

# Orbit Life



building  
communities

Spring/Summer 2019

Our Community Matters...

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



# How we're improving repairs satisfaction

YOU said we listened

You've told us that the way we handle repairs is important to you and this winter we saw some great customer satisfaction scores regarding our repairs service.

Both of our repairs contractors, Fortem and Mitie (now called MPS), received some of the most impressive customer satisfaction scores on record. In January, Fortem received a 90% satisfaction rating and Mitie received a whopping 91%. Prior to this in December, both contractors came in at a brilliant 91%.

They were obliging, they did a good job and were respectful of my home because they put sheets down and they didn't make any mess at all. They were pleasant, thank you very much

Some of the comments customers have made include; We believe these scores have been achieved by stressing the importance of not moving appointments, calling ahead on jobs, aiming to go above and beyond for any customer where possible and always respecting customers.

The work was efficiently carried out by a polite workman

We provide excellent services and good value, high quality homes.

We place our customers at the heart of what we do, investing in communities to make great places to live.

We are Orbit!

## Mitie becomes MPS

Our repairs contractor in the East and South, Mitie, has sold its repairs service for housing associations to Mears - and they changed the name to MPS. What does this mean for you? Contractor vans and uniforms will have a new logo on them, but the same high level of service will stay the same.

All of our contractors carry identification, so please always ask to see it. If you're ever unsure about letting a contractor into your home, ask them to wait outside and give us a call on **0800 678 1221** and we will be happy to double check the appointment for you.



## Introducing our Property Management team

As you may have noticed, there are some new faces working around your estate. We have introduced a new Property Management team to regularly inspect our buildings and communal areas so that they can report any repairs or issues that need our attention. We are always happy to discuss any issues about your home whilst we are there, so please do pop over and say hello if you see us around and about. We will be sure to pass your feedback along to other teams so that we can get issues sorted and help make your community an area you are proud to live in.

## Joining forces with RoSPA to help keep kids safe in the home

We teamed up with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to support their child safety campaign, **Brighter Beginnings**.

As part of the campaign, more than 3,500 'Keeping Kids Safe' packs were sent out free to Orbit customers with children under the age of five.

They include an easy-to-fit cupboard latch, a nursery thermometer, a falls prevention height chart and useful kitchen/bathroom resources

including a flannel and weaning spoon, which all contain key safety advice and details of the free, RoSPA Lifeline number **(0808 8010822)**.

For more information visit [orbit.org.uk/brighterbeginnings/](http://orbit.org.uk/brighterbeginnings/)



## Nominate your Community champion!



**Community Champions** Do you know someone in your neighbourhood who deserves recognition? If so, then put them forward for an Orbit Community Champion award! It is easy to nominate them and they could be rewarded with a certificate and a grant of up to £200.

We are keen to champion customers who go the extra mile to look after the communities they live in. This could be a customer who looks out for vulnerable neighbours, who is actively involved and makes the best use of a communal garden or who makes sure the bins are rotated each week to avoid fly tipping.

Those who are nominated and receive a Community Champion award will be given a certificate and a grant of up to £200. This grant will be paid via vouchers or equipment or to a relevant third party organisation.

Nominating them is easy – simply log on to [betterdays.orbit.org.uk](http://betterdays.orbit.org.uk) and follow the 'Community Champions' link.

Applications can be submitted at any time by customers, contractors, community partners or Orbit employees.



## Stratford uniform bank

The Stratford Uniform Bank supplies school uniforms for families in and around Stratford-upon-Avon that are struggling to pay for them.

Last summer, Kirsty Powell from Stratford, bought PE kit for her two sons and was shocked by the cost. She posted on the Stratford Forum Facebook page and was swamped with stories from other families in the same situation, so she put out a plea for donations. She was overwhelmed by the response as the donations came pouring in! Stratford Town Trust gave her some advice and put her in touch with Cheryl Flavell from our Community Investment team. We provided a container for Stratford High School to store the uniforms and cleared the site. Any extra uniforms will be sold at a reduced price to local families.

One of the many families who used the uniform bank told us; *"As a single parent on a low income it was a last resort. I've just picked the items up and they are all brand new, they even had the tags still on them! This is an absolute godsend for people like me who are struggling."*

If you live in the Stratford area and have challenges paying for a school uniform, you can check out the SUA Uniform Bank page on Facebook or email [sua.uniform@gmail.com](mailto:sua.uniform@gmail.com).



For all the latest fire safety advice, please visit [orbit.org.uk/firesafety](http://orbit.org.uk/firesafety)

## We've won two RoSPA awards!



We've just found out that we have scooped two gold RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) awards for our commitment to raising the standards of customer safety and our overall health and safety.

This fantastic achievement demonstrates our ongoing commitment to customer safety and best practice in property compliance.

Afzal Ismail, our Group Corporate Services Director says; "These awards reaffirm all the hard work that our Health and Safety and Compliance teams put into the business, day in and day out. To get two gold awards from RoSPA in the same year is an amazing achievement within the housing association sector."

