



# Homeowner's Manual

Part Two – Living in your new home



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# Welcome!

Congratulations at this exciting time for you! I am delighted to welcome you to your new home and would like to personally thank you for choosing Orbit Homes, where we pride ourselves on creating a special place for you and your loved ones to enjoy and in which you can thrive.

By choosing Orbit Homes, you can enjoy peace of mind knowing you have not only found your ideal home, but you are directly and positively influencing the lives of others. Our impact reaches far beyond the homes that we build and sell. We reinvest our profits into our communities to create better places to live and to support our tenants, and we partner with social enterprises, who also reinvest their own profits to support those in society who are struggling; delivering even greater benefit from the money we invest.

I want our customers to feel special, valued and supported throughout the buying process and therefore you will have the opportunity to provide feedback on your experience through our 'Voice of the Customer' survey, about six to eight weeks after your legal completion. Your responses to these independent surveys are very important to us, so do please take part; we review them in detail to help enhance our customer experience further and to congratulate team members on excellent performance.

All that remains now is for me to wish you every happiness in your new home both now and for years to come.

Kind regards.

Helen Moore  
Group Director, Orbit Homes



# Our continued support

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We would like to welcome you to your new Orbit Home. To help you get the full benefit of your home, we have compiled part two of this Homeowner's manual.

Your Home Demonstration and the 'Handover' with our Sales Consultant or Site Manager on move in day will have covered the essentials of using and maintaining your new home.

This manual gives you the information and advice on getting the best from your new home, the ongoing maintenance required, what to expect with a new building and what recommended actions you should take as well as what is covered during your Orbit Homes warranty managed by your Regional Customer Care team.

Our dedicated Regional Customer Care team are here for you. If you have a query about your home or your development; need to get in touch in an emergency or would like to raise any issues regarding the quality of your new home, our local Customer Care teams are on hand to offer advice and support.

Each Regional Customer Care team is supported by an out of hours service that has professional specialists on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in the rare event that you are left without power, water or heating.

We hope that you do not encounter any problems and that you will enjoy living in your new home, however we are always here and ready to assist should you need our advice or support.

This manual offers more helpful hints and tips on caring for your new home, as well as important maintenance and warranty information and who to contact if you have any queries or need urgent assistance.



# We are Here to Help

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As with all things new, your home may need a bit of TLC over the first few months of occupation. This manual outlines some of your responsibilities together with those of Orbit Homes.

It is Orbit Homes' responsibility to rectify any defects found, and we aim to do this as swiftly as possible; it is your responsibility to provide ongoing maintenance to your home.

## What is a Defect?

- A defect is faulty workmanship or materials
- We will not cover general wear & tear, alterations, poor maintenance, neglect, abuse, shrinkage, blockages or wilful damage

## Your Warranty

We take care of every new home and development that we design and build and we want to ensure that you can relax and enjoy life in your new home. In support of this, a series of independent quality inspections are carried out on each new home during key stages of construction. These are all aimed at giving you peace of mind so you can enjoy the benefits of living in your new Orbit home.

We provide you with a two year warranty, your Sales Consultant will confirm the details of your Warranty Provider. We recommend you check your own policy documents for specific cover, conditions and exclusions which apply to your home.

- We provide the initial defects liability 2 year warranty for all Orbit homes.
- Once this period has expired, any new problems will either fall under customer maintenance or will need to be escalated to your warranty provider during their structural warranty period
- If you're ever unsure what is or isn't a defect, please contact us to discuss

## What Happens Next?

- Please ensure you register your boiler and appliances warranties
- At your Home Demonstration, we will have also arranged a convenient time for your 7-day Courtesy Visit by our Site Manager, following you moving into your new home
- This visit is to ensure any items that were raised during your Home Demonstration or at the Handover, have been resolved. We aim to complete most items within 30 working days, but if this is not possible, we will jointly agree a suitable date with you.
- Once the 7 day items are complete, your dedicated Regional Customer Care Team will be your point of contact for any future defects or enquiries.



## Customer Satisfaction Surveys

### In-house Research

- We appreciate all feedback, so all our customers are contacted via a third-party company, In-house, and are invited to complete a telephone survey
- In-house will try to contact you 6-8 weeks after occupation to ask a series of open questions
- Please be honest about your Orbit Homes experience, good or bad, as this feedback also helps us improve our service

### NHBC Home Builders Federation (HBF) 5\*

- If you have purchased your property as an outright sale, 8 weeks after legal completion the HBF Team will contact you via email inviting you to complete their Customer Satisfaction survey
- It's a simple Yes/No survey consisting of 20 closed questions asking for your honest opinion on the service you received from reservation through to defects reported
- We welcome your feedback on this survey so we can improve our service to existing and new customers

# Contact Us

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## Our regional Customer Care teams are here to help you.

- Our office is open Monday - Friday 08:30 - 17:00.
- We aim to respond to all enquiries within 2-5 working days – some queries may take a bit longer as we need to check information with our colleagues in different departments, and we thank you in advance for your patience.

The Midlands region T:

0800 145 6818

E: [CustomerCare.Midlands@orbit.org.uk](mailto:CustomerCare.Midlands@orbit.org.uk)

The East region

T: 0800 145 6828

E: [CustomerCare.East@orbit.org.uk](mailto:CustomerCare.East@orbit.org.uk)

The South region

T: 0800 145 6838

E: [CustomerCare.South@orbit.org.uk](mailto:CustomerCare.South@orbit.org.uk)

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

Our emergency out of hours are dealt with by After Build.

