

# Annual Report to Customers

2015 - 2016



[www.orbit.org.uk](http://www.orbit.org.uk)

 building  
communities

  
ORBIT SOUTH  
part of Orbit Living



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# Welcome

**This customer annual report is a way of showing you, honestly, what we have achieved over the last year and what we still need to work on.**

We know there are areas where we need to improve. For example, you told us that you want a good and reliable repairs service. We know this is a priority for you and we accept that we haven't delivered that over the past 12 months. So we have made a number of changes and we're working closely with our contractors to put this right.

We have also introduced 'real time feedback'. This allows customers to immediately feedback on our services via text, email or telephone message. It means we get a true picture of what makes you happy – or unhappy! And if you're dissatisfied with something, we have the chance to resolve the issue quickly for you.

In 2013, we launched our 2020 vision and the nine targets to achieve by then. Three years on, we are making real progress and getting closer to our 2020 targets:

- We have built 3,616 new homes over the last three years (2020 target: 12,000)
- We've reached record shared ownership figures; have two private rented schemes and built 405 homes for sale in three years (2020 target: provide a full range of home rental and ownership options)
- Since 2013 we have provided 4,188 training opportunities, supported 617 people into employment and given 1,636 people digital support (2020 target: provide 10,000 training and capacity building activities to support empowerment, opportunity and jobs)
- Since 2013 we have committed £8 million into communities (2020 target: deliver £30 million of investment into communities)
- 66% of all rented properties are at Band C energy rating or above (2020 target: achieve a minimum energy rating of Band C in our homes)

- Currently 10.4% of our contacts with customers are happening online (2020 target: have 75% of customer contacts happening online)
- Satisfaction is based at 78.6% (2020 target: provide a range of tailored services which satisfy 90% of customers)
- Since 2013, 7,490 customers have received money and energy advice (2020 target: provide this advice to 20,000 people)

Last year, our regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), also announced a downgrade of Orbit's governance to a G2 rating\* – which means we are 'compliant but improvement needed'. This follows our decision to self-report a health and safety issue to the HCA in July 2015.

Although we are obviously disappointed, we fully accept the conclusions of the HCA. Their decision relates to fire risk remedial works and the HCA judged that the action plan we put into place to address those issues was appropriate and robust. We take the safety and security of our customers very seriously and we will complete the outstanding works as quickly as possible.

In this report, each section covers one of the six standards that the HCA looks at - so you can see how our services measure up to them.

\*Orbit re-graded back to G1 in July 2016





# How we compare to other landlords

We compare ourselves against other housing providers like us who have more than 5,000 properties and work across more than six local authority areas.

## How we compare against other housing providers:

### Top 25%

**95%**

Customers satisfied with their involvement in meetings and focus groups

**14.3**

Average days taken to re-let a property

### Average

**99.97%**

Gas Servicing: properties with a valid gas safety certificate

**85.7%**

Customers satisfied with the overall quality of their home

**81.7%**

Customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

### Bottom 25%

**48%**

Customers satisfied, overall, with the outcome of their ASB complaint

**86%**

Customers satisfied, overall, with the responsive repairs service

**79%**

Responsive repairs jobs completed on the first visit

**4.16%**

Rent arrears owed (gross)

**80.1%**

Customers satisfied overall with Orbit as a landlord





# Key

## KEY:

In each section we show how we have performed against the targets we set ourselves:

The colours indicate:



We achieved our target



We didn't achieve our target but our performance was better than last year



We did not achieve our target



Where the performance figure is grey, this means that it is either a new service standard for the year or that we had changed the way we measured it

## ICONS:

Click on these icons if you would like to see more content:

The icons indicate:



Click the play button to watch a short film



Click this icon to read a case study



Click this icon to read more information



Click this icon to see this page





# Customer Service



## How we performed against our service standards



57% of calls were resolved first time when contacting the customer service centre  
up 2% from last year



82.9% of customers were happy with the helpfulness of staff  
down 1.6% from last year



83.8% of customers happy with the competence of staff  
down 4% from last year



74.6% of customers satisfied with the speed of the service provided  
same as last year



71.8% of customers satisfied that we were able to resolve their query\*

\*New measurement so no direct comparison with the previous year





## What we did

### Listening to you

We introduced 'real time feedback' to understand what makes you happy... and what doesn't. By the end of the year, we had gathered over 35,000 responses. That's giving us a clear picture of what you think and helps us understand the issues that really matter to you.

