

# Client handbook

THE HANDBOOK FOR USERS OF ORIGIN HOUSING'S  
CARE & SUPPORT SERVICES



# Contents

**Welcome** 2-3

**Charter of rights** 4-5

**Complaints and compliments** 6-8

**Reporting abuse** 9-10

**Confidentiality policy** 11-12

**Client responsibilities** 13

# Welcome

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 London and the Home Counties. It provides a wide range of housing and related services,

- General needs housing for families, couples and single people
- Retirement Housing with Scheme Manager support
- Supported housing schemes, both directly managed and managed by Agents
- Accommodation for hospital key workers
- Floating support for people with support needs
- Care and Repair Services
- Commercial Properties

## HOW WE ARE REGULATED

### TENANT SERVICES AUTHORITY

The Association is regulated by the Tenant Services Authority, a government agency, which funds and monitors the 1,900+ housing associations in England.

## OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

Origin Housing's aim is to provide affordable housing and services of the highest quality to all our customers. We will do everything we can to make sure that you:

- Are treated fairly and equally
- Get a prompt reply to your letters, phone calls and general enquiries
- Are given clear, accurate and regular information
- Receive an efficient, polite service from well-trained staff
- Are able to have a say in the services we provide



- Have your enquiry handled in confidence and professionally
- Receive a courteous and friendly service when you call at our offices
- Are offered an interpreting or translation service if needed



A full copy of our equal opportunities policy is available on request.

## **OUR SERVICE TO YOU – AND THE TARGETS WE SET OURSELVES**

### *LETTER, EMAILS AND CORRESPONDENCE*

We will usually answer your letters within 10 working days. If we cannot give you a full reply immediately, we will send you a brief note within 3 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 5 rings and the person will answer with 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 5 minutes before being able to talk to someone. If you call without an appointment you will see someone who can help within 10 minutes. 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.



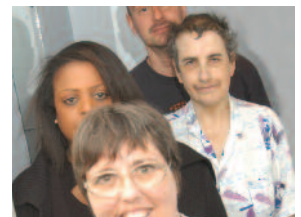
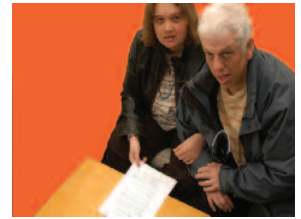
# Charter of rights

## ORIGIN HOUSING AGREES THAT TENANTS AND CLIENTS WILL:

1. Be encouraged and helped to maintain a high quality of life.
2. Be encouraged to achieve and maintain their independence.
3. Have their privacy respected.
4. Be treated with dignity and respect.
5. Have their human, emotional, and social needs respected.
6. Be enabled to follow the religion of their choice.
7. Be addressed as they wish.
8. Not be discriminated against on grounds of race, sex, colour, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability or age.
9. Be encouraged to handle their own medication.
10. Be able to retain the doctor of their choice or receive support to find one.
11. Receive outside nursing and medical care in private.
12. Be entitled to and supported to access all facilities available in the local community.
13. Be encouraged to discuss their care needs and/or support needs with the provider.
14. Have the right to be consulted on how they would like their care/support needs to be met.
15. Be supported by appropriately trained staff.



16. Have the right to consult their own solicitors/advocate.
17. Be supported to take part in recreational or educational activities, if that is their choice.
18. Be supported to access employment opportunities.
19. Be enabled to complain about the quality of care and support received.
20. Be given value for money.
21. Enjoy appropriate and positive professional relationships with staff providing the service.
22. Have the opportunity of meeting with other clients to discuss, with staff and managers if appropriate, matters relating to the care and support provided.
23. Have access to any information kept about them in keeping with Data Protection requirements and the Confidentiality Policy.
24. Have a right to confidentiality.
25. Be supported to manage their finances to meet their needs, according to individual choice.
26. Have the right to be informed about matters concerning their services.
27. Be ensured the continuity of their services.
28. Receive information in an appropriate format.



# Complaints & compliments

## ARE YOU HAPPY OR UNHAPPY WITH THE SERVICE YOU GET?

- at your home/flat?
- from an Origin Housing staff member?

Origin Housing is committed to continuously improve their services to you. We welcome 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 your 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 too 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 for example...
- If you think the support services 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:

Origin Housing  
Care & Support Department  
8 Nora Leverton Court, Randolph Street, London NW1 0TS  
Tel: 020 7284 5467

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 the response, you should then contact the Director of Care & Support (address as above, or 020 7284 5485) within 1 month of receiving the Step 1 decision. We aim to respond within 15 working days.