T: 0330 124 2788

Please note, if it is a non-emergency item it will be referred back to our Customer Care team which may cause a delay in a response. Please refer to our list on this page for a definition of an emergency item.

## Emergency Out of Hours

Orbit Homes provide an emergency out of hours service from:

- 17.00 - 08.30 weekdays and during weekends and bank holidays

Emergencies are defined as:

- Failure of the heating or hot water system
- Uncontainable water leak
- Complete failure of electrics (where this isn't an appliance or supplier issue)
- Threat of flooding caused by blocked drains
- Loss of security to entrance doors

If you suspect a gas leak:

1. Do not use switches or appliances
2. Open all doors and windows
3. Extinguish all naked flames
4. Turn off the gas at the gas meter
5. Call gas emergency National Grid:  
0800 111 999



# Guide to Your Home

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## Electrical

Please rest assured any electrical fault will be covered during your defects warranty period, providing it isn't the result of changes you have made to your property, damage related or general wear and tear.

## Appliances

Your appliance warranties are held with the manufacturer directly.

Please ensure you register all of these within 30 days of occupation.

In the first instance you should contact the manufacturer regarding any performance issues, who will arrange for an engineer to attend.

## Extractor Fans

A humidity-stat fan which constantly runs has been installed to your bathroom, en suite and cloakroom (where applicable).

When the light is switched on the system will boost, then return to trickle mode once the moisture levels have reduced (this can also be after the light has been turned off).

Ideally this should not be turned off from the main isolator switch as the fan will kick-in when it senses humidity or condensation.

In the colder months, you may notice condensation forming around the unit or a few droplets of water dripping from the fan – this is perfectly normal and is due to the warm air from the shower/bath meeting the cold air in the ducting in the loft space.

This shouldn't be excessive, but if it is please inform your regional customer care team.

Please make use of the cooker hood extractor fan installed to your kitchen when cooking, as this will help reduce condensation to the front of your kitchen units. It is recommended by the manufacturer that boiling pans are always covered with a lid in order to reduce the risk of excessive moisture being generated.

To keep your extractor fans working correctly, you should clean them regularly as per the manufacturer's guidance.

## Lighting

Regrettably we cannot guarantee the life expectancy of any bulbs.

This issue falls under customer maintenance to change the bulb in the first instance.

If after changing the bulb the light fixture still isn't working, please contact us and we can instruct our electricians to investigate.

## Minor Works Certificate

This document is required if you decide to change your light fixtures.

A qualified electrician must change the fixtures and provide you with a copy of this certificate to maintain your electrical warranty.

Our electricians will still honour their electrical warranty with this certificate but without, it voids your electrical warranty on the property entirely. If there was a house fire as a result of the changed fixture, your home insurance would not cover any claim, therefore it's vital you have this certificate.



## Electrical Failure to your Home

If you lose power to your home, before contacting us please refer to the below steps;

- Have you fitted any new appliances or recently plugged something new in?
  - The fault could be with your new electrical product. You can check this by plugging in an alternative electrical product which you know works, to see if it's the power supply to the socket or the new product itself.
  - If the socket is working ok with the alternative product, the new product is causing the fault.
  - You'll then need to reset the relevant switch on your fuse box to restore power to that socket.
- Check the age of your electrical product to be removed
  - Sometimes older electrical products can cause the issue too.
  - We would recommend you contact the manufacturer during the warranty or an electronic engineer for further assistance.
- Check your fuse box for any closed switches
  - This will be in either the hallway, cloakroom or cupboard under the stairs.
  - Any closed switches will be facing downwards.

Please also consult your neighbours to see if anyone else has been affected. If they haven't, please contact your electricity provider for them to investigate.

## How to check the MCB or RCBO (fuse box)

- MCB – miniature circuit breaker
  - RCBO – residual current circuit breaker with overcurrent protection
1. Switch the MCB or RCBO back on
  2. If the MCB or RCBO trips again, please unplug all equipment on this circuit
  3. Switch the MCB or RCBO back on and plug each appliance in one by one, until the switch trips again
  4. When the MCB or RCBO trips again this will identify the faulty appliance, which now needs to be switched off and unplugged
  5. Switch the MCB or RCBO back on and contact a qualified electrician

## Smoke Alarms

Your smoke alarms are mains operated with battery backup.

Please test these weekly to ensure they are working correctly, change the backup battery annually and clean them regularly as per the manufacturer's guidance.

## Thermostatic Room Control Panel

This is usually located in the hallway and is battery operated.

If your home has been installed with dual-zone control heating, an additional panel will be located in the main bedroom.

If you notice the screen becomes blank the battery likely needs changing. We would recommend you change the batteries annually.

Please refer to the manufacturer's guidance for further information, on how to use your heating and efficiently maintain the correct temperature within your home.

## TV/Aerial Points and Sockets

Your property has a media plate installed to the lounge which has a TV point, telephone point and additional power sockets.

The master telephone point will be pointed out at your Home Demonstration by your Sales Consultant.

You will need to install a television aerial.

If you find any telephone or TV points are not connected, please let us know so we can instruct our electricians to attend.

## Telecommunications set up

Your new home has been setup for internet, and your Sales Consultant will confirm the type of installation on your Home Demonstration.

You are free to choose your own network provider available to the area, but you will need to apply for connection from the provider directly.

## How to check the MCB or RCBO (fuse box)

Your meters will usually be in a meter box on the outside wall or in the ground near your front door.