The RoSPA Health and Safety Awards receive entries from organisations around the world and recognise achievement in health and safety management systems, including practices such as leadership and workforce involvement. It is the longest-running industry awards scheme in the UK.

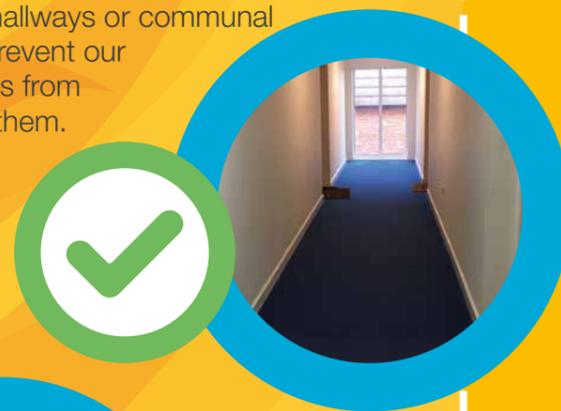
Winning these awards means that you can be sure we've done everything we can to make sure your home is as safe as possible!

## Keep it clear

Your safety is our priority. This includes looking after our buildings in a way that reduces risk and training our employees on fire safety.

Areas in blocks of flats need to be especially well managed and this includes indoor and outdoor communal areas as well as escape routes in corridors, lobbies and stairwells. Items stored in these areas create a real fire risk, so we have made the decision that from now on we are going to keep these areas completely clear. This is so that if fire and rescue services ever need to attend to a fire in your building, they need to be able to get to the fire quickly, without anything preventing them from doing so.

This new policy starts on 1 May, so please be sure to remove any items you have stored in hallways or communal areas to prevent our contractors from removing them.



## Our new Customer Safety team

Over the last three years we have worked hard to transform the way our Property Compliance team operates.

This is the team that carries out surveys and works to keep customers and their homes safe from hazards including fire, asbestos, electricity and gas. The team has won a series of national awards, including the National Housing Management Forum's award for 'Most improved asset management service' and the Shield 'Framework of the year 2019' for the way we manage our asbestos.

We've also just been shortlisted for four Association for Safety and Compliance Professionals (ASCP) awards in the following categories;

- Women in safety and compliance award
- Safety, training and development award
- Electrical safety and compliance initiative of the year
- Customer service excellence award.

We're really pleased about these shortlistings as the ASCP is the largest body that specifically recognises Property Compliance and customer safety in the country. The next phase of the team's transformation is to change its name, as 'Property Compliance' doesn't really describe what the team is about. We feel strongly that everything this team does is focussed on the safety of our customers – and we want you to know that too. So, from this month the team name is changing to the 'Customer Safety team'. This means that when we send out communications around things like fire doors or letting us in to carry out electrical servicing, you will see this new name rather than the old name of Property Compliance. We hope that this name change assures you that your safety is our priority and that we will be working even harder to keep you up to date with how we can work together to keep you and your family safer.

## Want to win a £50 shopping voucher?

**Have you booked your gas safety check?** We have been working with our gas contractor partners, BSW and Robert Heath Heating, to reward customers who book their annual gas servicing checks. Any customer that gives us access first time for their gas servicing will be entered into a monthly prize draw, where three lucky winners will receive a £50 shopping voucher. If you receive a letter requesting access, get in touch straight away – you could win £50 in shopping vouchers.

## Working together to promote fire safety

Fire safety is important; fires can cause a lot of damage and, at worst, cost lives. Although fires aren't common, it's important we work together to prevent them and that you know what to do if a fire does start.

For those reasons, we are running our annual fire safety awareness campaign in July to provide you with some useful fire safety advice – plus we're giving you a chance to win a £25 shopping voucher by taking our short fire safety quiz! Be sure to visit our fire safety page between 3 and 24 July to take part:

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



# Tenancy coaching

**Have you recently moved into an Orbit property? Are you unsure of your rights and responsibilities, or how to manage your tenancy and get things set up?**

Our Tenancy Coaches provide support with all the parts of managing a tenancy and a home. Sessions include...

Keys to an Orbit tenancy – find out how to be successful in a tenancy by understanding your rights and responsibilities as an Orbit customer, and how to access our support services.

Managing the unexpected – learn how to plan for the future and save for a rainy day.

Being a good neighbour - develop confidence, identify areas of support within the community and recognise the

impact of anti-social behaviour. Living in an Orbit community – learn how to support your community in a positive way. Ideal for new customers, young people and other people who feel isolated.

Thinking about work - uncover the benefits of working and how it can have a positive impact on your life.

Making positive changes – recognise how small changes can have a huge and long term positive impact on your life.

Fire safety – learn about fire safety in the home, how to prevent fires from starting and what to do if one does.

Your coach can also put you in touch with other teams, for help to get online, improve your wellbeing,

learn how to manage your money and get into employment or training!

