sessions will help you better understand your rights and responsibilities and explain more about the many advice and support services we offer.

Just get in touch to find out more.

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Caring for our planet



Other useful information



Accessing your account online

The best way to access your account information is through **myAccount**. You can access this via our customer hub website **orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/myaccount/**.

Once you have registered, you will be able to access your own secure personal area where you can do the following:

- Check your rent account balance
- Pay your rent
- Update your personal details
- Contact us about any issues with your home.

You can access it 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you need help accessing myAccount, please contact us on **0800 678 1221** and press option **1** then option **2**.

Digital help and support

As part of our **Better Days** offer, we can help you with digital skills and offer support to get you online and making the most of the internet.

We're ready when you are, just text 'contact me' with your name to **07860 017 857** or call us on **0800 678 1221** and press option **1** then option **4**.



Moving into your home

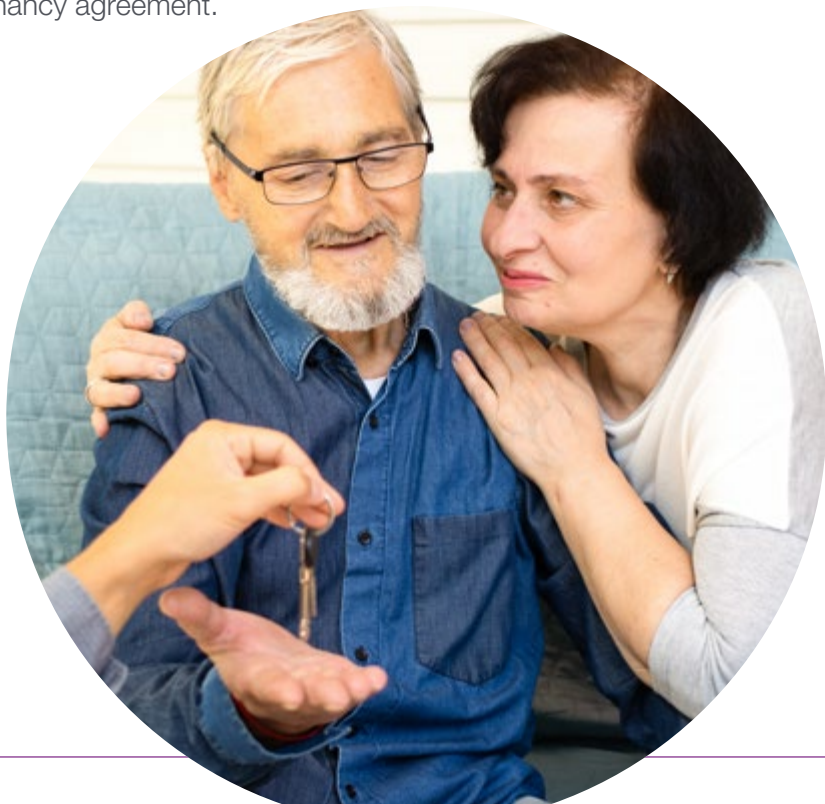


Before you move into your new home, we will have already carried out a range of safety checks and repair work to make sure that it is safe and ready for you to settle into. We will have carried out an inspection and taken photos to record the condition of your property.

It is important to us that you are happy with your new home and that you understand the conditions of your tenancy with us. You should already have familiarised yourself with your tenancy agreement.

For more information on the standards we follow when we let our homes, please visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/re-let-standard/

We want you to have a successful tenancy with us so you can focus on the other things in your life.



Here is some important information you need to know and things you need to do when moving into your new home:

Paying your rent

Paying your rent on time is really important. It helps us to maintain your home to a high standard and provide additional support if and when needed.

Paying by Direct Debit is easy and allows you to choose a payment date that suits you. You can set up a Direct Debit online through **myAccount**. It is quick, easy, safe and secure. You can also set up a Direct Debit with us over the phone. More information about paying your rent and other charges associated with your home can be found on our website – just search Direct Debit, or visit **orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/payments/**

Universal Credit and Housing Benefit

It's important that you keep up-to-date with your payments. If you're struggling, let us know as soon as you can so we can work with you to find a solution. It is your responsibility to pay your rent on time, even if you are receiving benefits such as Universal Credit.

If you receive Universal Credit, you will need to update your journal to record the change in landlord.

If you already claim Housing Benefit, you will need to let your local council's Housing Benefit office know about your change of address straight away. You should also let us know of any change of situation which may affect your benefit payments. Failure to do so can lead to a cancellation of your benefits or falling behind with your rent.

Rent arrears

If you fall into any rent arrears, please get in touch with one of our friendly advisors as soon as possible. You may be at risk of losing your home if you do fall

into arrears. We're here to help and we have a number of options that can support you if you're having any financial difficulties.

Please note:

- We don't accept cash payments
- We don't undertake planned improvement works, such as providing new bathrooms and kitchens, if you're behind on your rent
- We don't allow mutual exchanges, moves or transfers if you're behind on your rent

Did you know that we offer a free independent debt advice service for customers who may be struggling with their finances?

Visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/contact/ and fill in our contact us form, text 'contact me' with your name to **07860 017 857 or call on **0800 678 1221** and press **option 1** then **option 4**.**





What you can expect from us:

- ✓ Clear details about what rent or service charges you owe and when it should be paid
- ✓ A range of payment options for you to pay your rent, including our preferred method of payment, Direct Debit
- ✓ If you can't pay by Direct Debit, we can give advice if you are having difficulties setting one up
- ✓ Advice and support if you get into any financial difficulties
- ✓ Appropriate action to recover any outstanding rent that you may owe us.



