

orbit Life

Autumn 2026

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Customer Annual Report

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“Our role is to make sure the authentic customer voice reaches Orbit’s decision-makers and helps shape the services customers receive.”

John Bennett, Chair of the Customer Voice and Scrutiny Panel

Your voice, your influence, your Orbit



We’re constantly reviewing how we learn from real customer experiences.

Earlier this year we took a step towards making sure customer voices were being heard at a decision making level. After a selection process with more than 100 applications, the Customer Voice and Scrutiny Panel was formed, with 12 people from a broad range of backgrounds representing Orbit customers on issues that matter.

Meet John Bennett, the Chair of the new panel, and find out how customer feedback is helping shape services across Orbit.



We sat down with John to talk about why the panel exists, how it influences change, and why listening to customers is at the heart of everything it does.

What inspired you to take on the role of Chair?

I've been involved in customer engagement with Orbit for many years, and I've always believed that customers should have a direct voice in decisions that affect them.

While Orbit has long had strong customer engagement, I wanted to make sure customers' views were reaching senior leaders exactly as they were shared, not being filtered along the way. The Customer Voice and Scrutiny Panel gives us the opportunity to bring real customer experiences directly to the people responsible for shaping services.

What does the Customer Voice and Scrutiny Panel do?

Put simply, we're here to make sure customers are heard.

The panel gathers feedback from across Orbit, looks at areas where services could be improved, and carries out scrutiny reviews into issues that matter most to customers. We then share what we've learned with Orbit's leadership team and work together to improve services.

It's not about criticism for the sake of it. It's about helping Orbit understand what customers are experiencing and finding practical ways to make things better.

How do you make sure the panel focuses on the right issues?

Listening is a huge part of what we do.

Panel members regularly attend customer events and engagement activities, where we hear directly from customers about what's working well and what could be improved. We also look at wider feedback, surveys and recurring themes that emerge across services.

Sometimes it's the smaller day-to-day issues that have the biggest impact. By listening carefully and spotting patterns, we can make sure we're focusing on the things that matter most to customers.

“The best way to improve services is to listen to what customers are telling us every day.”

How does the panel reflect different customer experiences?

One of our biggest priorities was making sure the panel reflected the diversity of Orbit's customer base.

Our 12-member panel includes people from different regions, backgrounds and life experiences. While no single group can represent every customer, we've worked hard to create a panel that brings together a broad range of perspectives.

Just as importantly, we continue to seek feedback from customers outside the panel to make sure as many voices as possible are heard.

How does the panel influence decisions?

We have direct access to Orbit's senior leadership team and regularly meet with them to discuss customer feedback, concerns and opportunities for improvement.

It's a genuine two-way conversation. We challenge where necessary, but we also work in partnership with Orbit to help achieve positive outcomes for customers.

“Everyone wants the same thing: **services that work well and meet customers' needs.**”

What would you like customers to say about the panel in a year's time?

I'd like customers to be able to point to real improvements and say, “**That changed because customers spoke up.**”

We're often better at talking about problems than celebrating successes. I want customers to see that their feedback leads to action and that getting involved really does make a difference.

Most importantly, I'd like customers to feel listened to, respected and confident that their voice matters.

“When customers share their experiences, they can help shape positive changes for everyone.”

Communication is key

For John, one thing sits at the centre of good customer service: communication.

