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## VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER POLICY

<b>Executive Summary</b>	The Voice of the Customer Policy sets out the overarching purpose and principles that determine how Orbit uses a range of customer intelligence and feedback activities to inform strategic and operational business decisions. It underpins the objectives of Orbit's Customer Promise, and ensures that engagement with and consideration of customers' needs and priorities will be embedded in our business.
<b>Approved by</b>	Customer Services SMT – November 2017 Customer and Communities Board – November 2017
<b>EA completed</b>	EA completed on 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2017. A full Equality Analysis was conducted due to the high impact on customers, although overall rated as a low to medium risk. The actions required are to include specific statements to be aware of potential bias in voices that are captured/not captured if under-representation of key groups is found. Mitigations of gaps to also be included in the policy statement.
<b>Explain how customers have been involved.</b>	Customers have been involved in the formulation of this policy and the linked Customer Involvement Policy (which sits alongside the Voice of the Customer Policy, providing more detail on customer involvement approaches).
<b>Consultation</b>	Customers – August 2017 Customer Services SMT – Nov 2017
<b>Applies to</b>	All staff

**SCOPE: This policy sets out the overarching purpose and principles that determine how Orbit values and uses a range of customer intelligence and feedback activities to inform strategic and operational business decisions.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Voice of the Customer policy outlines Orbit's approach to harnessing customer feedback and customer intelligence to inform strategic and operational decisions, discussions and plans. It underpins our key 2020 commitment to being a customer -focused business, as measured by the objective to satisfy 90% of customers. It also directly supports the achievement of the key commitments of the Orbit Customer Promise, particularly 'engaging with customers', ensuring we listen and are clear about what we need from customers, and valuing and taking into account customers' needs when making decisions.
- 1.2 This policy commitment also aligns with the expectations of the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, which requires registered providers to provide opportunities for customers to inform, shape and scrutinise their landlord's service. The related Customer Involvement Policy provides further detail on how the specific expectations of the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard are to be met. Furthermore, by adopting the principles set out in this policy, key duties incorporated in the Equality Act 2012 will also be fulfilled.
- 1.3 This Policy **defines** what we mean by 'the voice of the customer', and sets out the **purpose, principles and key roles and responsibilities** within Orbit for capturing, using and evidencing how customer voices are heard, understood and applied in our business.

## 2. DEFINITION

- 2.1 Customer voices or views about Orbit are captured in a myriad of ways in our everyday business. These can include:
- Structured survey feedback
  - Focus group and other qualitative feedback – e.g. performance challenge team groups, service improvement groups
  - Informal feedback – e.g. a viewpoint expressed as part of a conversation
  - Complaints feedback
  - Social media postings
  - Consultation responses – e.g. in relation to policy changes or major service changes,
  - Problem solving exercises – e.g. task and finish activities
  - Customer inspections – e.g. of void properties or estates
  - Resident Board members

In addition, valuable insight into the experience, needs or behaviours of customers can be gained from:

- Customer profiling and segmentation analysis
- Behavioural analysis – e.g. analysis of take up, use of, and interaction with services, offers, or products and how these change over time
- Analysis of wider demographic and community data, or other external research.

- 2.2 The voice of the customer therefore can be understood in its broadest sense, incorporating both **direct** voices – that is, opinions expressed directly by customers in any number of ways, via any number of channels, and also

**indirect** voices – where customer needs, circumstances, experiences, challenges etc, can be understood through analysis of other types of customer-related data and intelligence.

### 3 **PURPOSE**

3.1 For a customer-centric business providing vital services and products to local communities, the use of customer feedback and customer intelligence is a critical tool to help us understand where our business is and isn't working well, from a customer-perspective. Customer voices, data and insights can inform and shape priorities, ongoing service and product development plans and offers, and form part of the evaluation of success or otherwise of our business strategy and operations. It can also be a key element of demonstrating to a range of stakeholders – including the regulator, local authorities, other service providers, and customers and communities – the quality, value or impact of our services and products. The Voice of the Customer policy therefore establishes the ways in which engagement with customers and customers' concerns or issues will be embedded into our business. This brings to life the commitments of the Orbit Customer Promise.