What we expect from you:

- ✓ Pay your rent in advance, in full and on the agreed date – using Direct Debit as your payment method, you're able to alter the frequency of payments and choose a payment date that suits you
- ✓ Contact us early to discuss any issues or trouble paying rent or charges to us
- ✓ Work with us and keep us informed of any difficulties you may experience as we have a number of advice and support options available to you
- ✓ Apply for all benefits you qualify for and take ownership of managing them. If you need any advice about benefits you may qualify for, please get in touch. You can also find more information about benefits by visiting orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mymoney/

Paying your service charge

We work hard to make sure that the service charges you pay are fair and offer good value for money.

We will review your rent once a year and will provide you with at least 28 days' notice of any changes to your rent or service charges.

You may, under the terms of your tenancy agreement, have to pay a service charge to us on top of your rent payments. The service charge will be charged to you at the same time as the rent, giving you a total charge to pay.

The service charge payments we collect will be used to maintain items and/or services that are not specific to your property and may be in communal or shared areas. These could be contained within your block of flats, or if you live in a house, across your wider estate.

Examples of items that could be covered within the service charge include, but are not limited to;

- Grounds maintenance (gardening in communal areas)
- Window cleaning
- Cleaning of internal stairwells and corridors
- Maintenance of fire safety equipment and other safety checks
- Removal of bulky waste items (or management of fly tipping).

If you live in an Independent Living scheme, this may also include scheme staffing, warden call systems, utilities for communal spaces, lifts and servicing of lifts and renewals (money collected for large service charge items for when they need replacing). It may also include personal charges such as wellbeing services provided within the scheme.

Your service charge is paid in advance and is based on what we expect the costs to be to maintain these services over a 12-month period, beginning in April and ending in March. At the end of each year, when we know how much has been spent, we will send you a year-end statement to show the actual costs compared to the budget, you will normally

receive this between June and September. The statement will show any underspend (surplus) or overspend (deficit), any surplus or deficit will be included within the next service charge budget. When you sign your tenancy agreement, your service charge may include a surplus or deficit brought forward from a period before you moved in.



Keys and key fobs

We will provide you with two sets of keys when you move into your new home. We only keep master keys to communal doors to blocks of flats and do not keep duplicate keys to your home. If you lock yourself out of your home, lose or damage keys, you must arrange and pay for their replacement. If you live in an Independent Living home, please speak to your Scheme Manager or an Orbit employee who works at the scheme.

Gas, electricity, water and council tax

You must arrange for electricity, water and council tax to be set up in your name from the start date of your tenancy. If your total rent includes any of these, we will let you know at the sign-up stage. If your home has gas, we will let you know at the sign-up stage who your gas supplier is. If you want to change your energy suppliers, you can do so after you have signed your tenancy agreement.

Pay less for your gas and electricity

We have teamed up with energy experts **Good Switch** to help you save money on your energy bills, including £25 of free energy when you switch to a participating supplier. **Good Switch** only works with trusted providers and every tariff is backed by 100% renewable electricity so you're doing your bit for the environment too.

To get the best deal, save money straight away and find energy saving tips visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/switch-and-save/. **Good Switch** can also take you through the switch by phone.

Call them on freephone
0808 280 2552.



Getting your boiler up and running

When you move into your home, you will need to contact us on **0800 678 1221** to book an appointment to turn on your gas supply, ensure your boiler is working and that you have access to heating and hot water. We will do this within one working day of your call.

If you have a pre-payment meter, you must have at least a £5 credit on your gas and electricity meter for us to be able to do this. We will ensure there is no debt on your meter when we sign you up.

Floors, furnishings and decorations

We don't provide any carpets, curtains and white goods (i.e. fridges and ovens) and it's your responsibility to arrange for these items. However, if the previous customer has left carpets or curtains that are in good condition, you may keep them if you wish.

If you decide to install new flooring and particularly if this means that you are replacing wooden flooring with carpet, you will often find that the height of the carpet may not be flush with your door(s). If doors need to be adjusted for fitting of flooring, this is your responsibility.

Laminate or wooden flooring is only allowed in houses and not in flats.

You are also responsible for the internal decoration of your home.

Looking for cost effective ways to furnish your home?

There are options that don't involve taking out high cost credit or borrowing beyond your means. You can often find good deals by visiting **Facebook's marketplace** and upcycle used furniture or try the **Reuse Network** at **reuse-network.org.uk**. **Fair For You** also provides affordable rent to buy options, visit **fairforyou.co.uk** for more information.

Bins

With the exception of communal bins for blocks of flats, we do not provide rubbish bins. If your home does not have bins, please contact your local authority **gov.uk/find-local-council**. If there are costs associated with this, you are responsible for those costs.

Insurance

We want you to be safe and secure at home and as your landlord, we insure the structure of your home against things like fire, storms and floods. However, it is your responsibility to insure any personal belongings that you have against any of the above examples such as fire, storms and floods.

To find out more about how to dispose of bulky waste safely and responsibly, please visit **orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/rubbish/**



We offer a Contents Insurance Scheme exclusively for our customers. For more information and to apply online please visit: **orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/homecontentsinsurance**



What you can expect from us:

- ✓ To be clear with you about your rights and responsibilities as a customer and what our responsibilities are as your landlord
- ✓ To take a firm approach to breaches of tenancy whilst signposting people that may need support
- ✓ To aim to resolve enquiries when you first contact us
- ✓ If you are new to Orbit, to visit you within twelve weeks of moving into your home to make sure that everything is working as it should and that you are settling in
- ✓ To carry out regular visits to check the condition of your home.



