



Property Operations

Access Policy

Regulation and Legislation	This policy links to a range of legislation and regulations. These are presented in Appendix 1.
Approved by	Customer and Communities Leadership Team – 16 Feb 2023
Supporting documents	<p>This policy relates to Orbit's overarching Strategy for 2020-25 and our Customer Promise. It also links to the following:</p> <p>Heating No Access Procedure Access Procedure Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy Tenancy Policy Property Safety Policy Responsive Repairs Policy Property Safety Management Plans Damp, Mold and Condensation Policy Safeguarding Policy and Procedure Net Zero Carbon Strategy Environmental, Social, Governance Strategy Environmental Delivery Plan 2021-25 Domestic Abuse Policy</p> <p>It is supported by the following: Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety Strategy.</p> <p>The Contractor No Access Protocol provides guidance for our contractors is what is expected from them when working for Orbit.</p>
Scope	<p>This policy sets out the framework within which Orbit works to gain access to our properties to carry out statutory and mandatory landlord repairs, renewals/improvements or inspections.</p> <p>It applies to domestic dwellings and all communal areas of residential buildings as well as playgrounds and leisure equipment provided and managed by Orbit.</p>
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 This policy outlines Orbit's approach to gaining access to our customers' homes to carry out the necessary landlord services to ensure they are safe, healthy and free from hazards that could cause harm.
- 1.2 The policy sets out the legal framework within which Orbit manages its responsibilities ensuring our homes are improved, inspected, and maintained. Orbit recognizes that effective communication and engagement is pivotal to gaining access and therefore we will adopt the following principles when arranging access with our customers:
- 1.3

Access Principle	Description
Trust	<p>We will understand where customers are coming from and foster positive interactions from the outset.</p> <p>We will be transparent and ensure that the customers' expectations are managed effectively in line with Orbit policy and procedure.</p>
Explanation	<p>We will provide all information up front, including a timetable of works where applicable.</p> <p>We will use simple language and pictures where possible.</p> <p>We will explain the possible impacts of work (e.g. visual impact on the home)</p>
Communication	<p>We will use a range of communication channels to reflect the needs and demographics of our customers.</p> <p>We will utilize the voices of our engaged customers and harness their support.</p> <p>We will ensure regular communication and reinforce messages throughout our campaigns.</p>
Delivery	<p>We will offer flexible support that works for our customers.</p> <p>We will have the correct monitoring in place to ensure the quality of work and deal effectively with any issues.</p> <p>Our delivery will be underpinned by strong customer engagement.</p>
Impact	<p>We understand the impacts that a request for access will have on customers e.g. timings and noise.</p> <p>We will put right any adverse impacts and ensure areas impacted are repaired and left clean and tidy.</p> <p>We will be clear with our customers about the possible impacts from the outset and ensure we provide an opportunity for ongoing conversations.</p>
Personalised	<p>We will listen and respond to our customers concerns.</p> <p>We will target appropriate actions to the needs of customer groups.</p>

2. Policy Statement

2.1 Orbit will ensure we arrange access for repairs, inspections and improvements needed to the following: **This list is not exhaustive*

- The structure and exterior of the property (including drains, gutters and external pipes)
- The installations in the property for the supply of water, gas and electricity.
- The installations for sanitation (basins, sinks and baths)
- The installations for property safety including sprinklers, door entry, warden call, assisted toilets, domestic auto doors, gates and barriers
- The installations for heating the property and providing hot water
- To carry out and provide a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
- To carry out an energy performance dwelling assessment
- To carry out decarbonisation works to the internal and external of the property or building
- To carry out and provide a valid Gas Safety Certificate at the start of the tenancy and within 28 days of each annual gas safety check (if there is a gas safety installation)
- To ensure all properties have a working smoke alarm on every floor used as living accommodation
- A carbon monoxide alarm in all rooms using solid fuels – such as coal fire or wood burning stove
- To ensure an EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) is completed at least every 5 years by a competent person
- To ensure the property is free from damp and mould by tackling repairs to the structure and exterior and make sure the property is adequately ventilated
- Installation of smart thermostats
- To ensure the home is free from trip and fall hazards by ensuring safety rails are installed and stairs are in good repair
- To ensure access to the property is well lit in communal spaces
- To ensure the property has an adequate water supply and drinking water is supplied from the mains
- The property is free from structural defects including the roof, floors, walls and ceilings.
- To carry out a stock condition survey to assess the lifecycle of capital components along with the general structure
- To ensure capital components are maintained or renewed on a lifecycle basis including kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, roofs, cyclical decorations etc.
- To ensure the property is safe and compliant to remedy any HHSRS failures and other regulatory breaches.

2.2 Customers must ensure access is granted to Orbit and relevant workers to enable repairs or inspections to be carried out. Orbit will ensure that we give our customers at least 24 hours' notice requesting access at a reasonable time of the day.