### Putting things right

We created a 'resolution team' in the customer service centre. So if you are unhappy with the service we provide and let us know through real time feedback, we can get in touch with you and hopefully resolve issues quickly.

### The right tools

We are using technology so staff who are out on site or in your home have immediate access to information. That means they don't have to wait until they are back in the office to look up your details or rent account information.

### Improving knowledge

We have been working hard to increase the skills of our customer service centre advisors. They have been working with frontline Housing teams so that they can answer more queries without having to pass you on to another member of staff.

*"Can I just say this is exactly how I envisaged the resolution team working? I am especially impressed that you maintain a list of outstanding cases and then follow up to make sure everything is back on track."*

**John, involved customer**



## What we plan to do

### You asked, we listened

We will introduce a Freephone 0800 number (in Orbit Heart of England and Orbit East). The rules covering mobile phones changed so now you don't have to pay for calling an 0800 number from your mobile.

### Getting it right first time

We want to be able to answer your questions – and put things right – the first time you call the customer service centre. That means reducing the number of times we have to pass you on to someone else or say we're going to call you back.

### Listening to you

We will look at ways for customers to feedback to us during their planned maintenance work (for example, when a new kitchen is being fitted) rather than when the job is finished. That way, we will be able to deal with issues that happen during the work, rather than at the end.





# Complaints

## How we performed against our service standards



**90% of formal customer complaints were responded to on time**  
target: 95% - down 5% from last year



**93% of formal complaints were acknowledged on time**  
(target: 99% - up 9% from last year)



**39% of customers were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint\***  
target: 50%

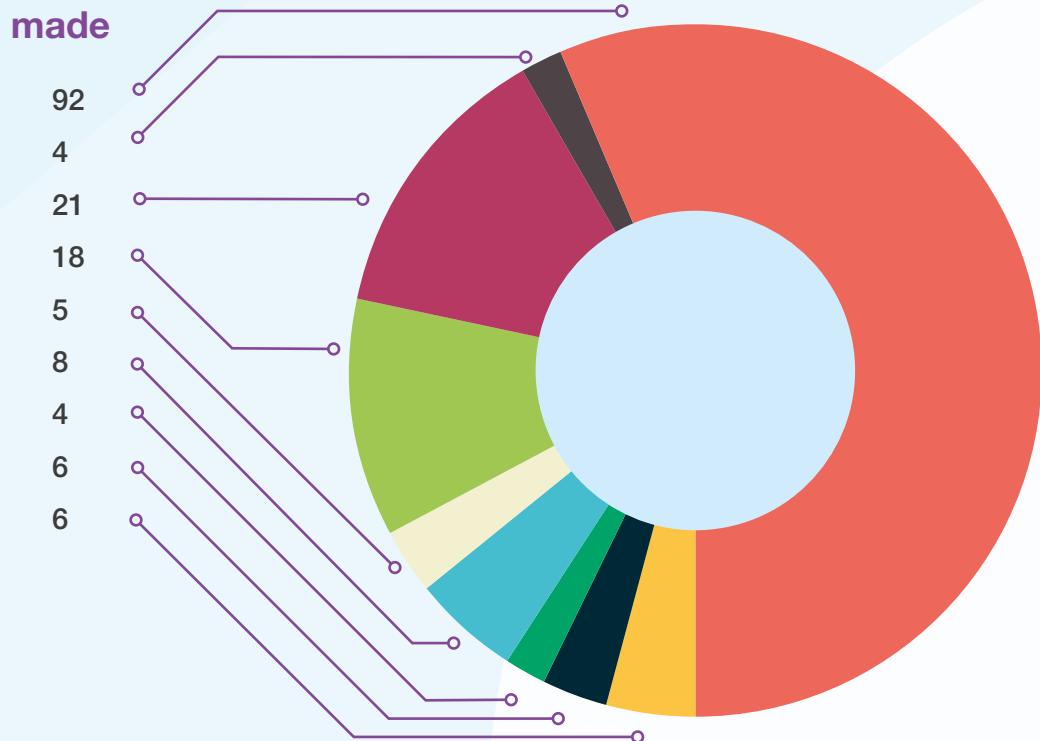
\*Measurement changed this year so no direct comparison with the previous year available