What we need from you:

- ✓ To have read and understood your tenancy agreement
- ✓ To be a good neighbour and to take responsibility for yourself and the behaviour of everyone in your home
- ✓ To use the property as your main and principal home
- ✓ To keep your home clean and in good order
- ✓ To inform us, in writing, if the property will be completely unoccupied for more than 28 days at any one time
- ✓ To gain written consent from us regarding any changes or improvements you would like to make to your home
- ✓ To ask permission before getting a pet.

Pets

We appreciate that owning a pet can bring positive benefits to your life and while we are happy for people to have small pets, it is your responsibility to take good care of them.

You can keep small pets that are either housed in cages, bowls or tanks inside the home, which do not need to be allowed outside of the property. Examples are small birds, fish, hamsters and house cats. In these circumstances, permission is not normally required, but only on the condition that a nuisance is not caused to your neighbours, nor any damage caused to any part of the property (including communal areas).

If you live in a flat, or maisonette without your own front door to outside areas, you will not be allowed to keep dogs or cats (unless a house cat – one that does not go outside).

However, if you live in an Independent Living property you can apply to own a dog and each application will be considered individually. For further information please ask an employee on site.

Permission to keep pets that are required as an aid to customers with a visual, hearing or sensory difficulty, or any other disability will not normally be refused.



If you wish to own a different type of pet other than the ones listed above, you must first obtain our written permission. When reviewing a request, we will consider the following:

- Type of pet
- How many pets you wish to keep
- The type of property you live in.





Repairs to your home

We want to make sure you live in a home that is in good condition, safe and secure, so please let us know if there is anything that needs to be repaired as soon as possible by visiting orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/contact-us/

For any emergency repairs, you can call us on **0800 678 1221**. If you live in one of our Independent Living schemes, please speak to your scheme manager or an Orbit employee who works at the scheme if you are unable to report a repair yourself.



What you can expect from us:

- ✓ Carry out repairs that are our responsibility within our set timescales (see orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/repairs/ for a full list of our repair responsibilities)
- ✓ Keep the structure and exterior (including the roof, walls, doors, windows, paths) of the building in good repair
- ✓ Ensure that supplies for gas, water, electricity and plumbing are in good working order;
- ✓ Maintain your kitchen and bathroom and shared areas like entrances and stairways.
- ✓ Recharge you for any damage you may have caused or any repairs that are your responsibility
- ✓ Provide you with appointments for completing repairs to your home
- ✓ Communicate with you throughout the repair so you are kept informed
- ✓ We carry out all service requirements to meet at least minimum standards for all life safety equipment in our communal areas and homes (where relevant)



What we need from you:

- ✓ Carry out minor repair jobs yourself (see our website for some helpful 'how to' videos on how you can carry out your own simple repairs)
- ✓ Report all defects and problems which are our responsibility straight away
- ✓ Allow access for works to be completed, keep appointment times and be in for appointments that have been arranged
- ✓ Take preventative action to minimise condensation and mould within your home (visit our website for some helpful tips on how to manage condensation at orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/condensation/)

Your repair responsibilities

You also have some responsibilities when it comes to looking after your home and completing minor repairs.

You can find more information on the repairs you are responsible for completing, along with some hints and tips to help you to do this, at orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/repairs/

Following customer feedback, we have put together a series of self-help fix-it videos designed to help you carry out basic Do It Yourself (DIY) maintenance around your home. The aim is to help give you the knowledge and confidence you need to carry out these minor repairs yourself without the need to contact us. You'll be able to fix the issue more quickly and not have to make an appointment for a visit.



You can view the videos by visiting orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/fixit/

Examples of repairs that you are responsible for*:

- Blocked sinks, baths, toilets (unless caused by shared drainage issues)
- Sealant around baths, basins etc
- Replacement basin or bath plugs
- Toilet seats
- Showers, unless installed by us
- Lighting – replacement of bulbs, fluorescent tubes and starters
- Battery operated smoke and heater detectors
- Door furniture e.g. letterboxes, numbers, doorbells
- Additional door locks
- Glazing, unless a crime reference number is provided because of damage caused by a crime that has been reported to the police
- Electrical appliances, unless we supplied them
- Any damage caused by you, your family or visitors (unless there is a health and safety obligation and you will then be recharged)
- Clothes lines and posts, except in shared areas
- Condensation and mold growth, unless caused by structural faults or disrepair issues
- Fences, except those that are next to a public right of way, or are the one privacy panel between you and your neighbour
- Forced entry by Police and emergency services
- Lock changes or replacement keys caused by accidental damage or loss
- Pest control, except in communal areas
- TV aerial or satellite dishes, unless a shared system

*Some of these items may be considered as communal repairs in our Independent Living schemes. If you're unsure, please speak to your Scheme Manager or an Orbit employee who works at the scheme.



Emergency repairs

If your repair is an emergency, please contact us on

0800 678 1221.

An emergency repair is one that presents an immediate risk to safety, security or health. Examples of issues that would

be treated as emergency repairs include: boarding up for security reasons, a gas leak or suspected carbon monoxide leak, burst pipes or loss of water supply, or a total loss of electricity supply.

Making improvements to your home

If you are thinking about making improvements or altering your home, you must speak to us first as you will need our written permission to carry out certain works. If you carry out any works without our permission, we may require you to restore the property to its original condition at your own cost.

