

Care & Repair service user guide

Small changes can make a big difference




origin HOUSING

SPH Housing is now trading as Origin Housing

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Origin's Care & Repair services



ORIGIN'S CARE AND REPAIR GRANTS SERVICE

Origin Housing's Care & Repair service makes essential repairs and helps fit aids and adaptations in the homes of Camden and Islington residents who are elderly, disabled or vulnerable.

To qualify, you and other residents need to be assessed by an occupational therapist (OT). If the OT thinks that your assessed need requires an adaptation to make life easier, they will be recommended to Origin's service. The Disabled Facilities grant is means tested so will depend on your income if you get a full grant or will have to make a contribution.

To benefit from the service contact an occupational therapist:

Camden council: 020 7974 4444

Islington council: 020 7527 2000

HANDYPERSON SERVICE

This service helps vulnerable, disabled and elderly residents of Islington and Camden who need small repairs done to their homes at a reasonable cost. The

only charges are for the handyperson to park when he or she comes, and for the materials used. Residents should refer themselves.

Contact number is: 020 7284 5450

HOME FROM HOSPITAL SERVICE

Origin also runs a Home from Hospital service for residents who are elderly or have disabilities in Islington borough. Sometimes it is difficult for residents to return from hospital because homes need cleaning, repairs need doing, or new furniture has to be found. This service helps sort all this out.

To benefit from the service, residents need to be referred by social workers or occupational therapists working at two hospitals in Islington:

Whittington Hospital, tel: 020 7272 3070

UCH Hospital, tel: 0845 155 5000



Background

These services were previously run by housing association SPH Housing which is now trading as Origin Housing. SPH Housing was already part of Origin Group, but it is now being merged to form one organisation, in order to provide better local customer services.

SPH Housing was formed by an earlier merger on 31st August between St Pancras Housing Association and Humanist Housing Association. SPH joined Origin Group on 1st July 2004.

Origin Housing works with communities to deliver high quality housing, care, support and services where we are needed.

The association now owns or manages over 5,000 homes, mainly for rent, in north London and Hertfordshire. It provides a wide range of housing related services:

- care and repair services;
- general needs housing for families, couples and single people;
- retirement housing with scheme manager support;
- support housing schemes; both directly managed and managed by agents;
- accommodation for hospital key workers;
- floating support for people with support needs; and
- commercial properties.

How are we regulated

The association is regulated by the Housing and Communities Agency, a government agency, which funds and monitors more than 2,000 housing associations in England.

Service standards

Origin's Care and Repair team aim to provide a holistic home improvement agency service. We aim to provide clients with practical help, support and advice on improving their housing condition and quality of life so they can remain living independently in their own homes.

We work with disabled/vulnerable clients of any age or people over the age of 60 years.

We have a team of advisors and building surveyors who support clients in carrying out building works to their properties and also offering advice on other service available to them. All assessments are client lead, clients' views are always listened to and used when assessing what it needed to assist a client to make them independent. All clients have a support plan and risk assessment carried out as part of their initial assessment. The three services are outlined on the first page.

Our clients will:

- be treated fairly and equally;
- get a prompt reply to letters, phone calls and general enquiries;
- be given clear, accurate and regular information;
- receive an efficient, polite service from well-trained staff;
- be able to have a say about the services we provide;
- have all of their enquiries handled professionally and with confidence;
- receive a courteous and friendly service when you call at our offices;
- be offered an interpreting or translation service if needed;
- have a full copy of our equal opportunities policy on request.

OUR SERVICE TO YOU – AND THE TARGETS WE SET OURSELVES

Letters, emails and correspondence

We will usually answer your letters within 10 working days. If we cannot give a full reply immediately: we will send you a brief note within three working days to let you know that we have received your letter; and a date by which we expect to be able to reply in full.

Telephone calls

We aim to answer all calls within five rings and the person will answer giving their name so you know who you are talking to. If the person you want to speak to is unavailable, your call will be passed to someone else who will be able to help. If you leave a message you will be contacted within one working day by phone or three working days in writing if you do not have a phone.

