



## About The Orbit Group

The Orbit Group is one of the larger housing organisations in the UK. Operating in the Midlands, the South East and the East of England, they provide over 35,000 high quality affordable homes to those in greatest need.

With over 40 years of experience in social housing, Orbit employ 1,200 staff and provide a range of services including: Rented Properties, Supported Housing, Sheltered and Very Sheltered Schemes, Low Cost Home Ownership, Mortgage Rescue and Private Retirement, as well as home improvement and new build schemes.

At the heart of everything that Orbit does is Customer Service. They operate a full 24/7 Customer Service Centre and believe in working in true partnership with their residents and communities.

### The Challenge

It was in 1996 that Orbit set up their first Customer Service Centre, although it was not defined as such then, with just six people. The aim was to provide a front-line, telephone-based service, predominantly to enable repairs to be reported.

Orbit immediately experienced the same challenges as many other housing organisations in how to equip advisors with the knowledge required to accurately log repairs and raise work orders. With much of the process reliant on the individual advisor, Orbit found that there was little consistency in the way repairs were being logged and prioritised. With the only support to advisors being a very large book containing the schedule of rates, Orbit also found that repairs were being inaccurately logged, prioritised and "costed."

If this was not enough of a challenge, the size and diversity of Orbit added to it. Not only were advisors expected to be an expert in every aspect of housing repairs, they also needed to be fully familiar with every nuance in policy and process between geographic areas and types of housing.

In 2000 Orbit took the decision to centralise their customer contact service at their new Corporate Centre in Coventry. This meant transferring all initial contacts with their residents from the various regional and local offices to the one centre and ensuring the skills and knowledge would still be there to provide a continuing and, more importantly, improved service. If that was not all, they also decided that the new Customer Service Centre should handle not just repairs, but all first contact calls which could cover every and any aspect of their service. If Orbit was to achieve the highly effective front-line Customer Service Centre that they hoped for, then they needed to put in place the right tools and support for their advisors.

### The Solution

After spending time visiting other housing organisations and reviewing what technology was available, Orbit selected **Keyfax Inter-View** as the solution to provide their advisors with intelligent call scripting.

What Orbit liked about **Keyfax Inter-View** was that it had been specifically created for social housing and therefore came with all of the intelligence built in around many aspects of housing, including repairs.

Orbit also liked the flexibility that **Keyfax Inter-View** provided. They could adapt scripts to incorporate their own specific policies and procedures, and could see that new scripts could be easily developed to meet future needs. What is more, these scripts could be developed by the Customer Services Team with no need for specific IT knowledge.



"Keyfax delivered on every aspect of our requirements" said Daphne Arnold, CSC Support Manager. "The fact that we can develop and enhance scripts within the Customer Services Team has enabled us to do more than we expected, quicker than expected."

### Improved Housing Repairs Process

**Keyfax Inter-View** has delivered significant improvement in the area of housing repairs. Advisors do not need to be technical experts in every element of the home; they just need to understand the basic process of recording a repair and the system guides them through the detail.

"By using **Keyfax Inter-View** we are finding that advisors are far more accurate in the diagnosis of a repair" said Daphne, "this in turn ensures we always have the right schedule of rates assigned and that the information passed to the contractor is concise and snappy - just what they want."

With policies and procedures embedded within the intelligent scripts, Orbit has found that there is far more consistency in the way repairs are prioritised. It is the system that determines whether a repair is an emergency, urgent or non urgent, therefore removing the pressure that was placed on the advisor.

"Keyfax has also enabled us to keep tighter controls over our costs" continued Daphne, "by ensuring that every repair has an accurate schedule of rates, we are able to associate costs to a job at the point where the repair is reported."

### Single Point Of Call For Residents

But it is not just in the area of housing repairs that **Keyfax Inter•View** has made a difference. Almost as soon as Orbit had started using **Keyfax Inter•View** for repairs, they decided to extend its use to cover the whole range of call enquiries. Intelligent scripts are used to enable Orbit to provide a single point of call for all Housing Management related issues, including complaints, anti-social behaviour, rents, payments, aids & adaptations, allocations & lettings and tenancy matters.

By creating a script for each of these different areas, Orbit is able to utilise any of their 66 advisors to take any call from the resident and have the confidence that they will deliver a consistent and high quality service.

“The Keyfax system is fully integrated into our MIS ActiveH CRM and Housing Management system, so we are equipping our advisors with all of the information they need to better serve the customer” explained Marian Honan, Housing Support Manager. “New information collected within **Keyfax Inter•View** is automatically posted back into the relevant system, which ensures we keep a full contact history of both our residents and our properties.”

### Efficient & Effective Customer Service Centre

Both Daphne and Marian believe that by utilising Keyfax their Customer Service Centre is certainly both more efficient and more effective.

Keyfax has significantly reduced the amount of training required to be given to advisors and the time that it takes to induct a new advisor. With **Keyfax Inter•View**, the breadth and depth of knowledge required by advisors is provided in real-time by the system, allowing the advisors to focus on their customer service skills.

By ensuring that best practice is embedded into each intelligent script, Orbit is ensuring that this is being consistently followed. The results are a higher proportion of calls being resolved on the first call, as well as a consistent and high quality service delivered to each and every caller, every time.

### Generating Value For Orbit

Putting in place a Customer Services Team that is both equipped and able to respond to any type of ‘customer service’ call has enabled Orbit to do things differently.

“We are constantly looking for ways we can assist in improving the performance of the Group by acting as their front-line service team” commented Marian.

A good example is Orbit’s internal IT function; like most IT departments, technicians were being swamped by high volumes of calls. So it was decided to place all first line calls through the Customer Services Team who would manage the ticketing of each enquiry (very similar to the housing repair process). Scripts were developed in **Keyfax Inter•View** to take all of the details required for each type of problem and the information passed to IT through integration with Orbit’s existing



IT Helpdesk system, HEAT. Also, the Customer Service Centre has been able to resolve simple IT calls, such as resetting passwords at the first point of call.

“This has been very successful”, explained Daphne, “not only are we taking the calls away from the IT team, we are also solving some tasks such as password resets; this allows the IT team to focus on areas where their skills are most valuable.”

Additional value is also being created by the Customer Service Team by offering services to external organisations. Their 24/7 customer service operation is being provided to other housing organisations to offer Out-of-Hours service to their residents, as well as services to a contractor and a home finance company - all generating income for the Group.

“This is only possible through the use of Keyfax” stated Marian, “The intelligent scripts enable us to empower our advisors for any type of call and the flexibility of Keyfax allows us to meet our clients’ requirements.”

In these cases, **Keyfax Inter•View** is being complemented by the customer management database option, also developed for Orbit. This allows each client to provide Orbit with a subset of their own data that can be accessed during the call and for key contact information to be collected and stored as required.

### A Valued Solution, A Valued Partner

“It is very difficult to imagine how we could operate without Keyfax” stated Daphne, “it has enabled us to continually improve the quality and breadth of services to our residents.”

However, Orbit is quick to point out that it is not just the solution that has made this project a success, but also the value they get from partnering with Omfax.

“Omfax is one of the best companies I have ever worked with” commented Marian, “They have been absolutely excellent; they never say they can’t do something; they say let’s see what we can do.”

“I cannot help but say something positive about Omfax” continued Daphne, “For instance, when we took on the IT Helpdesk function, this was new and we were not sure how to handle it; they worked with us in a short space of time to come up with and develop a great solution to the problem.”