We've got some helpful information on how simple things you can do to care for your plumbing and drainage – and prevent blockages. Visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/repairs/ for more details.



Examples of changes that require permission include:

- Putting up a TV or radio aerial or satellite dish
- Replacing a fireplace and/ or surround
- Building a porch
- Installing showers of all types and additional tiling
- Installing a driveway, car port or dropped curb
- Decorating the outside of the building
- Installing a gas cooker where an electric cooker is to be removed
- Changing the structure or layout of the property
- Where we do give permission, you must ensure that any changes involving electrics or gas are carried out by an appropriately qualified professional.

Aids and adaptations to your home

For any individual or family member who may experience a disability, where an aid and/or adaptation is required to your home, we will work closely with our local authority partners, health professionals and other relevant agencies to provide these.

Where major adaptations are required i.e. a walk-in wet room, we require full assessments from the relevant professionals and will

support customers to access to the specialist assessments needed.

We can complete most minor aids and adaptations without the need for a full assessment.

If you need any aids or adaptations to your home, please contact us for further advice. If you live in an Independent Living property, please speak to a scheme employee.





Keeping you and your family safe is our number one priority and we have provided some useful information below to help ensure you are safe living in your home and community. We also have further information, guides and leaflets on our website that you can find at the following address: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/homesafety/

Gas safety

As your landlord, we are legally required to service all gas boilers and provided appliances, and test gas pipework in your home once a year. It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you co-operate to ensure the safety of you, your family and your neighbours.

We recommend that you check your heating is working before it gets cold. Turn on your system and if there appears to be an issue, please book a repair.





What you can expect from us:

- ✓ To write to you annually, informing you when you need a gas safety check carried out
- ✓ To book an appointment with you to carry out this annual gas safety check
- ✓ To provide you with a copy of the annual gas safety certificate.



What we need from you:

- ✓ To respond to us when we are trying to arrange access to your home to carry out an annual gas safety check
- ✓ To allow us into your home to carry out the check
- ✓ To have any of your own gas appliances installed by a Gas Safe registered person.

We will give you a copy of the gas safety certificate for the property, which tells you when the gas services were last inspected. You must give us access to carry out an annual check.

For safety reasons, if you have a gas cooker this must be installed by a Gas Safe registered contractor. We do not arrange this for you.

If you smell gas or you are worried about carbon monoxide escaping, you should leave the property as soon as it is safe to do so. You should also contact National Grid immediately on **0800 111 999** and our Customer Service Centre on **0800 678 1221**. Do not use a mobile or cordless telephone unless you are outside the property away from the suspected leak. If you have difficulties hearing, you may contact the National Grid by textphone (Minicom) on **0800 371 787**.





If you smell gas:

Do not:

- Smoke
- Use matches
- Turn on any electrical appliances or light switches on or off
- Use electrical entry phones, locks or doorbells.

Do:

- ✓ Open all doors and windows
- ✓ Turn off all gas appliances
- ✓ If you feel it is safe to do so, isolate your gas meter at the emergency control handle (turn off the gas supply using the handle at the meter). Check to see if a gas tap has been left on or the pilot light has blown out on any gas boilers or appliances
- ✓ Look out for any gas safety engineer and open the door manually for them instead of using any electrical entry phones/locks/doorbells. It is also a good idea to put a note on the door telling people not to use the electrical door entry system or doorbell.

Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) has no smell or taste and is not visible. It is produced when gas burns incorrectly and can kill. You may experience headaches, drowsiness, stomach and chest pain. You are most in danger whilst sleeping. To help keep yourself and your family safe:

- Do not block the air vents on an appliance
- Do not block outside grilles, flues or airbricks
- Do not use an appliance if you are not sure that it is working properly
- Watch out for yellow or orange flames, soot and stains, and pilot lights that blow out regularly
- Always use a Gas Safe engineer to service your gas cooker and make sure it is safely fastened to the wall
- Do not use boiler compartments/ cupboards as storage areas.





Every five years we need to carry out an electrical inspection condition report (EICR) in your home. Please be sure to grant us access when we request it.

To reduce the risk of fire or injury caused by an electrical fault:

- Never undertake any alterations to the wiring, sockets or light fittings in your home, you must use a qualified electrical contractor
- Switch off appliances when not in use
- Always switch off and disconnect televisions from the power source at night
- Don't use appliances if plugs are broken and if wires can be seen inside damaged plugs
- Check wires regularly, never use damaged ones and do not run them under carpets or rugs
- Never touch switches with wet or damp hands
- Never use more than one electrical appliance per electrical socket and don't overload adaptors or power bars
- Do not run any appliances from a light fitting.

If you smell or see burning coming from an electrical socket or the fuse board you must turn the power off at the main switch and call us immediately.

If you have a water leak and the water comes through any electrical fitting you must:

- Immediately turn off the electric at the fuse board

- Call us immediately so we can send a plumber to rectify the water leak and an electrician to check the electrics.

If you suspect that an appliance is faulty, please check your model and serial number, or look for the model data label. You can check if your appliance has been recalled via the Electrical Safety First website: electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk.

Fire safety

Although fires are not common, it's important that we work together to prevent fires and that you know what to do if a fire does start.

Most fires in the home can be prevented taking some precautions. For example, have a smoke alarm and test it regularly. Be aware of the risks in the kitchen, be sensible with cigarettes, candles and handle electrical appliances with care.

