

CASE STUDY

ORBIT: BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Orbit, a housing association with a social purpose, should naturally be a class leader when it comes to being a responsible business. This case study highlights that there are lessons for all of us to learn about how we can have a greater impact on society and the environment for the benefit of everyone.



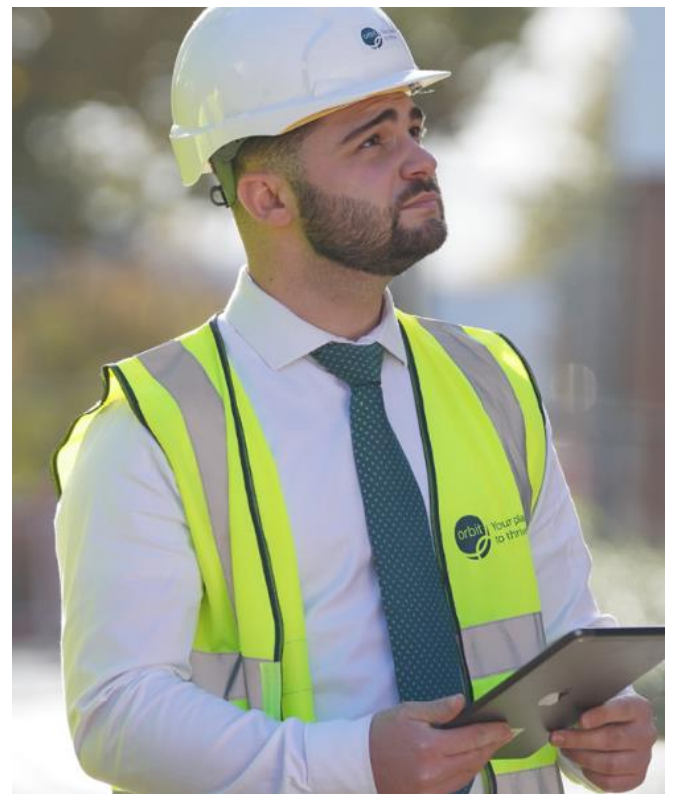
About the company

Orbit was established in 1967 by two people on a park bench contemplating how to tackle homelessness. The passion they felt about the inequality in the access, scale and quality of available housing was channelled into positive action, and Orbit was created.

Orbit's purpose today is every bit as important as it was when it was founded. The company now manages around 46,500 affordable homes in the Midlands, East and South East of England, and has set a target to deliver 6,500 new homes by 2025. Today, more than 100,000 people live in an Orbit home and the company's aim is to ensure the homes it provides and the places it creates are of good quality, affordable and safe. Orbit is proud to have a strong social purpose, enabling it to reinvest its profits to improve the quality of its homes, services and its communities, and the provision of more much-needed affordable housing.

The issue

How does a business know about the responsible issues upon which they are best placed to have positive impact, and where they can start to make a difference?





What the company did

Orbit had a view on key issues where it could make a positive difference, but it wanted to ensure its efforts contributed to the bigger picture and are aligned with the global United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It used research and data to explore local and national needs and used this insight to identify a number of short and long-term environmental and social commitments and targets,

that would have an impact on its stakeholders and on national and global indicators.

As a responsible business, Orbit also needed to ensure its approach allowed the flexibility to adapt and respond to situations that impact society and the environment or are in response to global or national emergencies, such as the rising cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine, and the continuing effects of COVID-19.



The Prince's Responsible Business Network

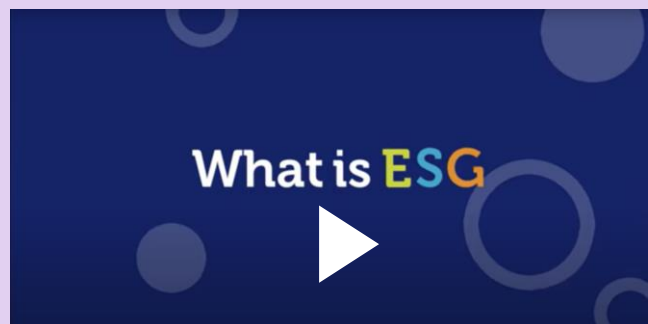
HOW BITC HELPED ORBIT

Using BITC's Responsible Business Tracker continues to be beneficial in Orbit's responsible business journey. Its commitments are embedded within its core strategy and the in-depth reporting

helps it track progress and provides recommendations for future implementation. It has helped Orbit gain buy-in across the business, ensuring responsible business decisions are part of a business-as-usual approach at every level throughout the organisation.

Demonstrating its commitment to driving equality, diversity, and inclusion, Orbit signed up to the BITC's 'Race at Work' Charter, which sees it record and publish its ethnicity pay gap results within its annual Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) report. Orbit is also a supporter of the BITC's 'Mental Health at Work' commitment and has launched Mental Health First Aiders across the business who provide support to colleagues and raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing and mental health within the workplace.

Orbit has found the one-to-one consultation support offered as part of its BITC membership invaluable in the development of its environmental commitments and targets, and the publishing of its Net Zero Carbon Roadmap.





“AS A RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS, WE ARE FLEXIBLE IN OUR ESG STRATEGY TO BE ABLE TO MEET GLOBAL AND NATIONAL EMERGENCIES THAT IMPACT OUR SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT, BOTH PROACTIVELY USING INSIGHTS AND RESEARCH DATA, AND REACTIVELY. THIS HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED BY EVENTS IN THE PAST YEAR INCLUDING THE INCREASE IN INFLATION, THE RISING COST OF LIVING, THE WAR IN UKRAINE, AND THE CONTINUING EFFECTS OF COVID-19. UTILISING OUR RESOURCES TO MEET THESE

EMERGING NEEDS IS THE CIVIC DUTY OF ALL RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES TO ENSURE WE ARE CREATING A BETTER SOCIETY.” Mark Hoyland, Group Chief Executive

IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

- 25 mental health first aiders across the business and the launch of #ThisIsMe, an award-winning wellbeing support programme for employees, that was vital during COVID
- Support in the development of our Net Zero Carbon Roadmap, which has resulted in Orbit reducing the carbon footprint in our operations by 33%
- Supporting Orbit's commitment to ensure all our homes are EPC C or above by 2023, reducing its environmental impact and supporting cost savings for its customers
- Aligning with BITC's Cost of Living crisis action plan through the delivery of a comprehensive package of support for customers and colleagues. This includes a partnership with National Energy Action (NEA) to provide energy-saving help and advice. Customers most in need will be referred to the NEA, which will provide help accessing energy grants, fuel debt applications, liaising with energy suppliers, and changing tariffs or payment types. It is also distributing Warm & Well packs and holding 50 face-to-face events. A communications campaign for both customers and colleagues, including tips and advice, signposting to support, as well as providing training for more than 150 frontline colleagues to ensure they are best able to support customers over this winter period are all taking place.
- Support for Orbit's approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and consultation regarding the recording and publication of its first ethnicity pay gap

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