## STEP 3 - APPEAL

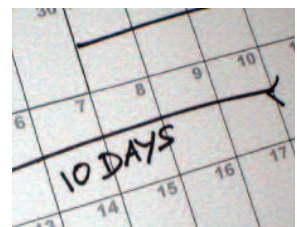
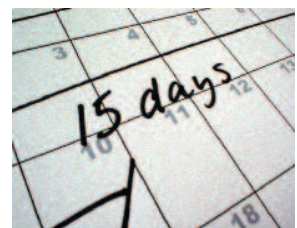
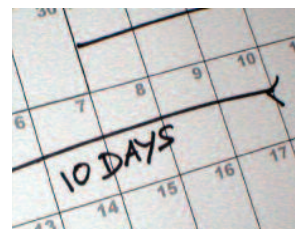
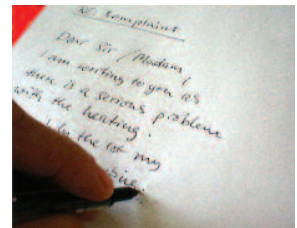
If you are still not satisfied you may appeal to the Care & Support Board within 1 month of receiving the Step 2 decision. You will receive a hearing within 6 weeks.

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 1- 3 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](http://www.ihos.org.uk)

### OTHER PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR COMPLAINT

- An Advocacy Service
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Housing Aid or Advice Centre
- A Solicitor
- Your Member of Parliament
- Your Local Councillor

### If domiciliary care, contact:

Care Quality Commission  
Telephone first on: 03000 616161, or  
Email: [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

Care Quality Commission National Correspondence  
Citygate, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

### 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 out your complaint.

You will not get into trouble at your flat, or 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.

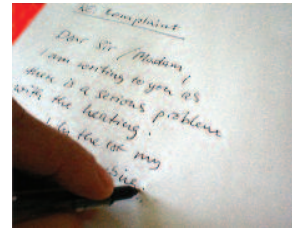
You won't get into trouble if you make a complaint.

Your complaint will be kept private.

### HOW TO MAKE A COMPLIMENT

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

We register all our compliments just like we do our 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 clients have all the information they need to report abusive incidents and situations 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 client, a friend, or other professional.

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.

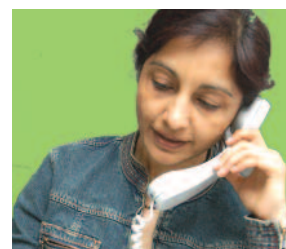
### *HOW CAN I REPORT ABUSE?*

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 your Origin Housing Support Worker. 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 a senior manager.

If senior staff feel there is a risk of abuse or abuse has already happened they will need to share information with your local Social Services Team. Generally, your permission should be asked for us 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 with children, have received training on Child Protection.

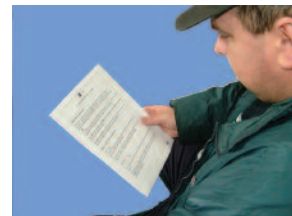
If you witness any incidences of child abuse, you should tell Social Services or the Police. This way professionals can step in and stop the abuse. Your Support Worker will help you to report child abuse, if you wish.

#### *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 Support Worker 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.

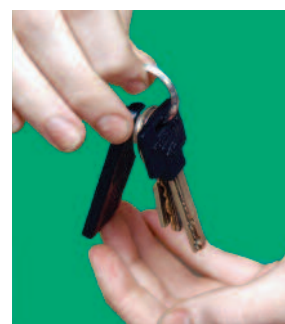
We will not share personal information about you with your family or advocates unless you have given us your permission.



## *WHEN YOU 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 7 days notice.

We will 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 you will need to give 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 it will be noted on your file.



# Client responsibilities

## *RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM ORIGIN HOUSING DOESN'T JUST GIVE YOU RIGHTS – IT ALSO BRINGS RESPONSIBILITIES*

Clients who receive support from Origin Housing agree 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.
- 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 smoke in the presence of our staff. This is the 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 be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances when we meet with you.
- Be responsible both for your own behaviour and for other people in your household including visitors.
- Cancel support if necessary by letting Origin Housing know and where required your social services department so we can offer the time reserved for you to someone else.

# Notes

# 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*

*Freephone: 0800 040 7989*

*Email: [enquiries@sph.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sph.org.uk)*

*Office hours: 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday*

## **ORIGIN HOUSING HEAD OFFICE**

*110 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BS*

*Tel: 020 7209 9222*

*Fax: 020 7209 9223*

*Freephone: 0800 040 7989*

*Email: [enquiries@sph.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sph.org.uk)*

*Website: [www.sph.org.uk](http://www.sph.org.uk)*

*Office hours: 8.30am – 5pm,*

*Monday – Friday*

