



Property Operations

Responsive Repairs Policy

Regulation and Legislation	This policy links to the Regulator of Social Housing Homes Standard; The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985; The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1983; The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998; Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, Homes (Fitness for human Habitation) Act 2018, The Charter for Social Housing Residents; Social Housing White Paper
Approved by	Head of Property Operations – 01.06.21
Supporting documents	Gas Non-Access Procedure; No Access Management Policy; Rechargeable Repairs and Services Policy; Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy
Scope	This policy outlines the way in which Orbit will provide a repairs and maintenance service to its customers' homes and communal areas.
Reference to "Orbit" means Orbit Group which consists of Orbit Group Limited, Orbit Housing Association Limited, Orbit Homes (2020) Limited, Orbit Treasury Limited and Orbit Capital Limited.	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Orbit is committed to providing an effective service in order to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction and to protect the value of its housing stock.
- 1.2 The Responsive Repairs Policy will ensure that we:
 - adhere to relevant statutory compliance obligations exceed the high standards expected of us by our customers
 - continually review our work and planning in conjunction with our customers' feedback
 - carry out operational efficiency reviews to enhance service offering maintain our properties so that they are in a good condition
 - safeguard the future of our properties to make full use of the housing stock are cost effective, and adhere to our group standing orders
 - adhere to our Asset Management Strategy.
- 1.3 The responsive repairs policy will support the following aspects of the Orbit Customer promise:
'Be easy to deal with, resolve your queries and keep our promises':
This policy commits to customers being able to raise repairs in a variety of formats. It also provides clarity on how we will prioritise repairs.

‘Be professional in everything we do’:

We have a Repairs Pledge agreement with our contractors which outlines expected behaviour from their operatives and office staff. This supports our ‘real time feedback’ customer satisfaction surveys enabling us to learn and enhance customer experience. Feedback is regularly analysed and outcomes help to shape the pledge.

‘Build and maintain quality affordable homes to be proud of’:

This policy identifies the steps we will take to ensure that homes are maintained to a high standard.

‘Listen to truly understand your priorities’:

We do this via customer satisfaction feedback and engagement with customers through our online engagement platform. The outcomes of these help to define and influence improvements to the service we provide

2. Policy Statement

Regulatory code and legal framework

- 2.1 Orbit carries out repairs in line with legal and statutory obligations, to safeguard the health, safety and security of customers, other occupants or visitors and to safeguard the building and environment. These obligations include:
- 2.2 The Home Standard of the Regulatory framework for social housing in England (from April 2012) which requires Registered Providers:
 - to provide a cost effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, customers, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time.
 - to ensure that customers’ homes meets the Decent Homes standard. For properties where the standards of design and quality, that applied when the home was built, are higher than those of the Decent Homes Standard Registered Providers should continue to meet these standards.
- 2.3 The Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 which requires Orbit to carry out certain repairs on behalf of tenants, in accordance with regulations set by the Secretary of State.
- 2.4 Orbit’s responsibility under section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 for maintaining the structure and exterior of our properties (including drains, gutters and external pipes) and installations in the property for the supply of water, gas and electricity; and for sanitation (including basins, sinks, baths and sanitary conveniences).
- 2.5 Orbit has a legal duty, as a landlord, under The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to ensure that any gas appliances and flues within our properties are safe to use and maintained correctly, including undertaking a safety check every 12 months.
- 2.6 Orbit is required to consult with leaseholders (including shared owners) prior to entering into Qualifying Long Term Agreements and prior to undertaking Qualifying works, in accordance

with Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 as amended by the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002.

- 2.7 Orbit has a legal duty, as a landlord under the Homes (Fitness for human Habitation) Act 2018, to make sure that its rented houses and flats are 'fit for human habitation', which means that they are safe, healthy and free from things that could cause serious harm.
- 2.8 Orbit is responsible to comply with The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper. The white paper introduces a new charter for social housing residents which sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect.

Reporting repairs

- 2.9 As part of Orbit's approach to accessible communications we provide customers with a range of ways through which to report a repair, all of which are handled at the same standard of service. Orbit currently has facilities for repairs to be reported in the following ways:
- Free phone telephone (including type talk)
 - Email
 - Office visit
 - Face to face contact with a member of staff
 - Writing
 - Website
- 2.10 Emergency repairs can be reported by telephone 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Non-emergency repairs can be reported by telephone between the hours of 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday.

Repair Responsibilities

- 2.11 Orbit is responsible for repairing and maintaining buildings and any fixtures and fittings originally provided, as per individual tenancy agreements and lease agreements.
- 2.12 Orbit will inform customers about which repairs Orbit is responsible for and which the customer is responsible for. The responsibilities will vary to take account of customer vulnerability or the nature of the tenancy or lease and can be found in our Repair Responsibilities document which can be found on our website.
- 2.13 Orbit is committed to a clear and transparent approach to repair responsibilities. Central to this is providing customers with clear and consistent information. We will provide customers with details of repair responsibilities at tenancy sign up, in customer literature and in response to enquiries.
- 2.14 Where repairs are required as a result of damage caused by the customer or due to lack of due care and attention, consideration will be given to recovery of these costs in accordance with the Orbit's Rechargeable Repairs and Services Policy. This applies to both current and outgoing customers

Repair priorities

2.15 Orbit prioritises responsive repairs within the following categories:

- **Emergency repair (4 & 24 hour)** - Any repair that is required in order to sustain the immediate health, safety or security of the customer at risk, or that affects the structure of the building adversely.
- **Routine repair (within 28 calendar days)** - Any responsive repair that is not an emergency.
- **Non responsive repair** – Major repairs (non-emergency) that are grouped together and included within stock investment programmes in order to deliver value for money, for example roof replacements or (non-boundary) fencing replacements.