## What you complained about

- Repairs service
- Planned maintenance service
- Housing services
- Leasehold services
- Income services
- New build properties
- Independent Living
- Estate services
- Other

**Number of Complaints made**

92  
4  
21  
18  
5  
8  
4  
6  
6



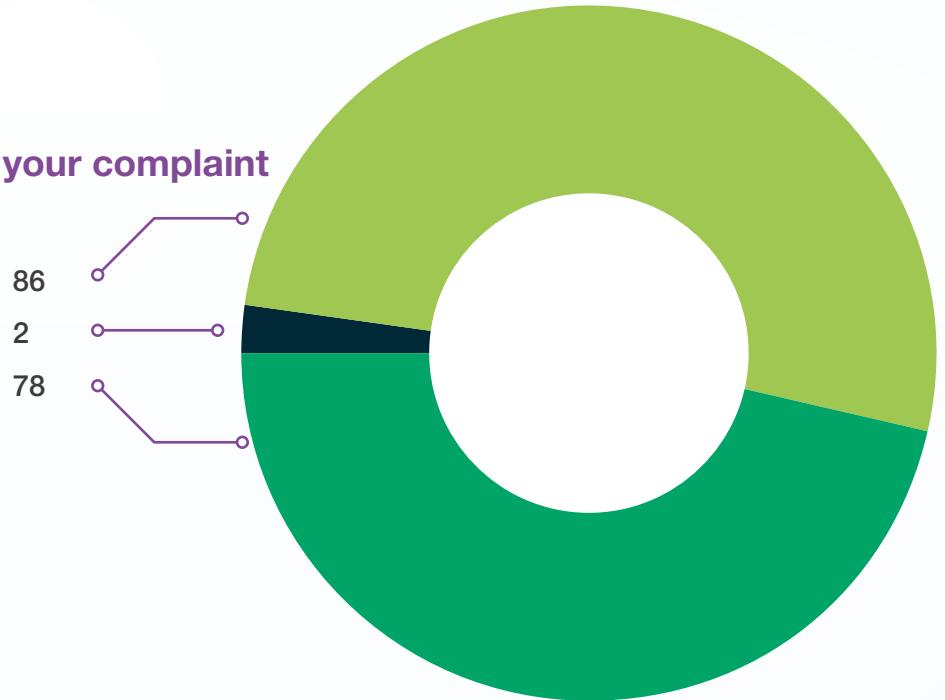


## What we did as a result of your complaint

Took corrective action

No action required

Provided advice



## Learning from complaints

You have told us that we can improve how we communicate with you when things go wrong.

As a result:

- We have introduced a dedicated resolution team in the customer service centre to help resolve issues quickly.
  - We're working hard on increasing the number of times our customer service centre can resolve your problem without passing you on to someone else.
  - We've started a major project looking at how we handle complaints which will include how we keep customers informed when problems happen.
  - We started to publish case studies of complaints, showing the result of cases that did go to the [Housing Ombudsman](#). Whether the result found in favour of us or the customer, we want to be transparent about this and show we're learning from your [complaints](#).
  - Keeping repairs appointments is a major area of dissatisfaction for you. So, over the year, we have focussed on this. Working with our contractors, we attended more appointments and completed more jobs than the year before.
- We worked with our involved customers and our main contractor in the Midlands (Willmott Dixon Partnership) to improve communication with customers when appointments had to be rescheduled because of unexpected circumstances (like a van breaking down or staff sickness).
  - You told us we weren't getting back to you quickly enough when you first reported anti-social behaviour to us. You also wanted to be kept clearly informed as to how your case was being handled. As a result, we have made changes to how we handle anti-social behaviour cases.
  - Customers who moved into our properties were dissatisfied with the amount of paperwork they had to go through when signing up for their new home. So we developed Orbit Move, a faster, easier and more efficient online system for customers to complete their tenancy sign-up.





## What we did

### Getting in touch easily

To make it more convenient for you, you now have different ways to tell us how your complaint experience went. We started using text messaging so you can get in touch quickly which helps prevent problems from getting worse. You can also email your feedback.

### Customer feedback

We introduced a complaints service improvement group made up of involved customers. They helped us understand what is important to customers who go through the formal complaints process. They have had training and will be starting to meet regularly next year.