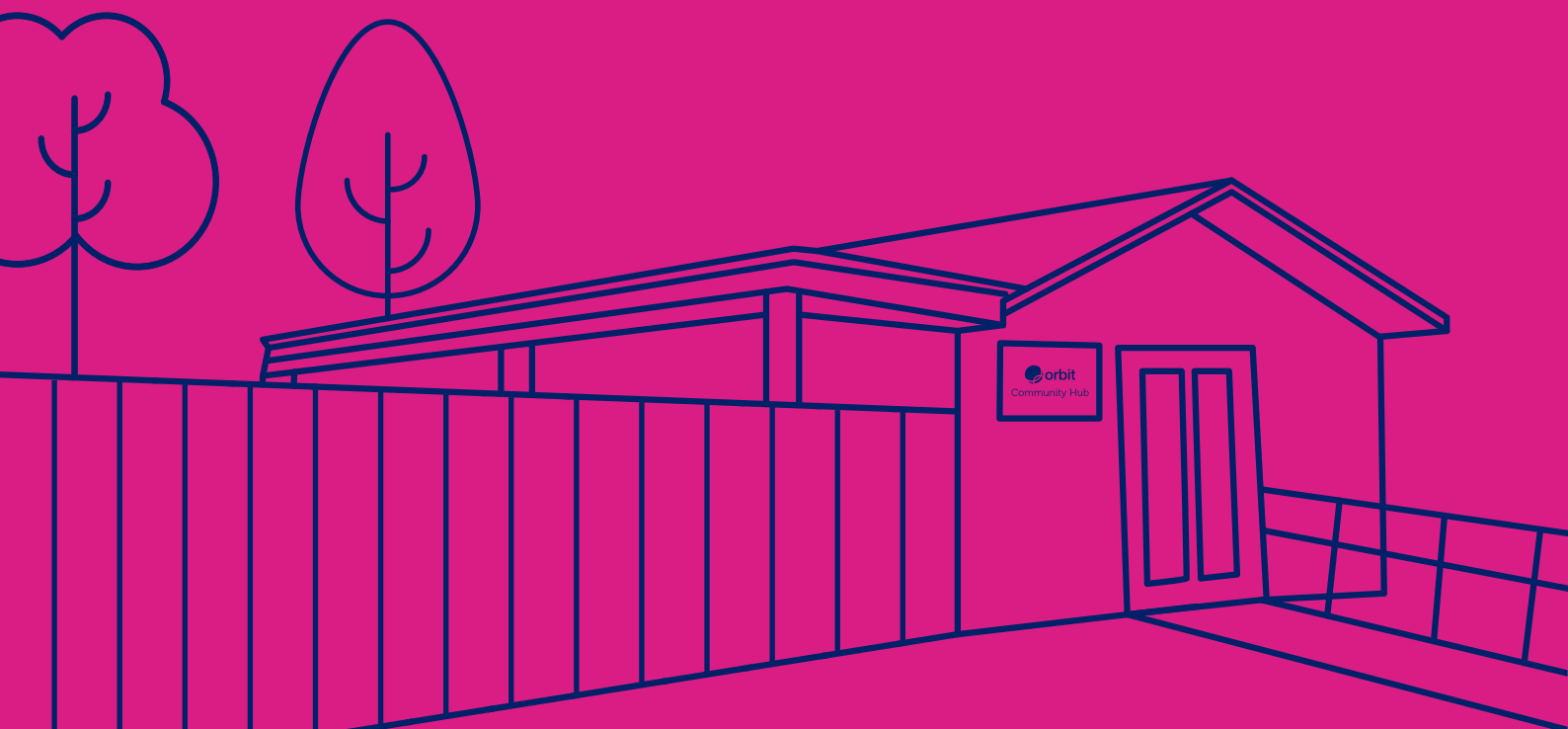
“Even when there isn't an immediate solution, keeping customers informed makes a huge difference. If people understand what's happening and why, it helps build trust and confidence.”

That's why the Customer Voice and Scrutiny Panel continues to work closely with Orbit to make sure customer feedback helps shape the way services are delivered now and in the future.

Get involved: If you have experiences or ideas you'd like the panel to hear about, **contact the Customer Involvement team** to share your views and help shape future improvements.

Jill finds her old self again through the Community Hub

“I feel I’ve got my mojo back.”



Moving to a new area at 77 was a big change for one of our customers, Jill. After leaving behind friends, familiar activities and the sense of togetherness she had built over the years, Jill was looking for ways to feel connected again.

Jill discovered her local Community Hub through drop-in sessions and coffee mornings, where she began meeting neighbours, making new friends and becoming part of her new community.

Over time, Jill started volunteering at hub events, including supporting an Afternoon Tea fundraiser for Breast Cancer Awareness by helping with refreshments.

The Community Hub has also helped Jill access local support and advice, including support from Citizens Advice Mid Mercia with a Blue Badge application.

Reflecting on her experience, Jill said:

“Moving house and area at 77 is a big upheaval. I didn’t think I could make friends at my age, but the Hub has enabled me to find my old self.”

Jill’s story shows how Community Hubs can help customers build connections, access support and feel a true sense of belonging in their local area.

Find your local hub and discover the support, activities and connections available in your community.

Your autumn reset

With the kids back at school and the days getting shorter, autumn is a good time to settle back into routines and get your home and finances ready for the months ahead.