Visits to our offices

You will not have to wait more than five minutes before being able to talk to someone. If you call without an appointment you will see someone who can help within 10 minutes. Or, if you want to see a specific person who is not available, you will be able to make an appointment to see that person at an agreed time. You will be able to speak to us in private.

CHARTER OF RIGHTS

Origin Housing agrees to that tenants and service users will:

- be encouraged and helped to maintain a high quality of life;
- be encouraged to achieve and maintain their independence;
- have their privacy respected;
- be treated with dignity and respect;
- have their human, emotional, and social needs respected;
- be enabled to follow the religion of their choice;
- be addressed as they wish;
- not be discriminated against on grounds of race, gender, colour, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or disability or age;
- be entitled to and supported to access all facilities available in the local community;
- be encouraged to discuss their care needs and/or support needs with the provider;
- have the right to be consulted on how they would like their care/support needs to be met;
- be supported by appropriately trained staff;
- have the right to consult their own solicitors/advocate;
- be enabled to complain about the quality or care and support received;

- be given value for money;
- enjoy appropriate and positive professional relationships with staff providing the service;
- have the opportunity of meeting with other service users to discuss, with staff and managers if appropriate, matters relating to the care and support provided;
- have access to any information kept about them in keeping with Data Protection requirements and the Confidentiality Policy;
- have a right to confidentiality;
- be supported to manage their finances to meet their needs, according to individual choice;
- have the right to be informed about matters concerning their services;
- be ensured the continuity of their services;
- receive information in an appropriate format.

CARE AND REPAIR SUPPORT STATEMENT

Our advisors will:

- treat all information given in confidence;
- be sensitive to cultural and religious needs;
- advise on the best possible course of action for your home repairs/adaptations;
- advise on funding options available;
- liaise with all stakeholders to promote your best interests;
- assist with the completion of all relevant application forms ;
- submit your application to the Local Authority for approval;
- ensure you are communicated with all progress of your application;
- advise you of any wider needs.

Our surveyors will:

- be sensitive to cultural and religious needs during the works;
- provide you will a full specification (and plan if relevant) for the works;
- act as your agent and inspect the works with periodic visits from start to finish;
- ensure you are communicated with all progress during the execution of the works;

- take into account client views during the works so far as is reasonable practicable;
- deal with the administration of payments due to contractors;
- exercise all reasonable skill and diligence in the performance of the service so far as is reasonably practicable.

Origin care and repair policy list:

Our advisors brief clients on the Origin policies relevant to their rights and protection. Should clients require a copy of any of these, they should contact an Origin advisor. These policies are:

- complaints policy;
- access to files;
- data protection;
- equal opportunities;
- health and safety; and
- confidentiality.

Origin care and repair tender process

Contractors are invited to tender against a specification and to complete and return the tender documents by a specific date. Tenders are evaluated against pre-determined criteria. We award the contract to the contractor we consider offers best value in terms of cost and quality considerations.

Selecting contractors

Three contractors are chosen at random from our approved contractors list. This is done by the surveyor in the presents of the Care and Repair Manager or a Senior Team Member. The information is recorded on forms in our tender return folder and on our tender rota monitoring spreadsheet.

Sending out tender documents

Two copies of the specification (with drawing), a tender return letter, a self address envelope with a reference number and closing date on the envelope, are sent to three contractors. The contractors are usually given four weeks to visit

the client and to return the seal tenders to our office. The return details are recorded in our tender book (with reception).

Receiving sealed tenders

Tenders are returned by post or hand to reception. They are logged in our tender book (date received) and passed to the issuing surveyor. The tender must remain sealed until the return date has expired.

Opening of the tenders

The tenders are opened by the Care and Repair Manager and the issuing Surveyor. The final sum and time scale for the works, together with the time and date the tender was opened is recorded on the tender return form. The winning tender is also noted on our tender rota spreadsheet. The three tenders (if three were returned) are given to the surveyors to carry out their tender analysis.

