



15 March 2024

Dear Resident

An update from Orbit

We're writing with some additional information on balcony safety at Erith Park, along with an update on cleaning and an explanation of why we've installed new door entry systems and the benefits of these. We'd also like to invite you to attend one of our customer meetings next week, when you'll have the opportunity to talk to the Orbit team and ask any questions you might have. You'll find more information about the meeting at the end of this letter.

Balcony safety

We want to let you know that we've now received the final report following the independent specialist safety assessment of balcony glazing at Erith Park. The report was in draft for several weeks while we reviewed the findings and waited for the specialist to respond to our queries. We're now working on a summary of the findings and will share this with you in the coming weeks.

We're also liaising closely with our contractor and co-developer at Erith Park, Wates. It's important that together we've fully investigated this matter, so Wates have commissioned a second independent report on the glazing. This will help us to verify the findings of our own independent assessment. Wates expect to receive their draft report later this month or early April. Again, we'll share a summary of the findings when this report is finalised.

We know that being asked to not use your glazed balcony is very inconvenient and we're grateful for your cooperation. This is not a course of action we've taken lightly but we believe it's a necessary precautionary measure at this time. Please be assured, we're committed to resolving this matter and will keep you updated as soon as we have more information to share.

In the meantime, so you can understand why we've asked you to not use your glazed balcony, we want to be clear with you on what the risks are. There are a total of 372 balconies with glazing at Erith Park and there have been glass breakages at six of these. The breakages have been at Vanacker Court, Talbot Place and Gunning Place.

The independent specialist safety assessment confirmed that you risk a fall from height if a glazed panel were to shatter on your balcony – and this is a particular risk for small children and pets. Should a breakage occur, there's also the risk of falling glass harming people below.

New door entry system

As you're aware, new door entry systems are currently being installed in all buildings at Erith Park and you should have received a new fob ahead of the installation.

The new system replaces the old 'closed protocol' system, which made it difficult for Orbit representatives and the emergency services to access the building out of hours and also meant that you were incurring increasing costs for the replacement of parts and fobs. We therefore took the decision to upgrade the door entry system this year as part of our annual improvement programme.



The new door entry system has some features we hope you will like. It will call either a mobile or a standard landline, and can provide video door entry if used with a smart device through the App. We've previously sent you a user guide on how to use the system and how to install the App, but if you have any queries or need any help, please contact us on 0800 678 1221 or download the user guide at www.orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/erithparkworks.

We want to 'make good' the areas where the new system has been installed and can offer you two options for this:

- **Option 1** - Removal of your old handset and cabling, with holes filled ready for the you to decorate as you choose.
- **Option 2** - Removal of your old handset and cabling, with holes filled then a white panel placed over the top.

We're already in contact with you to discuss your preferred option. If you've had Option 1 carried out in your home but you're not happy with it, we can revisit to correct the problem or carry out Option 2 instead.

Cleaning standards

We know the cleanliness and appearance of the communal areas at Erith Park is important to you and we want to reassure you that we're closely monitoring the standard of cleaning. We inspect the buildings every month and when we inspected last week, we were satisfied that standards were generally being met; however, we noted the skirting boards had been missed. This feedback has been passed onto the contractor and will be addressed on their next visit.

Customer meeting

We understand you may have questions about all of these matters and more, and we want to give you the opportunity to talk to your Orbit team in person. We're holding two meetings for customers at Erith Park on Thursday 21 March 2024. The first meeting will be from 14:30 to 15:30 and the second meeting will be from 18:30 to 19:30. Look out for updates on your noticeboards with more information about where the meetings will be held. All are welcome and we hope to see you there.

If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please contact us at SpecialProjectsTeam@orbit.org.uk, call us on 0800 678 1221 or speak to your Property Managers, Tina Mowat and Esmina Emdin.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Yeomans
Head of Property Safety and Technology