How to identify your meters

- Once you've found your meters, you'll need to be able to identify which one is the electricity, gas or water meter.
- The electricity meter will usually have five numbers before the decimal point, and it will be measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh).
- The gas meter will usually have four numbers before the decimal point, and it will be measured in cubic feet (ft<sup>3</sup>).
- The water meter will be directly next to your stopvalve in a small manhole cover on your garden or path to the front of your home.

- On the day you collect the keys to your new home please ensure the readings of each meter are provided to the utility provider for correct billing and account set up.

- Remember to give your meter readings regularly to your energy supplier or use the meter reading function on your smart meter.

## Loft Space

The loft space is not designed for storage, boarding or as an area you can walk in. It is your responsibility, if access is needed, to ensure this is done safely.

If the loft hatch is left opened for prolonged periods of time, this can cause condensation.

## Garage Storage

Your Garage can be prone to dampness or extreme temperature fluctuations, avoid storing items sensitive to moisture or temperature changes.

Our garages generally have a single brick wall design and can lead to condensation. It is your responsibility to review the levels within your garage before considering storing items safely.

If you choose to store items, keep them off the floor and away from walls, ideally covered up or locked in an insulated cabinet. This will reduce the risk of damage.

## Plumbing & Heating

Please rest assured any plumbing fault will be covered during your defects warranty period, providing it isn't the result of changes you have made to your property, damage related or general wear and tear.

### Your Boiler

Details of your boiler are included in your completion box along with the warranty and instruction manuals.

Please ensure you register the boiler warranty with the manufacturer directly within 30 days of occupation.

Your boiler must be serviced every 12 months of the boiler commissioning date to maintain the warranty; this includes within the first 12 months, and this is your responsibility to arrange.

The commissioning date can be found on the sticker attached to the boiler or on your Gas Safety certificate.

### Water Temperature

The hot water temperature is adjustable using the guidelines set out in the manufacturer's boiler instruction manual, which can be found in your completion box.

You will be shown the controls and how to control the room temperature on your Home Demonstration.

Controlling the room temperature can be done by adjusting the thermostatic room control panel.

Please refer to the manufacturer's guidance for further information.



## How to Re-pressurise your Boiler

Your boiler has a sealed heating system which is pre-pressurised and will not operate if the pressure falls to less than 0.5 bar.

Boilers naturally lose pressure over time, and re-pressurising the boiler is usually a non-defect item unless there is a leak present.

By re-pressurising your boiler, you're allowing more water to enter the system from the mains water supply via a filling loop.

There are two types of filling loop to combi boilers;

- External - a small silver hose will need to be attached. You should attach it during Step 2 and then remove it before turning the boiler back on at Step 6.
- Built in – the loop will be one or two valves, usually blue or black in colour.

To re-pressurise;

1. Ensure the boiler is off and the system is cool
2. Securely attach both ends of the filling loop (if boiler has an external filling loop)
3. Open the valves to allow the cold water to enter the system
4. Close the valves when the pressure gauge reaches 1.5 bar
5. Remove the filling loop (if it isn't a built-in one)
6. Turn the boiler back on and recheck the pressure.

Please refer to the manufacturer's guidance for further information.

If you are unable to resolve the issue yourself, the boiler continues to lose pressure or you notice water leaking from the boiler, please contact your boiler manufacturer during their warranty for an engineer to attend.

If you request Orbit Homes to instruct a plumber and no defect is suspected, you will be asked to sign a disclaimer confirming you will pay the associated cost of the visit before we can instruct.

## Frost Protection

If you are leaving your property unoccupied during spells or seasons of cold weather, we recommend leaving your thermostatic room control panel on constant, and your room thermostat set to 15°C.

This will ensure your central heating system continues to run at a lower demand when needed whilst you are away.

## Blending Valve

A blending valve is fitted to all baths as a safety precaution, restricting the temperature of the hot water to prevent scalding.

We are unable to remove this as it's a Building Regulation, but we can arrange for it to be adjusted to the maximum temperature if needed.

If you notice your bath water is running a bit lukewarm, please let us know and we can instruct our plumbers to attend.

## Blockages

If you notice your sinks, shower, bath or toilets are slow to drain, it is likely to be specific to your property with hair, product build-up or flushing of incorrect items often the cause.

Before contacting us, please attempt to unblock them yourself in the first instance.

Wet wipes, cleaning wipes, nappies, cotton buds, sanitary products, tooth floss and kitchen paper should never be flushed – please make sure you dispose of these items correctly rather than flushing to prevent blockages.





## Leaks

If you notice a leak during your defects warranty period, please contact us as soon as possible for us to arrange for a plumber to attend.

Whilst you are waiting for us to attend, please do not use the area, isolate the water to the affected area if you can or contain the leak with some plastic tubs / pots / pans.

If this is the only source of bathing available, to minimise damage, please place water-absorbent cloths over the area the water is pooling to until we can attend.

## Low Water Pressure

The water to your baths, showers and sinks is delivered under pressure from the mains water supply.

This flow of water is controlled by flow restrictors fitted to your taps which provide a constant flow of water, irrespective of the demand or the flow of pressure.

If you find your water pressure is too low, please first check there are no partially closed internal stop taps or leaks.

If you cannot find a problem, please contact your water supplier who can take pressure and flow measurements to determine the cause of the issue.

## Mastic

The mastic sealant to your bath/shower tray may become loose after some time in the property. This is usually due to general settlement and shrinkage but can also be caused by abrasive cleaning products such as bleach and scouring pads.

We will cover re-masticing due to settlement within the first 3 months; after this time it becomes customer maintenance.