WHAT CLIENTS SHOULD BE AWARE OF WHILE WORKS IS GOING ON IN THEIR HOMES

1. You should always check contractors' identity.
2. There will be some dust. Sheets will be laid down to reduce the dust levels.
3. You should be aware that there will be tools and cables on the floor. These will be kept as tidy as possible.
4. You should be careful of your footing as dust sheets sometimes snag your feet.
5. Contractors may need to go into other rooms of your home but they will ask you first.
6. There will be some noise. This will be kept to a minimum.
7. You should remove your personal belongings from the work area.
8. Your Care and Repair advisor and surveyor are available to answer any questions you may have.

These are a few things that clients should be aware of. All jobs are different and each individual case will be addressed at the pre-contract meeting.

Complaints and compliments

Are you happy or unhappy with the service you get?

Origin Housing is committed to continuously improve its service to service users. Origin welcomes all comments you have about our services. They can be positive or negative.

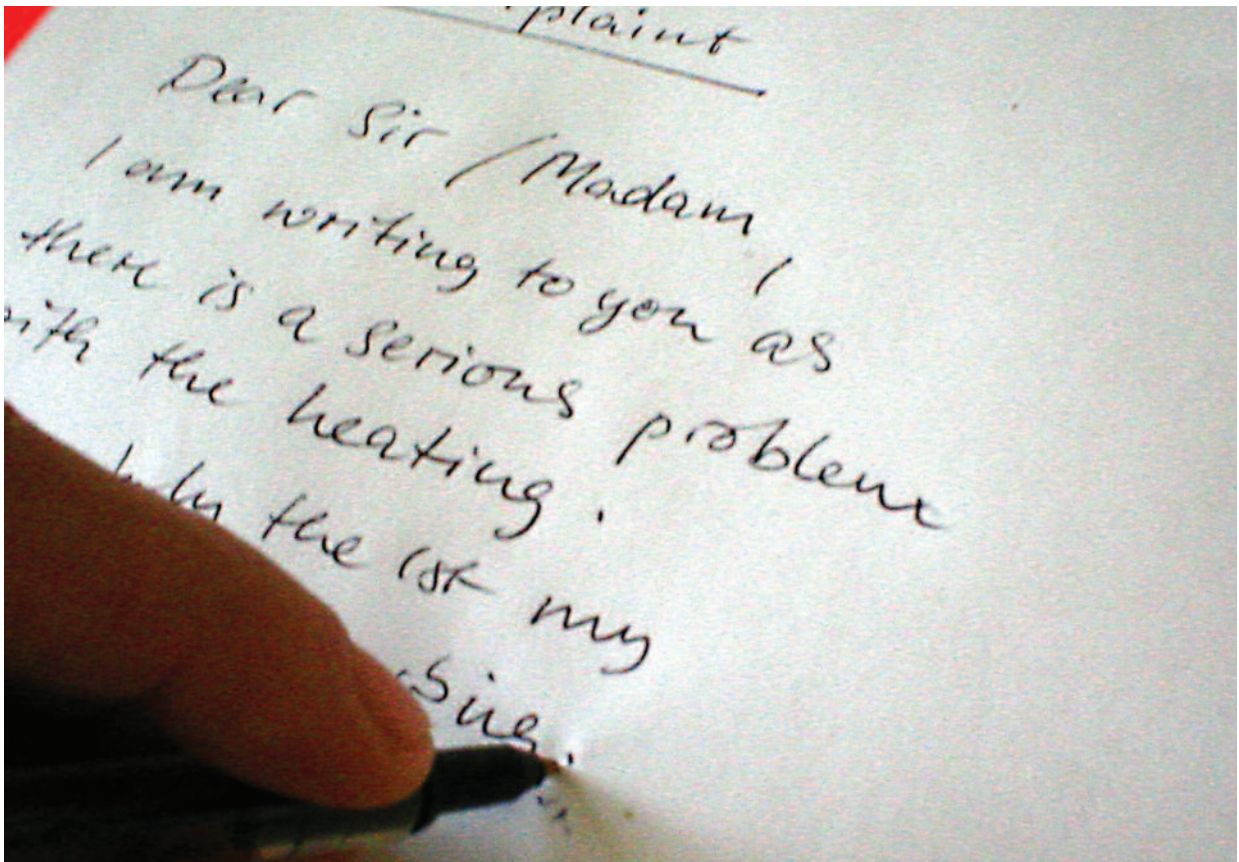
This document will tell you how to make a complaint or a compliment. Origin Housing will take customers' views on board.