- 2.3 In an emergency, permission is not needed to enter the home. Further detail can be found within the access procedure on scenarios which warrant an emergency entry to the home.
- 2.4 Orbit will ensure all reasonable methods of arranging access to ensure our homes and customers receive sufficient investment and services. If a customer refuses access, they may be in breach of their tenancy agreement and a court order may be pursued.
- 2.5 The **Access Procedure** provides guidance for internal staff to ensure Orbit have taken all reasonable steps to comply with relevant legislation.
- 2.6 Where access attempts are unsuccessful, Orbit will attempt to understand why customers cannot or will not provide access and work with them to find a solution to ensure that works are completed.
- 2.7 In the circumstance where a mutual solution cannot be found, Orbit will seek to exhaust their landlord obligations listed within the tenancy agreement to ensure that access is gained to complete our landlord services.
- 2.8 The Access Policy will support with 'Finding our silence' and the 'Orbit customer promise'.
- 2.9 Orbit recognize that in some scenarios customers may not allow access in some domestic situations. The domestic abuse policy and procedure provides guidance for staff and contractors to follow when faced with a suspected domestic situation.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Overall accountability for Health and Safety lie with the Chief Executive and the below table describes the responsibility of each Executive Team member in regard to supporting the policy aims.

3.23.2

Role	Responsibility
Group Director of Customer and Communities	To own and ensure the delivery of the Property Repairs, Property Management, Property Improvements and Property Safety policies and procedures relating to the management of Orbit's properties.
Group Director of Orbit Homes	To ensure the delivery of Orbit's Repairs, Property Improvements and Property Safety policy and procedure outcomes regarding new build homes.
Group People and Strategy Director	To provide a training framework to support staff across Orbit to deliver the Property Repairs, Property Management, Property Improvements and Property Safety policies and procedure objectives.
Executive Director – Orbit Corporate Services	To provide second and third line of defence assurance to the business that the Property repairs, Property Management, Property Improvements and Property Safety policies and procedure objectives are being met.
Group Finance Director	To ensure the appropriate finances are available to achieve Orbit's Property Repairs, Property Management, Property

	Improvements and Property Safety policy and procedure objectives are met.
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- 3.3 The **Access Procedure** and **Heating No Access Procedure** as listed in paragraph 2.5 provide details on the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of each access function.

4. Performance Controls and Business Risk

- 4.1 Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Property Operations Director.
- 4.2 Performance in the delivery of the service will be assessed by the Head of Property Repairs, Head of Property Improvements, Head of Property Safety, Head of Strategic Asset Management, Head of Tenancy Services through a monthly review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These KPIs are provided to senior leadership to ensure strong governance and oversight.
- 4.3 Orbit have created several procedures, protocols and work instructions which set out in detail what is required of contractors working for Orbit to meet the high standards Orbit sets for performance in each area. These have been shared with the relevant contractors, who are required to work to the protocols.
- 4.4 This policy will be made available to all internal stakeholders of Orbit who will be required to sign I that they have read and understand this policy.
- 4.4 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 on 30 Mar 2023 and is available to view.
DPIA	A DPIA was approved on 06 Dec 2022 and is available to view.
Consultation	Internal: Property Safety; Property Improvement; Property Charges; Property Repairs; Strategic Asset Management; Tenancy Services; Tenancy Sustainment; Income Collection and Recovery; Health and Safety
	External: Customers and key contractors
Applies to	Business wide

Document control

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Uncontrolled if Printed

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Author	Ryan Jordan	Sponsor	Tony Clark
Team	Customer Safety	Department	Property Operations

Directorate Customer and Communities

		Date
Approved by	Customer and Communities Leadership Team	Feb 2023
Last review		
	Next Review (or sooner if changed)	Apr 2026

Revision History

Version Number	Date	Comments / Reason for revision
v1.0	Apr 2023	New Policy – replacing previous No Access Management Policy

Appendix 1: Related legislation and regulatory instruments (Please note the below list is not intended to be exhaustive)

- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Homes (fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Housing Act 2004
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- LOLER 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- Work at Height Regulations 2005

Appendix 2: The Orbit Customer Promise.

Orbit Customer Promise	Commitment
We are easy to contact, resolve your queries and keep our promises.	<p>Customers can contact Orbit in a variety of ways and can arrange suitable times for visits.</p> <p>Orbit have effective monitoring in place to ensure the quality of work and deal effectively with any issues.</p> <p>Orbit will communicate and engage with their customers via text, email, telephone and notice boards.</p> <p>Orbit will proactively seek out and engage with our customers who may require support to ensure their home is maintained to standard.</p>
We demand the upmost professionalism from our people.	<p>We have a Repairs Pledge Agreement with our contractors which outlines expected behavior from their operatives and office staff. This supports our 'real time feedback' customer satisfaction surveys enabling us to learn and enhance our customer experience. Feedback is regularly analysed and outcomes help to shape the pledge.</p> <p>We expect our contractors to keep to their appointments and to keep our customers updated and informed of any changes which may occur in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>We ensure that our contractors are upskilled to recognize a safeguarding issue which should be reported back to Orbit.</p>

We build and maintain quality homes you can be proud of.	Orbit carry out a range of repairs, improvements and safety visits which are described in this policy which are made to ensure that our customers' homes are maintained to high standard and are safe.
We make sure our homes are affordable and sustainable.	<p>This policy will assist with gaining access to our property to carry out decarbonization works which are designed to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings. These works include boiler upgrades, ground source and air source heat pumps and solar PV works.</p> <p>This Policy will also provide a robust approach to gaining access and reduce costs form no access attempts.</p>
We listen and take account of your views	This Policy is reviewed by Orbit's engaged customers.
We will keep you neighborhoods clean, green and safe.	<p>Our Property Safety Visits are made to keep all our customers i.e. both those in property and the neighbors safe.</p> <p>Reductions in failed access will have a positive impact on environmental benefits through reduction of time and energy wasted, writing and commuting a property.</p>