A little preparation can help you feel more comfortable, avoid unexpected costs and make the most of the support available. You don't need to do everything at once – start with the things that will make the biggest difference to you.

Give your home an autumn MOT

Before the colder weather arrives, take a few minutes to check your home is ready.

- ☒ Check windows and doors are closing properly and let us know if there are any problems.
- ☒ Keep vents and air bricks clear so your home can stay well ventilated.
- ☒ Turn on your heating to check it's working and report any problems before you need to use it.
- ☒ Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working.
- ☒ If you have outside taps, make sure they're protected from freezing temperatures.

Need a repair?

Let us know through **myAccount** or contact us on **0800 678 1221**.

If you're not sure who is responsible for a repair, **check out our handy tool**.

Make your energy work harder

You don't have to turn your heating off completely to save money. Instead, think about how and when you use it.

Try these simple energy-saving habits:

- Heat the rooms you use. If you have control over individual radiators, make sure you're not heating empty rooms unnecessarily.
- Keep the warmth in. Close doors between rooms and draw curtains or blinds when it's dark to help keep rooms cosy.
- Use your heating wisely. Set your heating to come on when you need it rather than leaving it running all day.
- Switch off what you're not using. Turning off lights and appliances when you're finished with them can help reduce your electricity use.
- Make the most of your appliances. Washing clothes at a lower temperature and waiting until you have a full load can help save energy and water.

Need a little extra help?

If you're worried about your energy bills or aren't sure how to make your home more energy efficient, support is available.

Our **Energy Advice Service** can provide guidance to help you understand your energy use and make informed choices. You can also get help with managing your bills and accessing support.



Make your money go further

As the weather changes, some household costs can increase. Planning ahead can help you stay in control.

- Start with what you already have. Before buying new clothes or home items, check what you already have tucked away. A quick cupboard or wardrobe clear-out might save you a trip to the shops.
- Plan your food shop. Plan some meals and make a list of what you need. Using up food you already have can help reduce waste and keep your weekly shop on track.
- Watch the small spends. It's easy for little purchases to add up. Take a look at your regular spending and see if there's anything you could pause, reduce or switch.
- Plan for winter costs. If you can, put some money aside for expenses you know are coming. Even a small amount can give you some breathing space when unexpected costs come along.
- Check before you pay. If you're buying something, take a moment to compare your options. Shopping around can help you make a choice that works for your budget.



Have you got an autumn tradition in your home?

Do you change your décor for the season?

Or do you just really enjoy apple and blackberry crumble?

We'd love to hear from you.

If you're an autumn enthusiast, show us how you're bringing seasonal warmth into your home. Tag @orbithousing on Facebook or use #OrbitInAutumn on Instagram – then keep an eye out – we'd love to share our favourite entries in the next edition of Orbit Life.

Making it your home, together

Highlights from your 2025/26 Customer Annual Report

Every year, we share what we've been working on, what we've achieved, and where there's still more to do.

Our 2025/26 Customer Annual Report looks back at April 2025 to March 2026, giving you a chance to see how your feedback has helped shape our work – and what we're focusing on next.



See the impact of your feedback

You've told us that the everyday things matter – from getting repairs sorted and feeling safe at home to knowing where to go when you need help.

We've used what you've told us to help identify where we need to improve, while continuing to invest in your homes, our services and the support available to you.

Here's a snapshot of what you've helped us achieve:

- **More than 10,000** customers received free support through Better Days, helping you access financial support, improve your wellbeing and sustain successful tenancies during challenging times.
- **£142 million** invested in your homes and neighbourhoods.
- **More than 16,400** customer support interventions helped customers access advice, practical support and remain secure in their homes.
- Overall customer satisfaction **increased to 70.5%**, up from 69.2%.

What's changed?



You told us it should be easier to get help when you contact us.

To make this happen, we've introduced a new multi-skilled Customer Care team. Colleagues can now deal with a wider range of enquiries, helping more customers.

What this means for you: **Quicker answers, less time being transferred between teams and more issues resolved the first point time you contact us.**

You told us you wanted more local, personalised support.

We responded with a new neighbourhood approach, bringing services closer to customers and communities. You now have a dedicated Neighbourhood Manager who understands your local area and can provide tailored support. If you live in a Later Living or supported housing scheme, you'll continue to receive support from your Scheme Manager.

What this means for you: **A more local service, stronger relationships with the people supporting you and easier access to help when you need it.**

You told us you were frustrated having to repeat information.