How to complain

Some things you may want to complain about:

- if you have been told something will be done, and it hasn't been done or it is taking to long;
- if you have been treated badly or unfairly by a worker;
- if you have been told that you cannot have help or a service;
- if you think you are being treated badly because of your religion, the colour of your skin, your sexuality, your learning disability or disability;





- if you think the support service you get are not as good as they should be;
- if you think people could do a better job to give you the help you need.

These are steps you must take:

Informal complaint

Please talk to the person you normally deal with in Origin Housing (this may be a Support Worker, for example) – we will try to resolve your problem as quickly as possible.

If your complaint is about your worker, someone else will listen to your complaint and help you.

Step 1

If you feel your complaint has not been resolved, you can contact the Assistant Director of Support and Community Services:

SPH Housing
Care and Support Department

8 Nora Leverton Court
Randolph Street
London NW1 0TS
Tel: 020 7284 5450

We aim to respond within 10 working days from receiving your complaint. Please ask a member of staff if you need any assistance.

Step 2

If you are not happy with response, you should then contact the Director of Care and Support (details as above) within 1 month of receiving the Step 1 decision. We aim to respond within 15 working days.

Step 3 – Appeal

If you are still not satisfied you may appeal to the Care and Support Board within one month of receiving the step 2 decision. You will receive a hearing within six weeks.

You will be able to bring along a friend or an advocate to the hearing. The chair will consider your complaint and let you know the outcome of your appeal within 10 days.

Housing Ombudsman service

If you have followed steps one to three and you are still dissatisfied, you can take your complaint to the independent Housing Ombudsman. They can be contacted at:

Housing Ombudsman Service, Norman House, 105 – 109 Strand, London, WC2R 0AA
Tel: 020 7836 3630

You can make a complaint online to the ombudsman at: www.ihos.org.uk

Other people who can help you with your complaint are

- an advocacy service;
- Citizens Advice Bureau;
- housing aid or advice centre;
- a solicitor;
- your Member of Parliament;
- your local councillor.

Who will know you have made a complaint?

The only people who will know will be the people who need to be involved, to sort your complaint out.

By making a complaint you will not get into trouble at your home, or with your social worker or support worker.

Why should you complain?

It is important to speak up because it can make things better for you and for other people.

You have the right to make a complaint.

You won't get into trouble if you make a complaint.

Your complaint will be kept private.

How to make a compliment

If you are happy with our service and you want to let Origin Housing know about it, please speak to the person you normally work with.

We register all our compliments like complaints. This helps us to improve the services you are receiving from us.

Reporting abuse

Adult protection – how to report abuse

As your service provider we want to make sure that tenants and service users have all the information they need to report abusive incidents and situation that they are not happy with and are aware about what happens when they do disclose information about abuse.

What is abuse?

Abuse is when a person has caused harm to your physical, sexual, emotional, financial or material well-being or has neglected you.

Abuse can occur anywhere and the person who is abusive can be anyone, for example a member of staff a relative, another service user, a friend, or other professionals.

Regardless of age, race, gender, abilities or physical disabilities it can happen to anyone. Sometimes it only happens once but it can also happen over a long period of time.



How can I report abuse?

If you have concerns about something that could be abuse don't stay silent! Origin Housing will take your concerns seriously!

You can talk to Origin Housing or your advisor. If you suspect that your normal worker is abusive to you, you can call our reception and we will get another person who can talk to you in confidence.

However, the member of staff you have talked to always has a duty to discuss what you have told them with their line manager or senior manager.