### Resolving cases quickly

We worked closely with the Housing Ombudsman to make sure that customers' issues are resolved quickly. The formal investigation process can take 6-9 months so if we can work together to resolve cases, even the complex ones, without having to go down this path, it is better for you.

### Being transparent

We started to publish case studies of complaints, showing the result of cases that did go to the Housing Ombudsman. Whether the result found in favour of us or the customer, we want to be transparent about this and show we're learning from your complaints.

## What we plan to do

### Putting things right

We will complete a major review of how we handle complaints. We want to improve how we resolve problems when something has gone wrong. The main aim of the review is to improve the customer experience. We also want to make sure we don't keep repeating the same mistakes.

### Involving customers

We want to involve more customers in our improvement group so we have a wider range of views on our complaints service.





# Customer Involvement

## How we performed against our service standards



**91% of customers were satisfied that their views were taken into account**  
target: 95% - up 3% from last year



**95% of customers were satisfied with their involvement in meetings and focus groups**  
target: 98% - up 5% from last year

## What we did

### Improving knowledge

We launched a new training programme which aims to provide skills, knowledge and confidence to any customers who are involved in helping improve and change our services. The training covers a number of different skills, including assertiveness, communication, the ability to negotiate, basic IT skills and general team-building.

### Greater involvement

We were able to increase the number of service areas that are regularly reviewed by involved customers. There was also much more involvement going on: both face-to-face meetings and working from home. Greater numbers of customers were involved and more changes took place because of this [work](#).

### Keeping in touch

We launched our 'Involvement Matters' ezine; a digital newsletter to show how customers are making a difference. It's mainly aimed at involved customers but is also available on the [website](#) and through our social media pages.



## What we plan to do

### The customers' voice

We want to improve the customer involvement section on our website. We will be using the customers' own voices to show what they did and the difference they have made.

### Keeping up-to-date

The ezine went out four times a year. We are going to increase this so you can keep up-to-date with projects and service improvements as they happen.

### Capturing a broad range of views

We want to get an even wider representation of our customers' views. We will do this by linking in with real time feedback and sending email surveys to capture a broad range of views.





# Diversity



## The customer breakdown

At Orbit we believe in a society that gives everyone an equal chance to live, learn and work free from discrimination, harassment, victimisation and prejudice; a society that respects and celebrates our differences making for a stronger more vibrant community.

## Supporting vulnerable customers

We provided dedicated support to some of our vulnerable customers through our advice services, as well as through our community investment programme which has focussed on mental wellbeing, digital skills, energy advice and developing employment skills. You can find more details by going to the community investment and advice services parts of this report.

## What we did

### Aids and adaptations

We changed our aids and adaptations [policy](#) so that you receive the same level of service no matter where you live. 89% of customers who had used the service agreed that the new policy ‘balances the need to deliver aids and adaptations to meet customer’s needs, with Orbit’s responsibility to deliver the service in a cost effective way’.

#### Did you know?

We spent £283,000 on adaptations

We completed 486 adaptations

### Meeting customers' expectations

We have been looking at how we provide information to customers with individual communication needs (such as large print, audio or into another language). We want to make sure we meet customers' expectations wherever possible and give the best value for money service.

### How we measure up

We took part in the Stonewall workplace equality index which helped us measure our achievements and progress on LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) equality in our workplace. It helps give us a guide on what is good practice and how we support these groups. We came 22nd out of 30 housing associations.

#### Did you know?

You can log into the My Account area online and keep your details up-to-date.

## What we plan to do

### Communicating with customers

We will publish the results of our communication needs review. We'd like to use technology (such as translation apps) where appropriate, as well as make sure the service is the same across the organisation, meets customers' expectations and provides value for money.

### Supporting the vulnerable

It is important that we tailor our services to meet the diverse needs of our customers. So we will look at what support we can give our vulnerable customers.

Following our work on the Stonewall workplace equality index, we will work on an action plan to improve our services and increase our ranking.

