



Proposed changes to repairs and maintenance partners

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Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Why have I been sent this letter / information?

You've been sent this information because you pay for repairs and maintenance services provided by us and / or our partners.

What is happening?

Our current repairs and maintenance contracts end in March 2027, so we've been through a process to select partners for new contracts which will start on 1 April 2027.

What's included in the new contracts?

We've split these services into two parts. Separate contracts will be agreed for each part:

- **Part one covers emergency and routine repairs**
- **Part two covers major repairs and extra work when more support is needed.**

Part one includes repairs reported by customers or found by our inspection teams, that will be completed within agreed timescales, such as:

carpentry	groundworks
plumbing	fencing
roofing	asbestos removal
brickwork	electrical repairs
plastering	other small remedial works

Part two covers larger repair jobs reported by customers or found by our inspection teams, such as:

drainage works	brickwork
structural works	plastering
insurance-related works	groundworks
carpentry	fencing
plumbing	electrical works
complex roofing repairs	major remedial works
roof replacements	

What rules have you followed when choosing new partners?

We follow the rules set out in the Procurement Act 2023 when selecting partners.

This makes sure the process is fair, open and transparent.

You can find more information at: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/54/contents

Will the types of repairs I currently receive change?

No. You may have a different partner carrying out the work from 1 April 2027, but the services you receive will not change.

What stage of the process are you at?

In August 2025, we wrote to customers and asked what you thought about our repairs and maintenance services. We listened to what you told us, and your feedback has helped shape our plans.

We're now writing to let you know who we're proposing to work with in your area, and to ask what you think as part of a formal Section 20 consultation.

What is a Section 20 consultation?

Section 20 is a legal process landlords must follow before they agree certain contracts or carry out certain types of work that leaseholders may be asked to pay for through their service charge.

It applies when we're planning a contract that will last more than 12 months and may cost more than £100 per property each year, or when planned works may cost more than £250 per property.

The Section 20 process makes sure you're told what we're proposing, why we're proposing it, and how it may affect the amount you pay. It also gives you the opportunity to share your views before we make a final decision.

What is a Notice of Proposal?

A Notice of Proposal is a legal letter we have to give you as part of the Section 20 process. If you're a homeowner, please keep the Notice of Proposal for your records as your solicitor may need it if you sell your home.

Why does the Notice of Proposal only mention communal repairs?

The Notice of Proposal only refers to communal repairs because the Section 20 consultation is about work you pay for through your service charge. This usually covers shared areas, rather than repairs inside individual homes.

However, the proposed partners would also carry out repairs inside customers' homes. We know this is important to you, so we want to give you the chance to share your views as part of this consultation.

How do I provide my feedback or ask questions as part of the consultation?

By law, your feedback must be made in writing. You can do this in any of the following ways:

 Email: consultations@orbit.org.uk

 Write to: **Consultations, Garden Court, Harry Weston Road, Binley, Coventry, CV3 2SU**

Is there a deadline for providing feedback?

Please share your feedback with us before **Sunday 26 July 2026** so it can be considered. We'll reply to your comments or questions within 21 days of receiving them.

Do I have to reply or do anything?

If you don't want to let us know what you think, that's okay. You don't have to respond.

What is a Qualifying Long Term Agreement?

A Qualifying Long Term Agreement – or QLTA – is any agreement that we enter into for longer than 12 months.

How long will these new agreements last?

The proposed contracts would last for five years to begin with, with the option to extend them for up to another two years. This means they could run for a maximum of seven years.

Why do we have to enter a long-term agreement with partners?

Agreeing a longer contract means our partners can invest more into improving and caring for your home. It also saves money by reducing the need to keep finding and setting up new partners.

We've asked partners for a minimum five-year contract. We will only keep contracts going for longer if the service meets our standards, with good quality work and fair costs.

How were the proposed partners selected?

We take choosing the right partners seriously, so we follow a fair and careful tender process that follows the rules set out in the Procurement Act 2023.

We look at things like their experience, how they plan to make sure customers are satisfied with their work, their team's skills and training, how strong their finances are, their approach to sustainability and social value, and how they manage costs. Only those who meet our high standards and have the right qualifications were considered.

We also ensure customers are involved, so we can understand what matters most to you.

How are you involving customers in this change?

We know how important it is to you that we keep your home safe and well-maintained, and we have involved customers every step of the way. So far, we have:

- Carried out an initial consultation in August 2025
- Listened to the views of our Customer Involvement group
- Asked customers to review the answers given by prospective partners in their tender responses
- Involved customers in a 'meet the partner' event to share first hand their expectations for the service they receive

- Shared information via a dedicated page on the customer website; in communication to customers from Chief Executive Officer, Phil Andrew; and in the customer magazine (Orbit Life).

Customers told us it was important that partners had a local base in your region, so we've included this as a requirement in our process. We divided the areas where we have homes into five regions and invited companies to bid to deliver the services in each region. Local teams delivering local services should help reduce travel time and lower carbon emissions.