To prevent mould, the mastic sealant should be dried after each bath/shower.

## Thermostatic Shower Controls

The shower temperature can be adjusted using the thermostatic control – this is usually located to the left-hand side of the shower fixture.

## Stop Valve

This is used to shut off all water to the property in an emergency and can be found under the kitchen sink.

## Radiators

The radiators to your home are fitted with Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs).

These control the temperature of the radiator on a 1-5 scale of heat, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest.

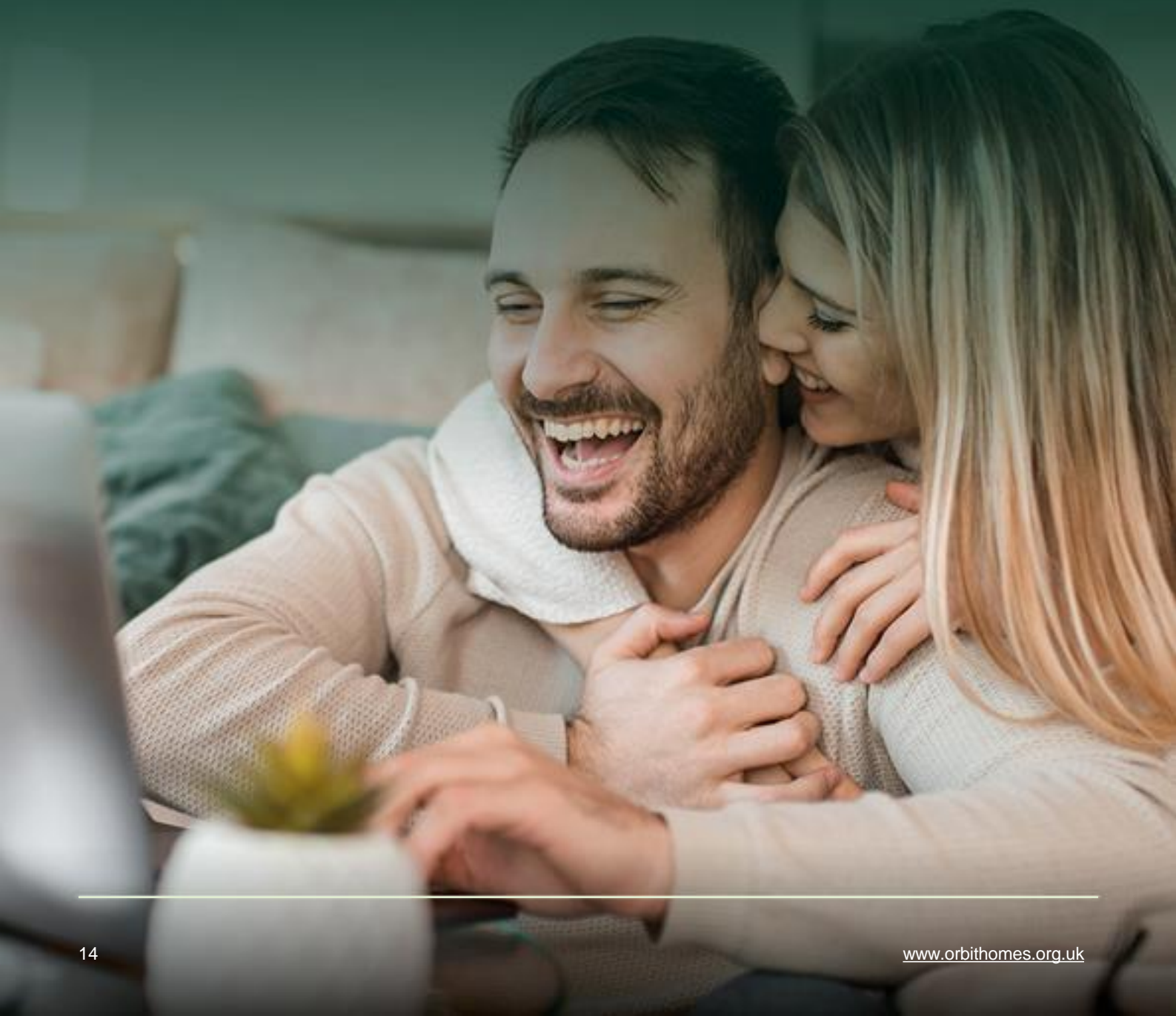
There is also a defrost mode setting – if you were to go on holiday during the colder seasons, we would recommend you turn the valve to this setting to keep the radiators temperature ticking over.

The main radiator fitted to the hallway, and sometimes to the landing, will not have a TRV fitted. If the central heating system requires draining, this is the radiator used. We do not recommend removing the central radiator during any renovation works as it will affect the main systems functionality.

## How to Bleed a Radiator

Please wait until the heating system is cool before attempting to bleed any radiators and make sure you have a water-absorbent cloth available to catch any water;

1. Attach a radiator key to the bleed valve – this is usually located to the top at one end of the radiator
2. Turn the key anti-clockwise and keep turning until you hear a hiss of air
3. When water begins to escape instead of air, it's time to close off the valve as the trapped air has escaped
4. Tighten the valve by turning the key clockwise
5. Turn your heating back on.



## Windows and Doors

Any manufacturing glazing fault will be covered by your defects warranty period, providing it is not the result of changes you have made to your property, damage related or general wear and tear.

A FENSA certificate is not required for new-build doors and windows

### Handles and Hinges

Your window and patio door handles and hinges will require basic maintenance every few months using a lubricant spray. Please ensure you have a cloth to hand to avoid getting oil in unintended areas.