It is also important to understand the evacuation procedure for your building (evacuation procedures will either require you to 'stay put' or to 'fully evacuate'). This information will be displayed clearly if you live in a block or building with communal areas and will also direct you to a safe meeting point. If you live in a single dwelling, the procedure you need to follow is to evacuate the building. Keep calm and get out, closing doors behind you to slow down the spread of fire and smoke.

Independent Living has a 'stay put' policy within most schemes - if you need to discuss this, please speak to your Scheme Manager or an Orbit employee who works at the scheme.

If you live in one of our Independent Living schemes and the procedure in your building is to 'evacuate', you must keep us up-to-date with any medical conditions that may prevent evacuation of your home. This includes the use of oxygen within your property.

Some fire brigades offer a free home checking service, so it may be worth contacting them for a home safety check or additional fire safety advice.

We have some really helpful information on our website on how you can help keep your home fire safe.

Visit
[orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/
firesafety/](https://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/firesafety/)
for more details.



The smoke detectors in your home, should be checked regularly as this will be your early warning that smoke or a fire is in progress in your home.



**If any of your smoke alarms go off,
never assume that it is a false alarm:**

- Don't waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables
- Don't tackle fires yourself, many people are injured this way
- Leave it to the professionals
- Before you open a door check if it's warm with the back of your hand. If it is, don't open it, there may be a fire on the other side. If there's smoke, keep low where the air is clearer
- Ensure all fire doors are kept closed, including in communal areas
- Call 999 as soon as it's safe to do so – 999 calls are free
- Never go back into the building once you are safely outside.



If you cannot make voice calls, you can contact the 999 emergency services by SMS text from your mobile phone. You will only be able to use this

service if you have registered with emergency SMS first. Text 'register' to 999. You will get a reply – then follow the instructions you are sent.

We've developed a new fire safety app that allows you to take a virtual tour of a flat, identifying fire hazards and showing you how you can reduce your risk and save lives.

When a hazard is highlighted, you can click on it to see real life examples alongside information and guidance to keep you and your family safe.

Please visit
[orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/
fire-hazards-interactive-tour/](https://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/fire-hazards-interactive-tour/)
to find out more.



Blocks of flats

If you are moving into a block of flats it is important that prior to your move you make sure you are aware of the fire strategy of the building. This information will be displayed clearly if you live in a block or building with communal areas and will also direct you to a final exit point and place of safety.

Make yourself and your household familiar with the fire strategy and ensure that you inform any visitors to the building what they should do in an emergency.

If you have an automatic fire panel that covers the whole communal building, you will have detectors and sounders in your flat. We check these regularly to make sure they are working for your safety. Please ensure that you allow access to carry out these tests in line with your tenancy agreement.

Communal areas

Please make sure you keep all communal areas clear and do not obstruct doors or exits as they are fire escape routes in an emergency.

Items such as prams, bikes and other possessions if kept in communal areas can prevent you

from escaping if required and also the fire service from getting to the fire.

Refuse being left in the corridors is also a fire risk and should be disposed of in the designated bin areas. Don't smoke in communal areas.

Fire doors

Front doors in our flats and other doors in your communal areas are fire doors and designed to withstand a fire for a minimum of 30 minutes. It is important that due to this you keep fire doors closed at all times.

Your front door has a self-closing device to ensure that the door closes automatically. You must not alter this device. If this is not working, then you must contact a professional to rectify.

You must not replace your front door without our permission. All fire doors must meet certain requirements and are certificated following installation. This is for your safety and others living and visiting the building. Your fire door is a key part of the building design to make sure that it will create a fire resisting compartment, so that in a fire emergency it will not allow fire

or smoke to pass either way for a minimum of 30 minutes.

If your door becomes damaged or you feel unsure about the condition, please contact us immediately.

Balconies and outdoor areas

Fires can occur on balconies and outdoor areas, which can easily spread to inside the building. To ensure the risk of a fire starting is reduced, please see the adhere to the following:

- Never use BBQs (including disposables) on your balcony - they pose a fire risk that can easily spread to other homes
- If a fire breaks out on your balcony, it could spread much faster than inside your building, whilst plants and a few items of patio furniture are acceptable, ideally you should keep your balcony completely clear
- White good such as fridge freezers and tumble dryers must not be stored on balconies. They are not suitable for outdoor use and are a potential source of ignition

- Do not store BBQs (or any type of fuel or flammable liquid, which includes gas bottles and starter fuel) on your balcony or in your outdoor area close to the building
- Do not drop cigarettes on your balcony floor or over your balcony. It may cause a fire on another balcony or in the outside area of your building that could spread. We recommend that you don't smoke on your balcony, if you do smoke on your balcony or in your garden, use an ashtray and dispose of smoking materials carefully and safely.



Cladding

Cladding systems on buildings are installed to the outside of a building to provide a degree of insulation and weather resistance, as well as to improve the appearance of the building. Cladding is part of the external wall system which also includes 'attachments' such as balconies, drainpipes and guttering.

All external wall systems including cladding, balconies and downpipes should be in good repair and firmly attached to the wall. If you notice any damages or issues, then please contact us immediately to report it.



What you can expect from us:

- ✓ To carry out all landlord responsibilities and maintenance connected to safety
- ✓ To provide you with information relating to safety in and around your home, including any evacuation procedures if you live in a block of flats.



What we need from you:

- ✓ To take prevention of fires seriously and not do anything which risks a fire occurring
- ✓ To not store any items in communal areas (visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/keepitclear/ for more details on how to safely store your belongings)
- ✓ To follow all appropriate safety guidance given by us.