*"Some of your workers have amazed me how they have changed my old dated wet room into a lovely fresh modern [one]; the work was carried out very efficiently, the workmen were very pleasant, respectful and hard workers. I really can't thank them enough"*

**Customer, Ipswich,  
about her new wet room**



# Responsive Repairs

## How we performed against our service standards



86% of customers satisfied with the overall responsive repairs service  
target: 85%. Same as last year



79% of responsive repair jobs were completed on the first visit  
target: 80% - down 1% from last year



93% of customers were provided with an appointment for their responsive repair  
target: 95% - up 4% from last year



90% of customers satisfied with the overall gas servicing (same as last year)\*

99.97% of properties had a valid gas certificate



## Did you know?

- 46,696 repairs reported
- 94% of repairs completed within timescales
- 24% of repairs were treated as an emergency
- Area surveyors carried out 7,088 inspections



## What we did

### Making improvements

Over the year, we got to more appointments and completed more jobs than the year before. We're making improvements and you responded positively, giving us improved satisfaction scores.

### Quality control

We worked on reducing the time taken to inspect a repair; down to an average of 7 days (previously it was an average of 12 days). We introduced inspections after the repairs were completed to make sure we kept on top of quality control.



## What we plan to do

### Reliability

We want to get things right first time and improve the reliability of our service, making sure that contractors turn up for appointments when they have been booked.



### Checking progress

We will give customers the choice to check the progress of their repair online through their 'My Account'.

### Understanding what matters

We will work on improving our customer satisfaction figures, including the use of real time feedback. Your feedback helps us understand what is working well, where we need to improve and what is important to you.





# Planned Maintenance



## How we performed against our service standards



**88% of customers were satisfied with the overall planned maintenance service**  
target: 86% - up 3% from last year



**84% of customers were satisfied with the choices available**  
target: 85% - up nearly 13% from last year

## Did you know?

### Orbit fitted:

495 kitchens

164 bathrooms upgraded

650 homes had their electrics upgraded

505 boilers were replaced

54 blocks had a lift upgrade

2,353 properties decorated

506 actions from fire risk assessments completed

243 blocks benefitted from a fire safety systems upgrade

12 roofs were replaced

438 window replacements

921 blocks had a communal electrical upgrade

## What we did

### Improving choices

You had told us you would like a better choice when it came to your new kitchens. So, with help from customers, we selected a new kitchen supplier who offers more choice and better quality; we will be fitting shelves as standard and, from next year, there will be a socket with a USB port to charge phones and mobile devices. Involved customers played a big part in this selection.

### Taking action on what matters

Thanks to real time feedback, we started to get a true picture of our planned maintenance service. The constant feedback means we can respond more quickly to any issues raised which is better for you. We can also see where we are getting things right. We've worked really hard this year to improve our customer satisfaction figures. Part of that means working closely in partnership with our contractors to deliver and improve our services; as well as changing contractors where necessary. We have done this in cases where performance wasn't meeting our expectations for a consistent customer service.

### Communicating better

We have worked with our involved customer service improvement group on improving our communications. They helped us improve our website and give better information on heating and external redecoration.





"Very happy with the kitchen. Love the colours. So does my little girl!"

## What we plan to do

### Improving kitchen installation communication

We will produce a video to help customers who are having their kitchen replaced understand all the steps, from start to finish. There will also be useful tips to help make everything run smoothly while the work is being done.

The customer service improvement group will be looking at how contractors communicate with you: do they say what they're going to do and do they say it clearly every time?

"I'm very happy to say that all the work carried out was excellent and all the members of staff were polite, hard working and Jayne [the site supervisor] was brilliant."

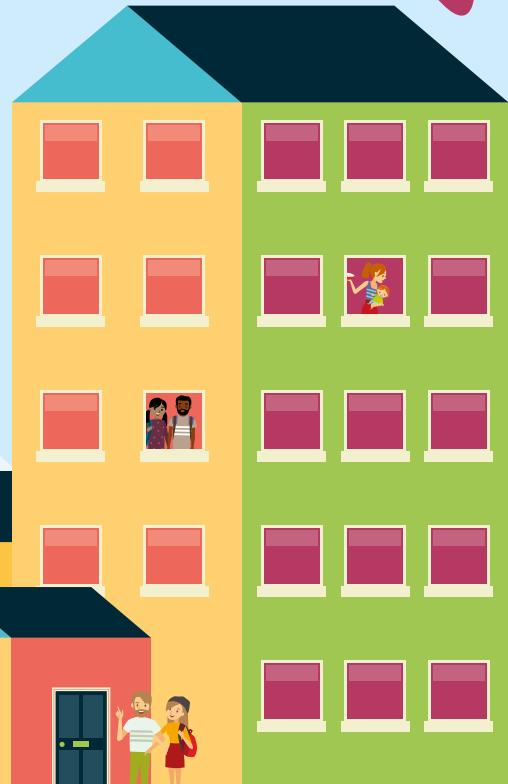
### Continuing to focus on safety

As well as our normal planned maintenance, we will continue to do work around safety (such as fire risk, removing asbestos, lift maintenance, gas servicing and electrical testing etc) and updating our policies and procedures.