If your external front or rear doors are sticking or have dropped, please first try to adjust using Silicone based spray and the appropriately sized allen key on the hinges.

If your doors or windows are sticking in hot spells of weather, this is perfectly normal. The doors will expand in the heat and once the temperature has cooled down the doors should return to normal.

### Locks

If your door or window locks become difficult to turn, in the first instance ensure an adjustment is not required to the door or window itself. If this does not improve the situation use a silicone based lubricant to the lock. Do not force the lock as this could damage it.

If you find a cut key will not work in your lock, you will need to return to the locksmith who cut it and arrange for them to rectify – if the lock works with the keys provided to you on handover, the new cut key will be the problem.

### Ventilation

Most windows are fitted with trickle vents which can be opened and closed for ventilation.

To help prevent condensation and to help your new home dry out naturally, we recommend these trickle vents are left open.

### Restrictors

Some windows in your home have been fitted with a restrictor – this limits the initial opening of the window to approximately 100mm, providing protection from falling to small children.

Please make sure you and all other occupants of the property are familiar with these restrictors and can release them in case of fire.

To release the restrictor;

1. Open the window as far as the restrictor will allow
2. Pull the window back in slightly (10-12mm)
3. Push down on the restrictor arm and pull inwards
4. This releases the restrictor and allows you to open the window fully
5. The restrictor will automatically engage when you close the window again.



## External

We will cover any external fault during your defects warranty period providing it is not the result of changes you have made to your property, severe weather, damage related or general wear and tear.

### Boundaries

Any perimeter fences and walls in your ownership fall under your responsibility to maintain.

If you ever require clarification, please contact us and we can confirm for you.

### External Taps

Your property may benefit from an external tap which can be found on the external wall of your kitchen.

We recommend external taps are isolated in the winter months to prevent freezing water and potential water damage.

### Fence Panels

Your fence panels are a natural product and require protection from the sun's UV rays in the summer and freezing/snow in the winter.

Please ensure your fence panels and gate are treated with a suitable preservative annually to ensure maximum protection.

### Guttering

We advise your gutters are cleared every 6 months to prevent a build-up of leaves and debris which can cause blockages and damage, preventing it functioning correctly. For customers living in particularly leafy areas, we would recommend this is completed every 3 months.

Should you notice any leaks or loose guttering within the first 6 months of occupation, please let us know and we can instruct our plumbers to attend.

### Render

If you notice any staining to your render, the cause will most likely be dust and element build-up.

With a little bit of elbow grease, some warm soapy water (washing up liquid is fine) and a soft brush, stains can easily be removed.

Please be gentle when scrubbing the render finish as this could damage the face of render.

If when cleaned and washed down the stain is still visible, a slightly stronger cleaning solution such as carpet cleaner can be applied.

### Streetlights

These fall under Orbit Homes' maintenance until the site is adopted.

If any lights are faulty, please contact us with details of the streetlight column number and we can arrange repair.

The streetlight column number can be found on a large white label attached to the streetlight and will consist of numbers and letters.

### Storm Damage

We do not cover any damages as a result of storm damage.

Please ensure you have a buildings insurance policy which provides this protection.

### Satellite Dish

Should you wish to fit a satellite dish to your property, please be advised this must be installed to the rear of the property to prevent any covenant or leasehold breaches.

Please contact your solicitor at the time of purchase directly for clarification within your legal documents.



## Turf

New turf requires regular maintenance, particularly regular watering to ensure the roots take.

To help keep your new garden in top condition, we recommend you follow the below guidance;

- Water regularly and do not let the ground dry out
- Avoid walking over your newly laid turf for at least 3 weeks to prevent creating bumps or uneven areas
- If you have pets, keeping your lawn well-fed can help the grass cope with wear and tear. A high-quality and pet-friendly lawn treatment application every 6-8 weeks can help, but please do check the product is suitable for your pets first
- Avoid excessively close mowing as this can weaken the grass – mow with the blade set high
- Never mow wet or frosty grass as this can damage the turf
- The presence of mushrooms on a lawn denotes a healthy soil, not poor-quality turf – please collect the mushrooms to prevent the mower squashing or spreading.

## Seasonal Maintenance for Turf

### Spring

Mow once a week

### Summer

Mow twice weekly or once a week during periods of drought

### Autumn

Mow once a week

### Winter

Unless the weather is mild and the grass is still growing, mowing is not usually necessary

We recommend you mow occasionally with a high cut setting, but please do not attempt if the ground is very soft or frozen, or during spells of cold drying winds.



# Home Maintenance

## Working on your Home Safely

Whilst we will always recommend hiring a professional contractor to complete improvements or repairs on your home, if you wish to complete these works yourself please consider the following advice prior to starting;

- To prevent any injuries or accidents when carrying out improvements or repairs, please plan any works thoroughly and make sure you have the right tools in good condition
- Make sure you have a well-stocked first aid kit in your home and ensure appropriate personal protective equipment is worn for the materials and tools you will be working with
- Consider eye and limb injuries and be cautious of fume or fibre inhalation
- Make sure you know where the mains on/off switch for your gas and electricity are and your stop-valve for your water supply
- Gas and water services may be situated in the floor, so be mindful of disrupting these
- If the works are above ground or floor level, please ensure you use a suitable ladder and have someone close by supporting and follow the manufacturer's instructions

## Bathroom Care

All bathroom ceramics and fixtures should be cleaned regularly to prevent limescale build up;

1. Wash areas with warm soapy water and wipe dry afterwards
2. Avoid using abrasive chemical agents and solvents as this can damage surfaces.