Legionella

Legionella is a bacterium which can grow in stored or stagnant water, under certain conditions. Inhalation of infected spray or droplets of water vapor can result in Legionnaire's disease. This is a pneumonia which may be mild and flu-like, but can be more serious, and sometimes fatal. Early treatment with the correct antibiotics is effective in most cases.

We follow a Health and Safety Executive Approved Code of Practice, carrying out regular inspection and water safety testing of shared water systems, in blocks of flats.

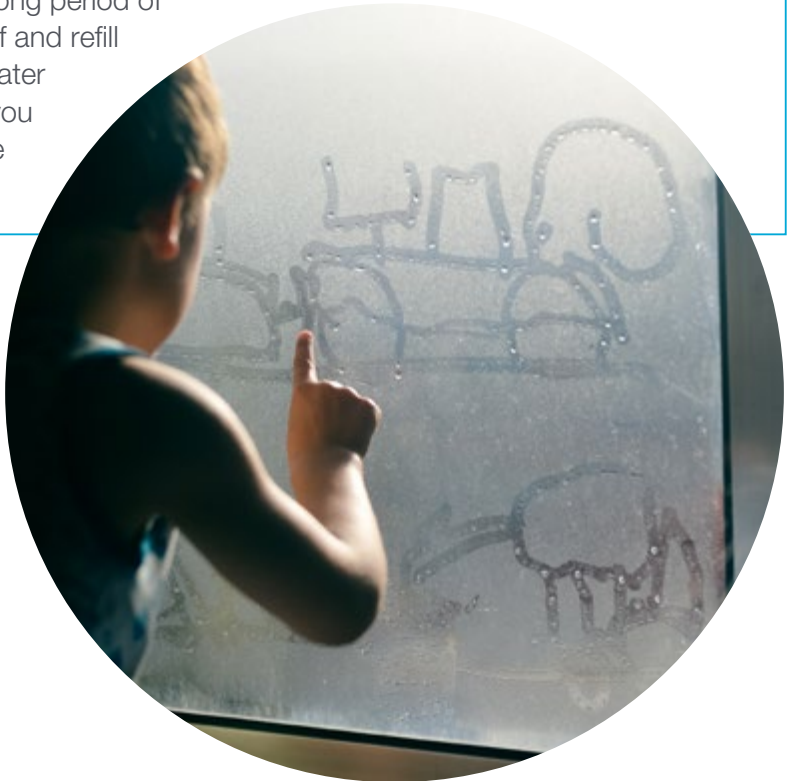
It is unlikely that you will be at risk from legionella bacteria in your home water system as mains supply water is treated by the water companies. Renewal of stored water in cylinders or tanks is frequent in occupied homes, so bacteria does not have the opportunity to grow.





The following precautions are advisable to avoid the possibility of legionella:

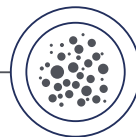
- Ensure all water storage tanks have tightly-fitting covers in place
- Regularly descale and disinfect taps, shower heads and hoses
- Ensure all thermostats on stored hot water cylinders are set to 60° C or above
- If you leave your home for a holiday or a long period of time, drain off and refill any stored water tanks when you return, before first use
- Flush showers and taps including outdoor taps and hoses for two minutes following any period of none use, including holidays
- Be mindful of water butts in your garden and use the water regularly.



Damp, mould and condensation

Everyone's home gets condensation at some time and usually becomes more of an issue for people in the colder weather — usually when a lot of moisture and steam is being produced. It can occur when you are cooking or bathing or if air is not able to circulate freely. When this damp air comes into contact with cold surfaces, it condenses back to water. Too much condensation in your home encourages mould and mildew growth and unsightly black stains to develop on your walls and in corners.

As our customer, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are managing condensation and that it does not become a problem and cause damage to the property or your belongings.



There are a few simple things you can do to help prevent mould and mildew from growing in your home:

- Stop moisture building up
- Ventilate your room
- Keep your room warm

For more information on how to prevent damp and mould in your home, visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/condensation/



Your wellbeing

Our **Better Days** programme is all about helping you to have a good day, every day. Whether it's finding employment, improving your digital and money management skills, or enhancing your mental health and wellbeing, we're here to help. Visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/ and use our postcode search to find out about all of the offers and opportunities near you. Our expert team can also offer information, advice and guidance on all of our offers and opportunities.

and guidance on all our offers and opportunities.

To find out more contact us today:

- Visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/contact/ and fill in our contact us form
- Text '**contact me**' with your name to **07860 017 857** and an Orbit employee will be in touch
- Call us on **0800 678 1221** and pressing **option 1** and then **option 4**

Our **Better Days** programme helps thousands of people every year and can provide advice and support beyond your residential needs.



Wellbeing and mental health

We all want to live long, happy, healthy lives – but there can also be times when we need support with our mental health. You may be experiencing low mood, depression, anxiety or isolation but support is available to help you.

Visit: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mywellbeing/



Employment advice

Get the tools to help you be seen and heard by employers from help and support with CV writing through to interview preparation are employment advice team can help you find a job that works for you. Customers who found employment through this programme can be up £600 a month better off.

Visit: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mywork/



Money advice

Get help and advice on debt, managing your finances, earning money and banking. Whether you are struggling to pay your rent or need debt advice and support, our teams can help you to gain control of your finances.