If senior staff feel there is a risk or abuse or abuse has already happened they will need to share information with your local social service team and generally, your permission should be asked for to do this.

However, where immediate action is needed to protect the vulnerable person, or the risk of abuse is serious, the information may be shared without your consent.

If you want, you can also approach a variety of other services to get support. Please refer to the enclosed 'Useful Addresses' sheet for contact details in your area.

Child protection – how to report abuse

As your service provider we have a duty to report any incidences of suspected child abuse. All our Support staff who work with families and children, have received training on child protection.

If you witness any incidences of child abuse, you should tell social services or the police. This way professionals can step in and stop the abuse. Your advisor will help you to report child abuse, if you wish.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when someone causes harm to a child, including neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse and emotional abuse.

'A child' is defined in the Children's Act as a person under the age of 18 or a person aged 18 – 20 who has been in care or has a learning disability.

If you have been a victim of child abuse, you can ask your advisor to get you counselling or other support to help you come to terms with this.

Confidentiality policy

Information about you

Information such as your full name, date of birth, address, phone number, support notes, financial information, relationship status or sexual orientation is personal information. It is confidential and secret.

This information will be kept with your support plan, under lock and key but it will be shared with other agencies if necessary.

Our staff members will only share your personal information with each other if it needs to be shared.

We will not share personal information about you with your family or advocates unless you have given us your permission.



When I start or leave the service

At your first meeting with us or when you want to move on, personal details will be discussed.

When you have left we will only pass on forwarding addresses to Gas, Electric or Water companies if they ask us in writing.

The law

Your name and address has to be given to the local Council Tax office by law.

Sometimes, by law, we have to pass on information about you to the police. We may also have to share information with others if you are in trouble with the law.

Meetings with staff

We will have confidential meetings with you in a comfortable room. You can invite an advocate, your parent, friend, or anyone else who might be of support.

Everyone who will be at the meeting will have a chance to decide what we will talk about. We will not talk about any personal information, unless you want to. Anything we write down about the meeting will be kept safely on your file.

Access to your file

If you want to read your file you will need to give us seven days notice.

We will not take out any letters or reports from people who do not work for Origin Housing, before you look at it.

If you want to see any information about you that is kept on our computer giving us 14 days notice.

Notes correct?

If you feel any of the facts we have about you are wrong, you will be able to change it or tell us that you disagree and I will be noted on your file.



Service user responsibilities

Receiving support from Origin Housing doesn't just give your rights – it also brings responsibilities.

Service users who receive support from Origin Housing agree to the following.

- To treat their support worker/staff members with respect and dignity and not to be verbally or physically aggressive.
- Not to discriminate against any member of staff for any reason, or make comments that could be considered offensive or abusive.
- To be on time for all meetings with us, if you are going to be late you should let us know as soon as possible if you are delayed or cannot make it.
- Agree to work to your support plan, working to all the areas of support; be supportive of us supporting you.
- Not to smoke in the presence of our staff. This is law and the staff team have to work in a smoke free environment. If you smoke we would like you to air your rooms half an hour before we arrive.
- If you have pets please keep them under control when we visit you; if needed this could include you putting your pet in a different room.
- Not to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances when we meet you.
- To be responsible both for your own behaviour and for other people in your household.
- To cancel support if necessary by letting Origin know, and where required, your social services department, so we can offer the time reserved for you to someone else.

Useful addresses and telephone numbers

**ORIGIN HOUSING
CARE & SUPPORT DEPARTMENT**
(for tenant support services in Herts,
Kent and London)

**8 Nora Leverton Court, Randolph Street,
London, NW1 0TS
Tel: 020 7284 5450
Fax: 020 7284 1776**

ORIGIN HOUSING HEAD OFFICE
110 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BS
Tel: 020 7209 9222
Fax: 020 7209 9223
Freephone: 0800 040 7989
Email: info@sph.org.uk
Website: www.originhousing.org.uk
Office Hours: 9am – 5pm
Monday – Friday