## Grout

Any cracks which appear in the grout, due to shrinkage/general wear and tear through use after the first 12 months, should be rectified by you quickly to prevent water seeping into the wall.

## Mastic

The mastic sealant to your bath/shower tray may become loose after some time in the property. This is usually due to general settlement and shrinkage but can also be caused by abrasive cleaning products such as bleach and scouring pads.

We will cover re-masticing due to settlement within the first 3 months; after this time it becomes customer maintenance.

To prevent mould, the mastic sealant should be dried after each bath/shower.

## Decorating

The first 12 months of occupation are often called the "drying-out period" and we advise you do not decorate the walls with oil based or silk paints, or wallpaper until your second year of occupation.

During this time, you may start to notice small cracks in the walls, gaps in the carpentry work and white circular marks to the ceilings – this is all perfectly normal.

Any gaps which look like pencil lines or nail pops fall under customer maintenance – these areas just need filling, sanding down and painting over.

Any gaps larger than 4mm, or which you can fit a £1 coin in, are deemed excessive shrinkage and fall under our responsibility to rectify.

After your first 12 months, please contact us if you feel the shrinkage is excessive and we can arrange rectification as required.

## Wall Fixings

It's really important you check the type of wall fixing you need for the weight of the item you want to fit before drilling holes in walls.

Never drill holes into walls which are in direct line of sockets, switches or radiators.

Typically, electrical cabling runs vertically behind the walls and plumbing pipework runs horizontally. Make sure you have a cable and pipe locating tool before hanging any item as this will pick up any metal fixings.

## Blockwork Walls (external)

These are the strongest walls and can support heavier items.

You'll need screws with wall plugs and you'll need to make sure both the screw and the plug penetrate right through the plasterboard and deep in the blockwork.

## Timber Frame Walls (internal)

Providing the fixings you are using are attached to the timbers within the wall and not just to the plasterboard, these walls can support heavier items.

Vertical timber studs are typically found at 600mm spacings across the wall's width but use a cable and pipe locating tool to determine their exact location.

If the stud locations aren't suitable, you'll need to spread the load by screwing a piece of wood between the two studs and fix directly to that instead.

## Partition Walls (internal)

These walls are not suitable for heavy items, but they can take relatively light loads as long as you're using the correct fixing.

For specific guidance, please refer to the manufacturer's fitting instructions.



## Floor Care

New carpet has an increased level of fibre which will be noticeable during the first few vacuums.

Any spills should be cleaned up quickly. We recommend you refer to the manufacturer's guidelines before attempting to clean with any cleaning agents.

Laminate, vinyl and wooden finished floors can be prone to impact damage and scratches so should be treated with care.

Placing protective materials under legs on furniture may help prevent damage.

Please note shoes with stiletto heels, metal heels, steel toecaps and stones trapped in shoes may also damage these floors.

Tiled floors should be treated the same as wall tiles and we recommend cleaning regularly with a damp cloth and appropriate cleaning agent as per the manufacturer's guidelines.

## Kitchen Care

To help keep your kitchen in top condition, please follow the tips below;

1. Wash surfaces with warm soapy water and wipe dry afterwards
2. Avoid using abrasive chemical agents and solvents as this can damage your sink, units and surfaces
3. Don't use bleach or chloride-based cleaners or materials
4. Always use a chopping board when preparing food; cutting directly on the worktop will scratch and damage it
5. Wipe away any spills as soon as possible to prevent staining and swelling of worktops and units
6. Trivets should always be used under hot objects, such as pots and pans, to avoid damage to the worktop
7. Be sensible with storage and don't overfill your cupboards.

# Energy Efficiency – Hints and Tips

## Electrical

- Don't leave appliances on standby and don't leave laptops/mobile phones on charge unnecessarily
- Turn lights off when you're not using them – if you switch a light off for just a few seconds, you will save more energy than it takes for the light to start up again, regardless of the type of light
- Turn the oven off a couple of minutes earlier while your food is still in there – some dishes will still cook while the oven's cooling
- Turn your microwave off when you're not using it
- Don't put hot food in the fridge; it affects the temperature inside so leave it to cool naturally first
- Keep your fridge's temperature around 3°C to 5°C
- When dust gathers on the condenser coils at the back of your fridge, it uses more energy so keep this area dust-free
- If you can, upgrade an old fridge-freezer for a newer model. Choosing an A++ model can save you money in energy bills over the lifetime of the product
- Dry clothes outside during nice weather so you don't need to use your tumble dryer
- Keep the filters clean in your tumble dryer
- Use eco-balls in the tumble dryer - they spread out your washing so your clothes dry quicker

## Heating

- Turning down your room thermostat by just one degree can save around £75 a year
- Set your heating and hot water to come on and off when you need them – 30 minutes before you get up in the morning and set it to switch off 30 minutes before you are due to leave is ideal
- Heat only the areas of your home that need heating.
- Set the temperature for each area of your home – you can do this via adjusting the TRVs
- Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows
- Keep your radiators clear – try not to put a sofa in front of your radiator because it will absorb a lot of the heat

## Water

- Use a bowl to wash up rather than a running tap
- Only fill the kettle with the amount of water that you need
- When you are doing the washing try to fill up the machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher – one full load uses less energy than two half loads
- Use the economy setting on your washing machine whenever you can
- A dripping hot water tap can waste enough energy in a single week to fill half a bath. Fix leaking taps and make sure they are fully turned off
- Make sure your taps are properly turned off when you're not using them

## Condensation Prevention

- Use the extractor fans installed to the cloakroom, bathroom and en suite when bathing
- Windows should also be opened wider to expel excess moisture
- Make use of the cooker hood extractor fan when cooking to help reduce moisture levels (where applicable)
- Ensure Pots and pans have lids on while cooking
- Washed clothes should ideally be hung outside to dry. If you are drying clothes indoors, make sure the door of the room is closed, the window open and the extractor fan is on if drying in the bathroom



# Aftersales

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## Management Company

If your property is on a development where shared or communal facilities are included, ongoing management and maintenance of these facilities is required.