Visit: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mymoney/



Digital skills

See how we can help you get online. Orbit customers can apply for FREE digital skills support. This support service is tailored for customers who may find it difficult to attend local courses and training and is delivered online and via the telephone.

Visit: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mydigital/



Are you struggling to manage your tenancy?

We offer free support with our Tenancy Coaches. Our skilled team know that life can sometimes throw unexpected things your way, if you need any extra support we can help with the following:

- Benefit advice
- General money advice around household finances
- Help to empower you through 1-2-1 coaching sessions
- Putting you in contact with the right people at the right time: offering help to get online, debt advice, improving your wellbeing, managing your money and getting into employment or training
- Signposting to local help and available grants

Our Tenancy Coaches provide support with all areas of managing your tenancy and your home.

1. Keys to a successful

Orbit tenancy - find out how to be successful in your tenancy by understanding your rights and responsibilities as an Orbit customer

2. Managing the unexpected – learn how to plan for the future and save for a rainy day

3. Being a good neighbour

– identify areas of support within the community and recognise the impact of anti-social behaviour

4. Living in a thriving community

– support your community in a positive way. Ideal for new customers, young people or anyone who feels isolated

5. Thinking about work – uncover the benefits of working and how it can have a positive impact on your life

6. Making positive changes – recognise how small changes can have a huge impact on your life

7. Fire safety in the home – learn about fire safety in the home, how to prevent fires from starting and what to do if one does

8. Universal Credit (UC), benefits and you – learn all about UC and other benefits such as how to apply and what it could mean for you.

Visit orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/contact/ and fill in our 'contact us' form

Text 'contact me' with your name to **07860 017 857** and our team will be in touch

Call us on **0800 678 1221** and pressing option 1 and then option 4

Get involved

We are committed to providing a range of opportunities for you to feedback on your experience, review our performance, help us to make decisions and shape ways we can improve. Customer involvement helps us to understand the topics that matter most to you and your community. It allows us to work together to improve our services.

You can get involved from home, in person, over the phone or online. For more information on how you can work with us, please visit our website orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/get-involved/

Your Voice is our online engagement platform and is the easiest way for you to chat with other customers about things that interest you, get involved to improve our services, feedback on your experiences and comment on our performance.



All in one place, you can:

- Share your views
- Talk about the things that matter to you
- Complete surveys on a range of topics
- Have your say by voting on polls
- Register for training sessions or events
- Follow your community and find out when your next estate inspection is due
- Raise any concerns you have about your estate with your Property Manager via the platform prior to the inspection taking place
- Receive feedback following the estate inspection.

To do this you will need to register here: yourvoice.tenant.digital and follow your community on the communities page.

You do not need to have any experience in customer involvement and you don't have to take part in every activity – you may give as much of your time as you choose and decide which activities you want to participate in.

Looking after your community



We expect you to look after your home, garden and surrounding spaces. We also expect you to take responsibility for your own behaviour and that of anyone living with you, including children and any visitors.

When you move into your new home, you will become part of a wider, local community. We want everyone in our homes to live in a community that is clean, tidy and safe and we want to make you aware of your responsibilities as part of your community.



What you can expect from us:

- ✓ To ensure shared communal areas that are our responsibility will be safe, tidy and well maintained; this includes cleaning, play equipment and gardening
- ✓ To be responsible for all trees, hedges, shrubs and borders in communal areas and open spaces owned by us.



What we need from you:

- ✓ To pick up any mess after your family pets, such as dogs and cats
- ✓ To dispose of your rubbish in your household bin, or shared bins for flats and to keep communal areas clear of rubbish
- ✓ To report any issues or problems could be dangerous or hazardous to you or your neighbours
- ✓ To make sure you and anyone visiting always park in line with parking regulations at your property
- ✓ To keep your home and the immediate area in a clean and tidy condition including garden, dividing fence and shed (if applicable)
- ✓ To treat your neighbours, communal gardens and surrounding spaces with respect.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

We are clear as to what we consider to be anti-social behaviour and we will take action against anti-social behaviour and any individual causing it. We will also provide

support to any people affected by it and/or witnesses. We don't deal with issues that do not fall under the criteria of what is considered anti-social behaviour.



We consider the following to be types of anti-social behaviour that we will manage in our role as your landlord:

- ✓ Arson (fire)
- ✓ Assault and threats of violence
- ✓ Brothels and prostitution
- ✓ Criminal damage (including offensive graffiti)
- ✓ Drug dealing and use
- ✓ Noise (that is deemed a statutory nuisance by the local authority)
- ✓ Sexual offences
- ✓ Verbal abuse / harassment / intimidation
- ✓ Weapons (guns and knives).



The following are not considered to be anti-social behaviour. We do not deal with these examples and expect you to manage these types of issues with your neighbours:

- Babies crying
- Children playing
- Cooking smells
- DIY noise
- Dog and cat fouling
- Disputes (friends and family)
- General living noise (doors banging, footsteps, etc)
- Lifestyle clashes
- Parking issues
- Parties (one off).

If you live in an Independent Living scheme, please speak to your Scheme Manager or an Orbit employee who works at the scheme.

We may not always be the sole or lead organisation involved in managing an ASB case and we will decide if action is possible or necessary on a case-by-case basis. We will be open and transparent in order to manage customer expectations from the outset. In situations where we do not have the powers or tools to tackle the issue, we may, if appropriate, work in partnership with other organisations (such as the Police), or signpost as necessary.

If the reported incident involves a crime please also report this to the Police and provide us with the crime reference number when you contact us. If you are at immediate risk of harm or can see that someone else is, you should dial **999** and ask for the Police.