"I was really surprised and delighted with all the workers respectfulness, courtesy and professionalism. I have never got this kind of service from anyone associated with Orbit before."

### Creating efficiency so we can invest more

We will start work on a big project to make our maintenance programme more efficient. It will involve improving our property surveys and using that information in a better way to help us organise the planned maintenance programme. This is a long process and first we need to get the system ready (so that when the property surveys are done, we have a computer system that can receive the information).





# Letting Our Homes



## How we performed against our service standards



14.3 days – average time taken to re-let our general needs properties  
target: 17.2 days – 2 days better than last year



25.2 days – average time taken to re-let our sheltered properties  
target: 26 days – 5 days better than last year



15.7 days – average time taken to re-let all our properties  
target: 17.2 – 3 days better than last year



82% of customers who had a good first impression of Orbit as a landlord\*

\* Measurements now being taken from real time feedback for the first time

## Did you know?

There were 862 new tenancies (752 new general needs and 110 sheltered tenancies)

There were 665 re-let tenancies (577 re-let general needs and 88 sheltered tenancies)

181 mutual exchanges





## What we did

### Faster, easier, more efficient

We introduced 'Orbit Move' which is a faster, easier and more efficient online system for new customers to complete their tenancy sign-up. Involved customers played a big part in helping us shape this service. 90% of new customers have used Orbit Move themselves since it was launched.

### Tailoring the service to meet individual needs

We reviewed our six week home visits to new customers. We recognised that not everyone needs the same service from us. Some are happy with a phone call; while others will need a personal visit. So we're tailoring this to meet people's individual needs and lifestyles.

## What we plan to do

### Continuing development



We will continue to deliver growth and new development sites. We will be working on improving the handover process.

### Offering housing options

We will be engaging with customers who are on fixed term tenancies about their housing options. Do they want to stay with us, move into shared ownership or to a different provider? This is an opportunity to discuss those options.

### Getting it right first time

We will continue to work with the customer service centre to improve how we communicate with you about your tenancy. Our aim is to make sure you get the right person, giving the right advice at the first phone call. We are getting better at this but there is still work to be done.

#### Orbit Move means:

- We will only ask for your information once
- We will process your application quickly and offer you support throughout the process
- We will introduce you to Orbit and your tenancy agreement rights and responsibilities





# Community Investment



**315**  
CUSTOMERS  
INTO JOBS



**ENERGY  
CLINIC**

**1928  
CUSTOMERS**

RECEIVE ENERGY ADVICE  
FROM IN-HOUSE TEAMS  
AND PROJECTS

**861  
CUSTOMERS**

TO BUILD  
AND IMPROVE  
THEIR ONLINE  
SKILLS



**2242  
customers**

WITH FINANCIAL ADVICE  
FROM IN-HOUSE TEAMS  
AND PROJECTS

**5823**

WITH WELLBEING  
PROGRAMMES  
TO HELP MANAGE  
ISSUES OF MENTAL  
HEALTH, HOARDING  
& ASB



**1307 CUSTOMERS**

TO UNDERTAKE EMPLOYMENT RELATED TRAINING AND SKILLS



## What we did

### Extra skills, more into work

Last year we spent £2.2 million on community projects and achieved some great results. For example, we helped nearly twice as many people into work than we did the year before and over 1,000 people gained extra skills and work-based training.

### Digital support



Our 'at home support' digital service in sheltered schemes had good uptake and showed positive results for customers who took part. Our wifi service in sheltered schemes continued to be popular; 82,000 user sessions took place last year.

## Benefiting the local community

Last year, we expanded our volunteering programme so both you, staff, our contractors and other partner organisations could get involved and help out on projects that benefited the local community. In 2015-16, staff and customers spent 17,097 hours on volunteering projects; that works out at a value of £279,440.

There is a volunteering area on our [website](#). It's an opportunity for you to help your community, give something back, meet new people and develop your skills by trying something new.