### 4. **PRINCIPLES**

4.1 This policy sets out Orbit's commitment is to embed the voice of the customer into our strategic and operational business considerations, putting customers at the heart of what we do. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that key objectives and performance measures are set, which measure the effectiveness of customer-related services
- Ensuring that all customer-related services, offers, policies and plans are developed, reviewed and tested with customers, or are at least informed by a customer need and impact analysis
- Proactively capturing regular feedback on service and product experiences
- Providing a range of ways for customers to be involved in shaping, scrutinising, and informing services and plans, as set out in our Customer Involvement Offer. Outcomes will be regularly reported and shared with customers.
- Seeking a cross section of customer voices – ensuring that diversity of experiences and views are considered appropriately
- Ensure that learning from customer feedback, including complaints, is built into ongoing service improvement activities
- When changing or introducing new approaches, ensuring that the impact on diverse groups are understood and considered, through the completion and evaluation of equality analyses (EAs), in line with the EA policy
- Regularly analysing and reporting on the voice of the customer at appropriate governance levels, with papers and discussion items always required to identify the impacts on and benefits to customers, as evidenced by direct and indirect voices. Identification of significant 'gaps' or potential biases in voices to be highlighted where appropriate.
- Providing opportunities for customers to become Board members
- Our values and competencies appropriately reflect a commitment to how we work with customer voices

## **5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 Boards – all Boards should ensure that there is sufficient evidence of customer analysis and impact in any relevant items that are presented for the Board’s consideration.
- 5.2 Executive Team (ET) and Senior Management Teams (SMTs) – are responsible for ensuring that the impact and benefits to customers is clearly evidenced and considered as part of strategic and operational business plans, offers and performance monitoring.
- 5.3 Leadership Team Directors – as policy and project sponsors are accountable for ensuring that direct and indirect customer voices are captured to inform the development and testing and evaluation of policies, change initiatives, and other service developments that impact customers. An appropriate Equality Analysis should always be completed for relevant changes. Evidence of how customer insights and feedback have been taken into account should be made clear in any recommendations for change.
- 5.4 All managers – are responsible for ensuring that they understand, seek out, and make use of customer intelligence and feedback to inform service improvements in their area. In line with the expectations of the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard, any service review or product offer change that could impact the customer, should be evidenced with customer feedback, engagement, and other intelligence. All staff, particularly front-line staff, will have good insight into how improvements could be made. Managers should ensure they engage with all staff on potential solutions. They are accountable for demonstrating to customers and internal stakeholders how customer feedback and insights have been taken into account as part of review and improvement projects and activities, promoting a positive ‘you said, we did’ culture.
- 5.5 Specialist support for understanding customer voices is available to teams around the business. This includes:
- Performance Services team - for real time survey and data analysis support
  - Research & Insight team – for customer segmentation and bespoke research support
  - Policy and Customer Involvement teams – for policy impact analysis and facilitated customer engagement and consultation activities. The customer involvement team will develop and deliver a range of customer involvement activities in line with the expectations of the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard. (See also Customer Involvement Policy for further details on these specific items).
  - Equality and Diversity Consultant – for equality analysis support
  - Customer Relations team – for dissatisfaction resolution and complaints analysis
  - Business Improvement – for customer experience mapping
  - Community Investment – for community engagement activities

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 6.1 Orbit policies are developed in line with our Equality and Diversity policy. An Equality Analysis has been conducted and the details can be accessed on request.

## **7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING**

7.1 We will only share information as outlined in our Data Protection Policy.

## **8 MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

8.1 Compliance with this policy will be monitored by the Policy and Standards team, who will capture evidence to test compliance with the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard. Concerns regarding any non-compliance will be identified as part of ongoing reports to SMTs and Boards.

## **9. REVIEW**

9.1 We will carry out a fundamental review of this policy every three years or sooner subject to legal, regulatory changes or if internal changes require.