One of the most common frustrations customers told us about was having to repeat information to different teams. To help address this, we've launched the first phase of our new customer platform, iProperty Cloud, giving colleagues a better view of your information and helping teams work together more effectively.

What this means for you: **Less repetition, faster responses and a more joined-up experience whenever you contact us.**

You told us we needed to improve complaints.

We know we still have work to do when it comes to complaints. You told us you wanted complaints to be easier to raise, communication to be clearer and actions to be followed through. We've responded by simplifying the complaints process, improving updates throughout investigations and strengthening how we learn from your feedback.

What this means for you: **A clearer complaints process, better communication when things go wrong and greater confidence that your feedback is helping to improve services.**

What happens next?

The report isn't just about looking back. It also gives you a picture of where we're heading and the areas we know need more attention.

We know we don't always get everything right. Your feedback has helped us understand where we need to do better.

We'll continue to use what you tell us to help shape our priorities and improve the things that matter most.

Read the full **2025/26 Customer Annual Report** [here](#).

Keeping your home and neighbours safe

Everyone deserves to feel safe at home. By taking a few simple steps, you can help protect not only your own home, but also your neighbours and the wider community.

We'll make sure your boiler and any gas appliances are serviced every year. To help keep your home safe, it's also important to regularly test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to make sure they're working properly.

Staying safe with lithium batteries

Lithium battery-powered devices are part of everyday life. From mobile phones and laptops to e-bikes, e-scooters and children's toys, they help keep us connected and on the move.

Lithium batteries are generally very safe, but they can become a fire risk if they're damaged, charged incorrectly, or not looked after or disposed of properly. The good news is that a few simple habits can make a big difference:

- **Always use the correct charger for your device.**
- **Charge batteries on a hard, flat surface with plenty of ventilation.**
- **Avoid charging devices overnight or when you're out of the house.**
- **Keep charging devices away from doors, hallways and escape routes.**
- **Replace damaged batteries.**
- **Recycle used batteries safely by taking them to dedicated disposal points at supermarkets, electrical stores or your local tip. Never put lithium batteries in your own waste or recycling bins as they can spark and cause serious fires.**
- **Test your smoke alarms regularly so they'll alert you if there's a problem.**

Taking these simple steps can help reduce the risk of fire and give you greater peace of mind. You can find lots more tips and useful information about safe charging on the [London Fire Brigade website](#).

Candle Safety Week

As the nights get longer and the weather gets colder, many of us enjoy the warmth and atmosphere that candles can create in our homes. **Candle Safety Week (26 October - 1 November)** is a great opportunity to make sure you're using candles safely.

If you use candles at home, remember to:

- **Never leave a burning candle unattended.**
- **Keep candles away from curtains, furniture and anything else that could catch fire.**
- **Place candles on a stable, heat-resistant surface where they can't be knocked over.**
- **Keep them out of reach of children and pets.**
- **Make sure candles are completely extinguished before you leave a room or go to bed.**

A moment's distraction is all it takes for a candle to become a fire risk, so a little extra care can go a long way in keeping your home safe.

Learn more about fire safety

For more fire and building safety advice, including guidance on protecting your home and what to do in an emergency, **visit our Customer Hub**.

Getting support when you need it

Many people face challenges that make day-to-day life harder, but asking for help isn't something to be embarrassed about. Dave's story shows how the right support can make a real difference to confidence, wellbeing and financial security.

I'll be honest, asking for help didn't come naturally to me.

I'm retired and live on my own. Over the years, I've developed some health conditions that make everyday life more difficult. My eyesight isn't what it used to be, I sometimes struggle with my memory, and the medication I take can leave me feeling dizzy. Together, these things can make even simple tasks harder and increase my risk of falling.

I rely on my State Pension and Housing Benefit, and I don't have any savings to fall back on. I knew I needed some extra support, but I wasn't sure where to start. Reading letters, filling in forms and speaking to different organisations had become increasingly difficult because of my eyesight and memory problems.

That's when I was introduced to Better Days.

Having someone sit down with me and talk things through face to face made a huge difference. There was no judgement and no pressure. Instead, I was given support and guidance, one step at a time, helping me understand what help was available and how to access it.

One of the biggest issues I was facing was an Attendance Allowance claim that had been turned down. The decision seemed to focus on the fact that I live in a single-level property, but it didn't reflect the challenges I deal with every day.