This can apply to developments with shared areas and services, such as homes with communal parking bays, communal grounds or gardens, storage areas and lifts.

If you have any estate concerns or complaints, please email our Home Ownership Team who will be able to assist – [HomeOwnership.Services@orbit.org.uk](mailto:HomeOwnership.Services@orbit.org.uk)

## Service Charge

You are required to pay an annual service charge payment which will be due on 1<sup>st</sup> April each year, the amount will be confirmed to you by our Sales team.

For Shared Ownership customers, you will be required to pay this monthly with your rent, insurance and ground rent payments as applicable.

The easiest way to keep your payments up to date is by setting up a Direct Debit. Please email the form to [IncomeCRcompliance@orbit.org.uk](mailto:IncomeCRcompliance@orbit.org.uk) or send it by mail to – Income team, Orbit, PO Box 6406, Coventry CV3 9NB.

You can manage your account via our online app, myAccount. It's quick and easy to use and you can access it anytime, anywhere and on any device. Please visit [orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/my-account/](http://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/my-account/) to register. To get started you'll need your account reference number. You will also need to provide the date of birth that we have on record for you. If you haven't already provided us with your date of birth, please call us on 0800 678 1221 and we will update our records.

## Resale

If you wish to sell your property, you will need to contact your solicitor at the time of purchasing for any copy documents required in the first instance; your solicitor will have this information archived.

If they are unable to assist, please email us which documents you require and we will help where we can.

Please note, as this information will have been archived by us, you may incur a charge for copy documents and time taken to source.

Please allow 21 working days for us to provide the information we can.

## Covenants & Restrictions

Our homes and developments are subject to restrictive covenants which determine what a freeholder or leaseholder can or cannot do with their property or within the neighbourhood.

These can include not building a conservatory without our written permission, running a business from home or parking a commercial vehicle, caravan or boat to the front of the property.

If any breach affects Orbit Homes directly, we will challenge this and once your development is finished, responsibility then falls to residents to act as they think appropriate.

On developments involving a management company, residents may instruct the management company to challenge any breach on their behalf.

Please consult your solicitor at the time of purchase to clarify covenant restrictions.

# Structural Warranty

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Your new Orbit home comes with a structural warranty, usually lasting 10 years.

## Builder Warranty

The initial 12 months or 2 years of the warranty is known as the builder warranty period, where the builder is liable to cover any defects found.

This timescale will be confirmed to you by your Sales Consultant.

As previously advised, this does not cover general wear and tear, alterations, poor maintenance, neglect, abuse, shrinkage, blockages or willful damage.

A Resolution Service is provided by the warranty provider should Orbit Homes not agree to rectify any items that we do not class as defects.

## Structural Warranty

After the defects liability period has ended, your warranty provider will directly provide insurance protection to your property.

This cover is for structural damage to your property and can include the roof, flues and chimney, external cladding, and external render.

Please note, warranty provision is dependent upon the year your property was built and the technical requirements provided by the warranty provider at that time.

Please ensure you check your own policy documents for specific cover, conditions and exclusions which apply to your home.



# Complaints Procedure

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We hope you don't encounter any problems with our service, but we do acknowledge sometimes things go wrong.

We welcome all feedback and complaints so please send us your formal complaint in writing to the relevant email address below, dependent on the location of your property:

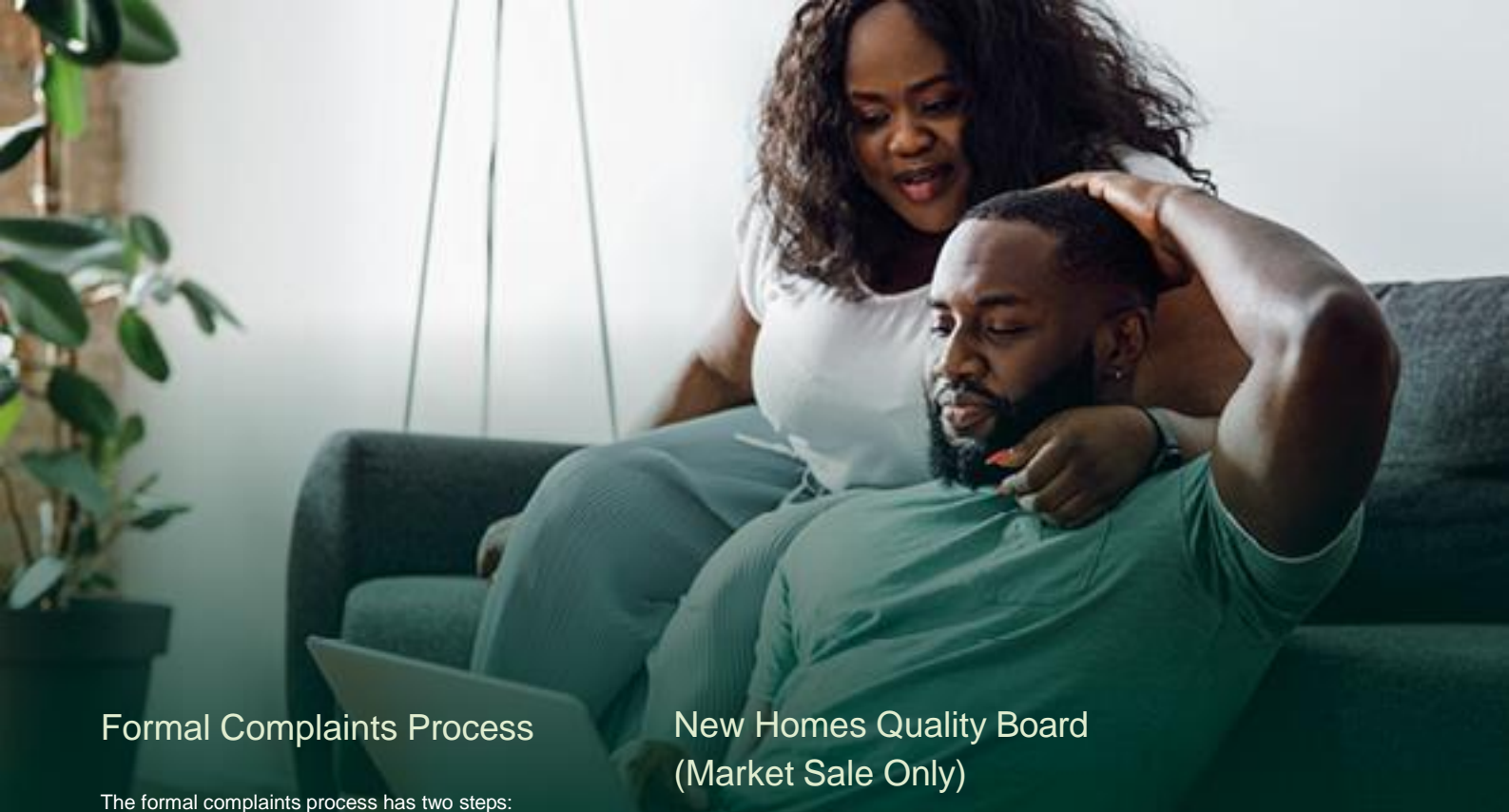
[CustomerCare.East@orbit.org.uk](mailto:CustomerCare.East@orbit.org.uk),

[CustomerCare.Midlands@orbit.org.uk](mailto:CustomerCare.Midlands@orbit.org.uk)

[CustomerCare.South@orbit.org.uk](mailto:CustomerCare.South@orbit.org.uk)

What is not considered a complaint:

- Where Orbit has not had the opportunity to put the problem right
- An initial request for information or an explanation of a decision made
- Initial requests for a service e.g. a repair or notification of a neighbour dispute
- Disputes regarding service charge calculations will be dealt with outside the complaints policy; unless reference is made to how we have previously dealt with the matter
- Anonymous letters, although these may be investigated if they are a cause for concern
- Disputes between neighbours are usually dealt with separately through our Anti-Social Behaviour Policies, unless the complaint relates to how we have dealt with the matter
- A complaint about a service where we have no responsibility, such as local authority nomination procedures
- A claim for damages that should be handled as an insurance claim
- Where we have no contractual/legal relationship
- Complaints about legally determined policy
- Where the dissatisfaction relates to a previous issue which has already been reviewed via our complaints process and a conclusion reached either via an internal or external process



## Formal Complaints Process

The formal complaints process has two steps:

### 1. Investigation

Your complaint will be acknowledged within five days of its receipt. We will investigate and respond within 10 working days. In the event this may take longer, we will let you know within the same period.

We will also ensure that we write to you again within 30 days of receipt of your complaint to update you or confirm our response.

### 2. Review

If you are not satisfied with our response received following our investigation, then this will be reviewed by a senior manager who has not been involved in the initial investigation and will be approved by a Head of Service/Director

If you are a Market Sale customer who purchased your home after 4th April 2023 your home is covered under the New Homes Quality Code. You can choose to escalate to [the New Homes Ombudsman Service here](#) after receiving our final response, or after 56 days from when you made your complaint if it is still unresolved.

If you purchased your home before the 4th of April 2023 you will be covered under the Consumer Code.

If you are a Rental or Shared Ownership customer, you can contact our Customer Support Hub to [log a new complaint here](#).

You can choose to escalate to the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#) about a complaint if you are still dissatisfied.

## New Homes Quality Board (Market Sale Only)

The New Homes Quality Board sets out and redresses mandatory requirements all home builders must meet when marketing and selling their homes, and for their after-sales service;

- Customers are treated fairly;
- Know what service levels to expect;
- Are given reliable information on which to make their decisions;
- Know how to access low cost, quick dispute resolutions if they are dissatisfied.

Please note, nothing in the New Homes Quality Board affects Home Buyers' existing legal rights.

For further information relating to the NHQB please go to the NHQB website – [www.nhqb.org.uk](http://www.nhqb.org.uk)

Email: [customer.services@nhos.org.uk](mailto:customer.services@nhos.org.uk)

Telephone: 03308084286 (9.00am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Phone: 0300 111 3000



## Development Specific Information



[orbithomes.org.uk](http://orbithomes.org.uk)

Orbit Homes (2020) Ltd - Reg. No. 06950748