## What we plan to do

We know our support programmes can reach more of you – so we want to get better at making you aware of what is available, what benefits you would get and how to access these services. We provide support to those who are out of work, helping customers meet more people, support people suffering from low level mental health conditions. We are also here for the small, first steps too.

We've got a new employment team who will work on offering opportunities to customers (including self-employment) and offer a variety of grants to help you meet your goals.

There will be new programmes that will provide guidance and support in reducing any impact that Welfare Reform might have on you and your family.

We will be looking at supporting customers' wellbeing, particularly around mental health.

We will continue our at home support digital service, rolling it out to different locations and targeting key groups of customers who may benefit from taking part.

*"I applied for an apprenticeship and am now in work full-time. I am now financially stable for the first time in my life and able to pay extra toward my rent every week. I can treat my son and will finally be able to buy him what he asks for on his birthday."*

*"If I hadn't done this activity, I could have ended up on the streets, in jail or dead."*

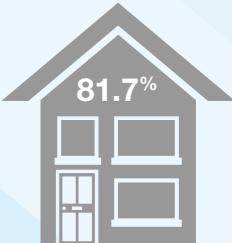
*"It gave me the opportunity to give something back, a first step. They started to trust me, give me responsibility and self-confidence."*





# Neighbourhood and Community

## How we performed against our service standards



**81.7% customers satisfied with their local neighbourhood as a place to live**

## What we did

### Putting things right

Our estate inspections were not having the impact that we hoped they would so we need to rethink our approach to them. We want to provide the best service, tailored to customers' needs.

We continued to work closely with the Community Investment team to link projects to our communities

where they have the most social impact and benefit our customers.

## What we plan to do



### Better, more consistent service

We want to offer a bespoke estate inspection service that is tailored to your needs and delivers the right person to the estate at the right time. We will be working on how we can offer a better, more consistent service.

# Anti-Social Behaviour

## How we performed against our service standards



**48% of customers satisfied with the outcome of their ASB complaint\***  
target: 73%



**92% of customers contacted about their ASB complaint within the timescale\***  
target: 97%



\* Measurements now being taken from real time feedback for the first time

## What we did

We changed our anti-social behaviour (ASB) policies and procedures. They include recommendations from our involved customers who reviewed our ASB service and pointed out what needed to improve. This included the need to make contact quicker once a report of ASB is made.

It means you now get a consistent approach with a

clear process to follow wherever you live. Staff have got more information, advice and lots of good practice examples to help them give you a better service.

## What we plan to do

We will be using real time feedback to help us understand how we are performing and what improvements we need to make.





# Estate Services

## How we performed against our service standards



**65.3% customers satisfied that their service charge provides good value for money**



## What we did

### Understanding what matters

We switched to real time feedback on the services we provide. This gives us a much clearer picture with better information so we can act on issues quickly.

### Improving resources

We have put extra resources into creating two new teams: Estate Services and Service Charges. Both are focused on delivering an improved service for you.

### Getting value for money

We looked at the agreements we had with our contractors. To make sure we were getting value for money, we retendered the contracts which weren't performing well.

## What we plan to do

We will carry out a review of our service charges to make sure they are fair for everyone. Our aim is to make sure that service charges are clear, accurate and easy to understand.

We will provide smartphones to our site staff (gardeners, handymen etc). This means that they will be able to get customer feedback quickly to see when things have gone well or whether they need to go back to a job because a customer isn't happy.





# Rent

## How we performed against our service standards



**4.16% - overall rent arrears owed  
(for general needs and sheltered customers)**

4.16%

Overall rent arrears owed (for general needs and sheltered customers)



**85.9% of customers satisfied that their rent provides good value for money**

## What we did

### Improving timescales

We put Income team staff in the customer service centre so we can deal with your rent-related calls as quickly as possible. It seems to be working: in 2015-16 84% of customers were satisfied with how their rent calls were handled.

### Value for money

Putting rent statements online (rather than sending them out in the post) has saved £100,000 which we can now invest in our other customer services.

### Making things easier for customers

You can now set up direct debits over the phone; this makes payment easier and helps to reduce costs all round.

## What we plan to do

### Meeting individual needs

We recognise that customers will struggle more because of the new benefit changes that are coming. We will contact those customers who are affected by the changes to offer them information, advice and support.

### Improving knowledge and services

We will update our systems so you can set up a direct debit online as well as by phone. We will also include a 'self-help' portal on our website. You will be able to get information on money and benefit issues as well as access personal tenancy support and money advice.