To report anti-social behaviour, please contact us through orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/myaccount/ or call us on **0800 678 1221**.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is an incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and violent behaviour including sexual violence, in most of cases by a partner or ex-partner, but it could also be a family member or carer. It is more common than people think.

Domestic abuse is a crime and should always be reported to the Police. The Police take domestic abuse seriously and will be able to help and protect you. They have the power to take action against people who commit the abuse and safeguard the public. However, there is some assistance we can provide as a landlord.



Please visit
[orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/
domesticabuse/](https://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/domesticabuse/)
to find out how we
can work with the
Police to support you.



Caring for our planet



What we've done:

We're passionate about caring for our planet. We expanded our Orbit Earth programme last year

and developed three commitments to help us deliver on our environmental goals:



**Climate action
to become
net zero carbon**



**Enhancement of
our greenspaces to
improve their quality
and biodiversity**



**Responsible
partnerships to
develop and manage
a sustainable
supply chain**

Last year, we made the switch to 100% renewable electricity at all our offices and communal spaces, and this year we made this a standard requirement in how we buy energy in the future. Putting our Orbit Earth vision into practice by highlighting that it is everyone's responsibility to work more sustainably has led to a range of projects and changes driven by employees.

These include:

- donating abandoned furniture and white goods to local reuse charities
- encouraging employees to car share to work and other business appointments to reduce transport-related emissions
- using electric powered equipment like lawn mowers, rather than traditional petrol fuelled ones.

What you can do:

- Switch to a renewable energy tariff, most are now price comparable to traditional energy sources – visit our Switch and Save webpage orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/switch-and-save/ to find out how you can save money on your energy bills AND switch to a sustainable energy tariff
- One of the best things you can do to help save our planet is to recycle your paper, cardboard, plastic and metal (such as food tins). Most local councils offer curb side pickup or you can take your recycling to any recycling centre in the country. To find out more, visit recyclenow.com
- Switch to LED lightbulbs – they use less energy than regular lightbulbs and last much longer too.



Complaints

We hope that you're happy with your new home and the services that you receive from us, but if there is something that isn't working as it should please let us know so that we can put things right.

In the first instance, please speak to one of our Customer Service Advisors who will try to resolve your issue on the phone. If we are unable to do so, we will carry out an investigation if required and agree a course of action with you.

Moving out

We want to make moving in and out of our homes as easy as possible.



What you can expect from us:

- ✓ To confirm in writing an end date and carry out a final inspection with you.

Visit
[orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/
contact-us/complaints/](https://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/contact-us/complaints/)

Call us on
0800 678 1221.



If you decide to move out of your home, you will need to do the following:

- ✓ You need to give a minimum of four full weeks notice ending on a Sunday, to end your tenancy with us. To find out more, please visit our website, where you'll be able to do so online:
orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/managemytancy/
- ✓ Pay your rent and any monies outstanding
- ✓ Report any repairs and maintenance issues before you leave and allow access for any work to take place
- ✓ Allow us to carry out an inspection before you leave
- ✓ Allow us to carry out viewings for new customers
- ✓ To leave the property when your tenancy comes to an end and return all keys to us by 10am on the Monday following the end of your tenancy
- ✓ Take everything with you and leave the property clear, clean and tidy, making sure it is in the same condition as stated in your move in inventory. This includes gardens and sheds. You will be charged if it is left in poor condition
- ✓ Take final meter readings
- ✓ Give us a forwarding address and telephone number
- ✓ If you have the right to a mutual exchange, you must get our approval before you can move.

Having home contents insurance can't prevent floods, thefts or fires from happening, but it can help you get back on your feet.

Find out more about protecting your furniture and personal possessions.

Call: 01962 892086

orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/homecontentsinsurance



Is your stuff worth protecting from just **£3.42 a month?***



*£3.42 a month for £9,000 standard cover.
Terms and conditions apply, contact above.
Price includes Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) charged at the appropriate rate.
Lower sums insured at lower rates are available for over 60s.
Excesses may apply regarding an Accidental Damage claim. Please review your policy wording for full details.
The policy is underwritten by Aviva Insurance Limited and administered by Wessex Administration Services Limited who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. You must review the Important Notice and Declaration in the application pack before calling to apply.
FP.ENT.81.L.C.ORGb

Notes

Get involved...

To sign up to Your Voice, please visit:
yourvoice.tenant.digital/account



To get involved with Orbit, please visit:
orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/get-involved

Help and support...

Visit **orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/contact/**
and fill in our contact us form

Text '**contact me**' with your name
to **07860 017 857** and an Orbit
employee will be in touch

Call us on **0800 678 1221** and
pressing **option 1** and then **option 4**

BETTERDAYS

have a good day, every day

orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mywellbeing/



orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mywork/



orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mydigital/



orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/mymoney/



orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/help-support/myhome/





Scan the above QR code to find the most up to date version of the handbook on our website



Get in touch:

You can visit our website:

orbitcustomerhub.org.uk

For more information, please contact us at:

orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/contact-us

Or to talk to us, please call:

0800 678 1221

Textphone:

18001 0800 678 1221

Take a look on social media:

f /OrbitHelp

@OrbitGroupUK

Our postal address:

**Orbit
PO Box 6406
Coventry
CV3 9NB**

If you need information in a different format please contact us on **0800 678 1221**

Orbit Group Ltd and Orbit Housing Association Ltd are registered societies under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and are exempt charities registered with the Regulator of Social Housing.