**Want to know more?** Visit [betterdays.orbit.org.uk](https://betterdays.orbit.org.uk), email [betterdays@orbit.org.uk](mailto:betterdays@orbit.org.uk) or call **0800 678 1221** option 4.



# Building opportunities!

**Our Employment Coach for Stratford, Ozair Osmani, has been working with our repairs contractor in the Midlands, Fortem, to provide training and work experience opportunities to customers keen to get into construction.**

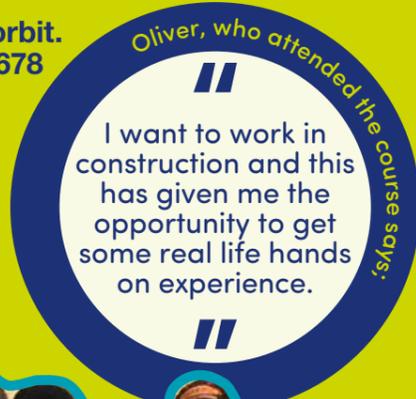
Customers gained first hand work experience with Fortem's repairs team, visiting properties, meeting customers and completing a range of different jobs. They also completed training on CV writing and employability skills - as well as brick laying, plumbing and carpentry. Customers also received training in Health and Safety and gained their Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) cards, a requirement for working on site in the construction industry.

11 customers attended the course and were delighted with the end result, having gained an insight into what it's like to work for Fortem and taken steps towards getting into work.

Check out the video for more! [youtube/nyUYFitQh-Y](https://youtube.com/nyUYFitQh-Y)

Our skilled Employment team could help you to access similar opportunities and support you to find the job you want!

Email [betterdays@orbit.org.uk](mailto:betterdays@orbit.org.uk) or call **0800 678 1221**, option 4 or for more info.



# Think asbestos!

**If you are thinking about making some DIY improvements to your home, please consider whether or not there is any asbestos.**

Undisturbed, undamaged or sealed asbestos is safe. We undertake asbestos surveys when we upgrade homes or when they become empty, we hold these surveys and may already have one for your property. Where we do not already have a survey or it is not the right type for the repairs or improvements, one may have to be completed before any works can start. If this is the case, you will need to allow access to our contractors to complete asbestos works before starting any DIY.

Contact us for permission if you plan to start any DIY work - even if you don't think you have any asbestos in your home, and we'll walk you through everything that may need to be done.

For more information about asbestos, please visit: <https://bit.ly/2ER6ixq>



# Investing in good value, high quality homes



**Our customer promise sets our commitment to provide good value, high quality homes, so here is a bit more detail on how we do that...**

Each year we invest millions of pounds to make sure we provide quality homes for our customers. We know how important it is for you to live in a warm and affordable home. Our aim is to 'build thriving communities' and there are many things we do to help us reach this goal.

Every year we replace around 2,000 heating systems, so your homes can maintain a healthy temperature and reduce the risk of being left without hot water.

We also undertake energy efficiency upgrades to help you reduce energy bills and put money back in your pocket. We do this by installing additional loft insulation or filling your wall cavities with insulation - to ensure heat remains in your homes.

Sometimes older properties can cost a lot of money to bring to a modern standard. All of our properties are reviewed when people move out of them and in the rare case that a property cannot meet our customer expectations, we may decide to sell. All proceeds from our sales are re-invested into providing new homes or improving the quality of our existing ones.

For advice on how to help save energy costs in your home, please visit: [bit.ly/2FdKV5a](https://bit.ly/2FdKV5a).

To find out more about how we have invested in our homes this year, be sure to read our annual report summary in the next edition of Orbit Life coming out in the Autumn.



# Kent customers getting more **Oomph!** in their life



Customers at our sheltered housing schemes in Thanet and at Caesar Court, our independent living with care scheme in Deal, are enjoying regular wellness sessions through the Oomph! project.

Sessions are a mixture of physical movement and mental stimulation through games and exercises. The activities are designed to benefit all participants whatever their ability, strengths or weaknesses - and most of all to be FUN.

Oomph! sessions are currently taking place at Caesar Court in Deal, Finsbury Court in Ramsgate and Victoria Villa in Margate - and will shortly be starting at Manktelow Court and Pettman Court in Broadstairs. Customers at our other sheltered housing schemes in Thanet are welcome to join in at any of the host venues, just speak with your Scheme Officer for further information.

## Help us to fulfil our Customer Promise!

We're seeking a dynamic Resident Board Member to join our Orbit Customer and Communities Board. The successful candidate needs to be an Orbit customer who lives in one of our communities and is passionate about making sure that all Orbit customers live in a home they can be proud of. You will also need to commit one or two days a month to the role to attend meetings or occasional training.

For more information, please visit: [orbit.org.uk/residentboardmember](http://orbit.org.uk/residentboardmember)



If you would like more information please just get in touch.

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This magazine has been approved by our customers

If you need information in a different format please contact our customer service centre.