### Putting things right

We have a target of £500,000 to collect from former customers who have left us owing money.





# Advice Services

## Did you know?

We provided tailored, personal advice and tenancy support to 1,667 customers

As a result, our customers are better off by £3.9million

## What we did

By improving our computer systems, we can contact you quickly if you fall behind in your rent or are having benefit problems. The sooner we get in touch, the easier it is to resolve the problem for you.

We worked with Experian on a 'data exchange' project. If customers allowed us to share certain data, we found that 25% more customers would be able to improve their credit score. 70% of customers would see their credit score improve.

We extended our Advice Service to our Independent Living customers in sheltered and supported schemes.

We have taken on board feedback from you about how we deal with customers who get into arrears. If people are willing to talk to us about their problems, we offer them advice and support. If they don't, we will take action against them. Don't ignore problems; the sooner you talk to us, the sooner we can work together to resolve the situation.



## What we plan to do

We will start to contact you about whether you would like to share your data so you can potentially improve your credit rating.

We will improve information on benefits on the website and add links to other sources of support.

We will get £2.4 million of additional income for our Advice Services customers. This is a mixture of making sure they receive the benefits they are entitled to, renegotiating payments with other lenders and, in some cases, agreeing with lenders that debts should be written off.

*"Last year, my husband had a stroke and had to stop working. This reduced our income considerably. We had never tried to claim anything before and I didn't know where to start. Everyone else I had contacted told us we weren't eligible for anything. It felt like there was no-one to turn to for help. It has been such a relief to know there is someone to talk to at the end of a phone."*



# Value for Money

## Value for money standard

Value for Money (VfM) is about making sure that we spend our money (your rent and service charges) wisely. We have to get the balance right between cost, quality, meeting expectations and achieving high levels of customer satisfaction.

So VfM to Orbit means ‘maximising our resources to provide the level of service agreed with our existing customers while creating a profit for a purpose to fund our 2020 objectives’.

We achieved a £5.1m efficiency saving in 2015-16 and identified a further £3.1m in the 2016-17 budget. Orbit’s work on VfM gives us a focus to improve services and release resources to meet development targets, improve our existing homes and help us to invest in our products and services and the communities where we work.

This is achieved a number of ways including a clear and strong approach to project management, selling some of our central services as well as a continued focus by all staff and teams to achieve savings locally.

Each year we produce and publish on our website an overall [Value for Money Self Assessment](#).

## Comparative Costs & Performance

As part of our approach we compare our costs and performance with other landlords.

The table shows how our key services compare.



1) Responsive repairs and void works

2) Rent arrears and collection

3) Major works and cyclical maintenance

4) Lettings

5) Tenancy management

6) Resident involvement

7) Estate services





# Income and Expenditure

- Our operating surplus improved by **£9.0m** to **£46.6m**
- Our surplus on sales increased to **£9.2m** (up by £2.7m from last year)
- Our surplus after sales, interest & donations increased to **£19.0m** from **£13.6m**
- Turnover increased by **11.3%** to **£122.8m**
- Operating costs reduced by **1.2%** to **£67.2m**
- We spent **£28.9m** on major works & repairs
- Our fixed assets increased by **£57.9m** reflecting investment in our homes.

We invest a large amount into maintaining and improving your home. [This link](#) shows how much we set aside in our budgets and what we actually spent in the last two years.

Details of our income and expenditure can also be found there. Our full annual accounts are available on our [website](#).





# Governance and Financial Viability

The Board is responsible for the running of Orbit. It contains a mix of independent members as well as a strong customer representation.

At the end of the year we had achieved a final surplus of £32.3 million to reinvest in the business and into our neighbourhoods and communities.

Our strong financial performance provides confidence to our customers, regulator, funders and other stakeholders that we can deliver existing and new services.

Orbit are regulated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and, as such, are accountable against the HCA's standards. For more information, click [here](#)

## Let us know what you think

Thank you for taking the time to read the Annual Report to customers 2015-16. We are keen to have your feedback so please take a few minutes to let us know [your thoughts](#).





# How to get in touch

For further information please email us at:

**info@orbit.org.uk**

Or call:

**0800 678 1221**

If you use Typetalk please call us on:

**18002 0800 678 1221**



This report has been  
approved by  
our customers

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