You also told us you want fewer subcontractors involved in delivering the service. We've reflected that in the proposed new arrangements by focusing on partners who prioritise the use of directly employed staff, with partners to only use subcontractors for specialist work.

How will you make sure partners do a good job?

We've set clear standards to check how well our partners are doing. These will help us monitor the service they provide and make sure it meets expectations.

This includes asking partners to offer an appointment when the repair is first reported, complete repairs on the first visit whenever they can, keep customers updated throughout the process, and ask for feedback so we can check customers are happy with the service they received.

Can the contract be ended early if the partner isn't doing a good job?

Yes. If a partner doesn't meet our standards, we can step in and act, including ending the contract early. We'll set clear expectations from the start and monitor the partner's work closely, so you can be confident you'll get the quality service you deserve.

Will any changes mean these services cost more in the future?

New contracts will use a schedule of rates. This means there's a fixed price for each repair, based on a nationally recognised pricing system. This helps make sure each job is priced fairly based on the work actually carried out, and that payment is only made once the work is complete. Prices will stay the same during the contract, apart from annual inflation-related changes.

Can I opt out of these contracts?

Your lease or agreement usually means we're responsible for delivering these services. Because of this, it is not normally possible to opt out. If this applies to you, it will be set out in your lease. Our aim is to provide a reliable, good-quality service for all customers.

How can I find out more?

If you have a question which is not covered in these FAQs, please contact us by emailing consultations@orbit.org.uk or you can call us on **0800 678 1221**.

We have a dedicated area of our customer website where you can find all this information and details of any other live consultations: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/newpartners

Summary of Customer Feedback

This is a summary of the comments and questions we received from customers in August 2025 along with our responses.

Observations	Responses
Why are you doing this now?	The current repairs and maintenance contracts end in March 2027. New contracts need to start on 1 April 2027, so the change happens smoothly.
How can we get transparency about what you are doing?	We're involving customers every step of the way. The aim of this consultation is to give customers clear information about the process we're following, the options we're considering, and the decisions we're making. We're also sharing this information on our customer website and through our customer magazine.
What does this mean for shared ownership customers?	Some leases and freehold transfer agreements mean we're responsible for repairing and looking after our buildings. This means it's our job to choose the right partners to carry out this work.
How will you make sure you select the right partners?	We make sure any partner we work with can provide a safe, reliable and well-managed service. This includes checking they meet health and safety standards, have the right qualifications, and have the correct insurance in place. We also carry out a thorough tender process in several stages, so we can be confident the companies we choose are able to deliver the services our customers need.
How will you make sure we get good value for money and only pay for the services we receive?	We used a competitive tender process to compare the costs from different partners. Cost made up 30% of the overall score for each partner. The new contract will use a schedule of rates. This means there's a fixed price for each repair, based on a nationally recognised pricing system. This helps make sure each job is priced fairly based on the work that is carried out, and that payment is only made once the work is complete.
Why are we agreeing to longer contracts?	Agreeing a longer contract means our partners can invest more into improving and caring for your home. It also saves money by reducing the need to keep finding and setting up new partners. We've asked partners for a minimum five-year contract. We will only keep contracts going for longer if the service meets our standards, with good quality work and fair costs.

Observations	Responses
How will you manage the contract?	We'll have the right people in place to manage the contract properly. This includes having dedicated team members to oversee the contract and check that partners deliver the services they promised. We're also introducing a new contract management framework to monitor performance, quality, sustainability and cost on an ongoing basis.
How do you make sure partners do a good job?	We've set clear standards to check how well partners are doing. These will help us monitor the service they provide and make sure it meets expectations. This includes asking partners to offer an appointment when the repair is first reported, complete repairs on the first visit whenever they can, keep customers updated throughout the process, and ask for feedback so we can check customers are happy with the service they received.
We have been unhappy with our service before, repairs have taken too long and communication has been poor, how will this improve?	We've listened to this feedback and used it to shape the future service. This includes making changes to appointment times, reducing the target time for routine repairs, and using technology to keep customers better informed. Improving service and communication has been an important aim of the tender process.
How will this be a financially sustainable service?	We'll be moving to a recognised national pricing system to make sure repair costs are fair and we will only pay for works that are completed. The tender process also helps us check that the prices offered are in line with the wider market. Prices will stay the same during the contract, apart from annual inflation-related changes. We also compare costs to make sure the pricing is reasonable and gives good value.
How does this affect my service charge?	Impact on service charges may be different for different Orbit customers. We expect the new contracts to offer better value for money overall. At this stage, the contracts do not set specific costs for customers. Repairs are responsive and costs will depend on the work needed in each home or scheme, so we cannot say exactly what the costs will be right now.
When will I get my repairs done?	Repairs can be needed at any time, so the new contracts set clear timescales for how quickly they must respond. For example, emergency make-safe repairs may need to be completed within four or 24 hours, while routine repairs should be completed within 21 days. You can find full details about repair timescales, including information about damp and mould repairs, on our customer website: orbitcustomerhub.org.uk



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