The Better Days team helped me ask for the decision to be looked at again. Together, we explained how my health conditions affect my daily life, including my memory loss, difficulties managing medication, worsening incontinence and the risk of falls.

Along the way, the Better Days team also:

- **Helped me submit a Mandatory Reconsideration for my Attendance Allowance claim.**
- **Made sure the Department for Work and Pensions had a clearer picture of the support I need day to day.**
- **Contacted my GP to discuss concerns about my worsening memory and help arrange further support.**
- **Rearranged a hospital appointment I had missed so I could continue receiving important healthcare.**

I'm still waiting to hear the outcome of my claim, but the support I've received has already made a real difference. I feel more connected to the services available to me and more confident about managing the future.

Looking back, I've realised there's no shame in asking for help. Sometimes, having someone by your side can make all the difference. Getting support early has helped me feel more secure, and it's given me reassurance that I don't have to face challenges on my own.

Dave, Orbit customer

“Thank you so much for all your help! Thank you for calling the hospital for me and rearranging the appointment I missed while we were together. Thank you also for calling my GP and showing such genuine concern about my forgetfulness. Fingers crossed I will now qualify for the Attendance Allowance which will have a great impact on my day-to-day life.”

Dave, Orbit customer

Support through Better Days

Our Better Days programme is here to help you with some of the challenges that life can bring. This includes practical support with money, benefits, energy and household bills.

Our teams can also connect you with other organisations and services in your local community, so you can find the support that's right for you.

You can look out for Better Days activities and events in your area, too. These are a chance to get advice, access support and meet other people in your community.

Remember, you don't have to struggle on your own. If you're finding things difficult, reaching out for support is a positive first step.

Find out more about Better Days and the support you can access on our [**Customer Hub**](#).



Making it easier to find the information you need

Want to know more about how we manage your home and services?

New rules are being introduced to make it easier to you to find the information you need.

You might have heard us mention Social Tenants Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs). It sounds complicated, but the idea behind it is simple.

STAIRs is about making sure you can easily find out more about how your home, neighbourhood and our services are managed.

What information will be available?

We've started making certain information available through a new publication scheme. You can find out more on our [dedicated webpage](#).

This includes information about:

- **How we run things:** Details about us, where you can find us, how you can get in touch and how we work with partners.
- **Spending:** How we spend money and plan for the future.
- **Managing homes:** How we manage and maintain the homes we look after.
- **How we're doing:** How we're performing, how safe our homes are, the complaints we've received.
- **Housing services:** The services we provide to you, such as repairs, building safety, estates management and our Better Days programme.
- **Policies:** The policies we follow to look after and run our homes.
- **Lists and registers:** Information about publicly available lists and registers that include details about Orbit.

We want to make this information easy to find and understand, so you can get answers without always having to contact us.

What if I can't find what I'm looking for?

From April 2027, you'll also have a right to ask us for certain information about the management of your home and our services.

You'll need to make your request in writing – just tell us what you'd like to know and we'll help where we can.

In most cases, we'll respond within 30 calendar days.

What does this mean for me?

Being able to access clear information helps you understand how we work and why decisions are made.

It also means you can use the information to ask questions, give feedback and have your say about the services you receive.

There will be some information we can't share – for example, where there is legal or privacy reasons – but we'll explain this if it applies to your request.

Colourful Kayaks spark joy in Norwich

A colourful new 32ft long mural called 'Kayaks' has appeared near Orbit's St Anne's Quarter in Norwich city centre.

But it didn't emerge mysteriously overnight like a Banksy. This cheerful urban artwork was the result of a sunny five days of painting by a group of volunteers including Orbit colleagues. The mural was designed by talented Orbit customer, Linda Sonntag, and was inspired by the brightly coloured kayaks which can often be spotted along the River Wensum. The work was commissioned and organised by Mitch Beadle, a former Neighbourhood Manager at the scheme.



Linda said: “It was a terrific experience painting 'Kayaks' right next to the river – the colours are vibrant and happy, and the shapes simple and clear. The overall effect is very uplifting, and we had a hugely positive response from people walking by. We are grateful to Orbit and especially to Mitch for commissioning and supporting this project – together we are brightening up the area and making people smile.”

Keeping you and your family safe

Since October 2025, Awaab's Law has required housing providers to take faster action when dealing with damp and mould issues.