2.16 **Damp and Mould** – In the event that a customer reports damp and mould, we will conduct a risk assessment with them before determining whether a repair is required. Should a repair be required this will be raised on the relevant priority in line with our Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy.

2.17 We provide a high priority response to customers that have been identified as having acute physical or mental health vulnerabilities (as defined in Orbit's Safeguarding Policy). This may include treating what is generally categorised as a routine repair as an emergency where the circumstances constitute a risk to the health or safety of that customer due to the nature of their vulnerability.

Appointments

2.18 Appointments are offered as either morning (8am - 1pm) or afternoon (1pm - 5pm). Orbit will also send a reminder text the day before the appointment to our customers and a telephone call when the tradesman is on their way.

2.19 If a contractor is running late for an appointment they will contact the customer at the earliest opportunity to explain the reason for the delay and provide an updated estimated time of arrival.

2.20 Where a second visit is required the appointment will be made, via the contractor, before they leave the property.

2.21 At the end of each appointment, prior to leaving the property, the contractor will ensure that the property is safe and secure.

2.22 Where a customer is not home at the appointed time the contractor will issue a no access card, advising the customer of the time and date they attended. The customer will be invited to contact the Customer Service Centre to make another appointment.

2.23 Where a contractor is unable to attend an appointment they will contact the customer, at least two hours in advance of the prearranged appointment, to reschedule. Orbit will process repairs accurately and promptly through all stages from initial request, ordering, inspection and payment.

Procurement and value for money

2.24 Orbit will:

- a) Procure works that achieve best value for money taking into account service quality and speed of response.
- b) Tender and let contracts in accordance with Group Standing Orders.
- c) Make prompt insurance claims either under Buildings Insurance or Defects Warranties on all relevant repairs to ensure the response repairs budget is only spent on other repairs. This includes ensuring that employees are fully aware of which cover exists on properties and the appropriate claims procedures.
- d) Ensure that only correct invoices for completed satisfactory work are authorised for payment and are passed for payment within contract timescales.
- e) Ensure appropriate controls by separating repair ordering and authorisation functions and levels of authorisation responsibility, including:
 - i. carrying out sufficient random and targeted inspections
 - ii. gathering and analysing regular feedback about the service from customers
 - iii. providing managers and the boards with accurate information on performance to help drive improvements
 - iv. improving processes from evidence gathered, relevant good practice and benchmarking.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Head of Responsive Repairs is responsible for the delivery and monitoring of the policy
- 3.2 The repairs delivery team is responsible for day-to-day service delivery
- 3.3 The contracts operations manager is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day service delivery
- 3.4 The Head of Responsive Repairs is responsible for the performance management and internal control of the policy.

4. Performance Controls and Business Risk

- 4.1 Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Head of Responsive Repairs and the Head of Customer Safety and their reporting teams.
- 4.2 Contract performance will be scrutinised via monthly contract meetings with our Repairs Contractors to ensure compliance with contract terms & conditions and KPI requirements are met.

- 4.3 A performance summary will be presented during Property Operations SMT for review and performance is shared with customers through our Annual Report.
- 4.4 The department will also be subject to regular internal audits against this policy.
- 4.5 Orbit will carry out a fundamental review of this policy every three years or sooner subject to legal, regulatory changes or if internal changes require it.

5. Essential information

- 5.1 All Orbit policies and procedures are developed in line with our approach to the following, data protection statement, equality diversity and inclusion (EDI) approach, complaints policy and our regulatory and legal obligations to ensure we deliver services in a lawful manner and treat people equally and fairly. Details of these are found on the declaration document for strategy policy and procedure summary and have been an integral part of the formulation of this document. Orbit's privacy policy can be accessed on our website www.orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/publications/policies/

EA	Equality Analysis was completed in 2017 and is available to view.
DPIA	A DPIA has been completed against sharing data with contractors. A further DPIA will be completed against the new repairs procedure when the service is fully reviewed.
Consultation	Internal: Property Operations
	External: Customers will be consulted on the revised policy as part of the proposed full service review starting in 2021
Applies to	Property Services; External contractors

Document control

Status

Approved

Uncontrolled if Printed

Date Issued

01.06.2021

Version

v2.2

Revision

Title	Responsive Repairs Policy			ID226
Doc Type	Policy	Review Cycle	3 Yearly	
Circulation	All Departments	Classification	Public	

Doc Level 3

Author	Ben Gothard	Sponsor	Tony Clark
Team	Responsive Repairs	Department	Property Services

Directorate Customer Services

Approved by	Customer Services SMT	Date	March 2018
Last review			May 2021
		Next Review (or sooner if changed)	May 2024

Revision History

Version Number	Date	Comments / Reason for revision
v2.0	May 2021	Three-year review – minor updates ahead of proposed full service review: 1.3 Customer Promise updated 2.7 and 2.8 Legislation added 2.10 Telephone hours amended 3. Responsibilities added
v2.1	Nov 2021	2.15 covid-19 statement added 2.16 damp and mould statement added
v2.2	Aug 2022	2.15 covid-19 statement removed