From Monday 30 November 2026, the second phase of Awaab's Law will come into effect. This will extend requirements to cover a wider range of health and safety hazards that could affect customers and their homes, including:

- **Excess cold and heat**
- **Falls**
- **Structural collapse**
- **Electrical and fire hazards**
- **Domestic hygiene and sanitation**
- **Food safety hazards**
- **Explosions**

Keeping you and your family safe in your home is our top priority. These changes will help us make sure potential hazards are identified and addressed more quickly, helping you live in a safe and healthy home.

We'll share more information about what these changes mean over the coming months. In the meantime, you can find out more about Awaab's Law and reporting damp and mould on [our website](#).



Mira's story: I'm glad I asked for help early

As a single parent with three children, life can be busy at the best of times. My children are aged 11, nine and two, and my two eldest receive Disability Living Allowance because of their autism and mobility difficulties.

Universal Credit is my main source of income, so keeping on top of finances is really important. However, because I have dyslexia, I often find benefit claims, official letters and forms difficult to understand. I do my best, but it can sometimes feel overwhelming.

When I received a Council Tax bill that was much higher than I expected, I knew something wasn't right. I could have ignored it and hoped it would sort itself out, but I was worried the problem might get worse.

Instead, I decided to contact Orbit's Financial Inclusion team for support.

Looking back, I'm really glad I did.

During my appointment, the adviser carried out a full benefit check and quickly identified that there were errors affecting both my Universal Credit and Council Tax Reduction claims. Things that I hadn't noticed, and probably wouldn't have spotted on my own, were having a significant impact on my household finances.

The team discovered that Disabled Child Additions for both of my eligible children had not been included in my Universal Credit claim, potentially dating back to 2018. They contacted Universal Credit on my behalf and helped raise the issue, which was referred to a Decision Maker to investigate a possible official error.



They also contacted my local council to correct information affecting my Council Tax Reduction claim and supported me in requesting a reassessment.

As well as helping with these issues, they took the time to make sure I was receiving all the support I might be entitled to. They provided advice about Carer's Allowance and highlighted other ways I could reduce household costs, including discounts on energy and broadband bills.

Thanks to their support, my family could benefit from:

- **Between £24,000 and £25,000 in backdated Universal Credit, subject to Department for Work and Pensions calculations.**
- **An ongoing increase of £329.58 per month to my Universal Credit payments once the missing Disabled Child Additions are applied.**
- **A reassessment of my Council Tax Reduction, which is expected to reduce my weekly Council Tax bill significantly.**
- **Potential entitlement to Carer's Allowance worth £86.45 per week.**

The outcome is still being finalised, but already I feel reassured knowing that the right support is in place and that my claims are being looked at properly.

I've learned that if something doesn't seem right, it's worth asking questions and seeking help. By reaching out early, I was able to get support before the situation became more complicated, and that could make a real difference to my family's financial future.

Know where you stand with your tenancy

There's a lot to think about when you're looking after your home, from keeping up with your rent to reporting repairs and letting us know when your circumstances change.

You don't need to know everything or have all the answers. But knowing where to find information and who to contact can help you feel more confident and prepared.



Keep your details up to date

If your phone number, email address or other contact details change, let us know. Having the right information means we can contact you when we need to and make sure you receive important updates about your home and services.

It's also worth checking that you know how to access your online account and where to find important information about your tenancy. You can do this on myAccount.

Know what you're responsible for

Your tenancy agreement explains your rights and responsibilities, including things such as looking after your home, reporting repairs and paying your rent.

If you're not sure about something, ask us for advice so you can understand what you need to do.

Speak to us if things change

Sometimes circumstances change unexpectedly – your income might change, you could experience difficulties paying your rent, or your household might change.

If you think a change could affect your tenancy, please get in touch as early as you can. There may be support or options available and talking to us early can help prevent a difficult situation from becoming worse.



Keep important information handy

It can be useful to keep your tenancy agreement and other important documents somewhere safe and easy to find. You could also make a note of useful contact details, including how to report a repair or get help with your rent.

That way, if you need information quickly, you'll know where to look.

Don't put off asking for help

One of the best ways to plan ahead is to ask questions when you're unsure.

Whether you need help understanding your tenancy, are worried about your finances or have noticed something that needs attention in your home, just get in touch with us.





You can raise a repair, pay your rent, set up a Direct Debit and much more using **myAccount**.

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 @orbithousing

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**



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