



Make A Difference

Information for Funders

At Origin we combine over 80 years of experience in providing quality, affordable housing with a deep-rooted commitment to improving the lives of our residents and their communities.



Situated within the Neighbourhood Services department, the Community Development Team works with communities to deliver a wide range of local initiatives based on the following strategic themes:

- **Strengthening Communities** – encouraging and supporting initiatives which bring people together, sharing their skills, knowledge and resources, as they aim to address community needs
- **Developing Leaders** – providing people with training and opportunities to develop projects and to volunteer within their communities, thus promoting positive community action
- **Managing Money** – providing information, advice and guidance to enable people to make smart financial choices
- **Supporting Employment and Training** – providing advice, training and work experience opportunities to help people into employment
- **Promoting Health and Wellbeing** – addressing the health needs of our communities through targeted projects aimed at empowering people to take control of their own well-being

Our communities are diverse both in terms of their location and also their composition. Using these strategic themes as a guide we therefore take the time to find out what our different communities actually need so as to maximise benefits from our work. In doing so, we also demonstrate significant value for money.

Find out more about the kind of work that we do and how YOU can MAKE A DIFFERENCE by contributing...

Strengthening Communities

Our communities represent a broad range of needs and opinions, many of which will be shared. There is therefore a need to bring our communities together to identify mutual issues and to support people to work together to achieve positive outcomes. Three of the ways that we do this are through the Leavesden Steering Group, Origin Time Bank and Festival of Cultures.

Leavesden Steering Group

The Leavesden Steering Group, led by Origin in Watford, emerged as a joint partnership between local social landlords, the police and the community, originally in response to high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. A range of initiatives, from clearing up a local park to community fun days, have brought the community together resulting in improvements in the physical environment and a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Origin Time Bank

Launched in 2008, with initial funding from Abbey (now Santander), the Origin Time Bank has already become one of our largest initiatives, around which many other projects are based. Time banking provides members with the opportunity to earn Time Credits in exchange for volunteering services and these credits can then be used to buy services either from other individuals, the association or external partners. Unlike traditional volunteering, the participant is both the volunteer and the recipient. So far the Time Bank has over 200 members, far in excess of initial predictions.





Festival of Cultures

Based in Somers Town, north London, the annual festival of cultures is a multicultural mix of music, food, dance and entertainment. Thousands of people attend the festival each year to celebrate the diversity of the area through the arts. As a major partner in the event, Origin has focussed on youth involvement in recent years, with young people involved in the planning and delivery of activities for the day.



Developing Leaders

Our experience of working with communities shows us that people often know what their communities want and need; however achieving a lasting influence can be difficult. There are many barriers to involvement, including socio-economic circumstances, knowledge, jargon, language and negative perceptions, however by providing support such as mentoring and training, these barriers can be overcome. Our Youth Forum, “4 Kix” Football Programme and Community Chest are just three of the projects we run which focus on developing leaders.



The Youth Forum

Our Youth Forum was set up by young people living on our estates as a way to feed back to estate managers and the Origin Board about issues of concern in their communities. The young people involved learn leadership and project management skills, as well as how to communicate their views clearly and effectively.

“4 Kix” Football Programme

The “4 Kix” programme, part-funded by the Football Foundation, uses football as a means of engaging young people, who then go on to volunteer within their communities whilst benefitting from a detailed programme of

training and support. Participants are encouraged to take part in recognised awards schemes including Duke of Edinburgh and the Youth Achievement Award, further enhancing their skills and opportunities.

Community Chest

The Origin Community Chest is a pot of funding available to residents annually to run their own community projects. With support and guidance from staff, beneficiaries have the opportunity to directly target needs and issues within their areas in innovative and creative ways.

Managing Money

Our research tells us that our communities need targeted support on the following issues:

- reducing debt
- accessing affordable financial services
- raising financial skills and literacy
- increasing incomes

We are therefore working across the Origin Group to address these issues through a range of projects and opportunities, including the Financial Inclusion Toolkit and Welfare Benefits Advice.

Financial Inclusion Toolkit (DVD)

With funding from Abbey (Santander), we are working with local Credit Unions to develop a financial inclusion toolkit, providing practical information and advice on the issues that matter to our communities. The aim is to develop a toolkit which can then be used by other service-providers so as to maximise benefits from this project.



Welfare Benefits advice

This project was created as a direct response to our tenants' needs. We provide an advisory service for people who might be entitled to welfare benefits. Thanks to the programme, our residents are able to get financial help and have access to a wider range of benefits.

Supporting Employment and Training

Government research has demonstrated that many people who are out of work do not engage in mainstream employment programmes. This fact, alongside the high levels of unemployment reported for our residents, suggests a need for new and innovative approaches to supporting communities into employment and training, including Work Matters, "Your Shout" media project and Youthwork Training.

Work Matters

The Work Matters project, delivered in partnership with another social landlord, was created to help get tenants back into work. Through a wide range of training and support, residents are provided with the skills, confidence and experience to raise their aspirations and seek employment; an invaluable service in the current financial climate.

Your Shout Media Project

Following direct feedback from residents, Origin launched media training courses for local young people in order to develop their creative skills and improve future job prospects. Delivered over ten weeks "Your Shout" courses teach attendees radio and music production, web marketing and web construction.



Youthwork training

Origin actively encourages young people involved in our youth activities to undertake formal youth work training. It is extremely rewarding to see young people who have been involved in projects over the years grow up and gain the qualifications enabling them to put something back into their communities and also providing them with a practical means of obtaining an income.



Promoting Health and Wellbeing

If we are to give people the confidence and ability to work together as a community to address community needs, we must look at the needs and wellbeing of the individuals who make up that community. As a theme, health and well-being, therefore seeks to address core issues such as access to health services, information, support for carers, advice, healthy food and exercise, in a way that is culturally and demographically relevant.



Healthy Bodies, Active Minds

This programme focuses on delivering services for residents in our many Retirement Housing schemes. Weekly fitness classes, including Tai Chi and chair-based exercise, help to keep bodies healthy, whilst internet access and computer training is designed to address the isolation of older residents whilst improving mental health and well-being.

Sports Programmes

We deliver a wide range of sports opportunities both formally through projects such as “4 Kix”, “More Than Football Tournament”, Schools Football Coaching and multisports on estates, and also informally through our various youth clubs. As well as being given the opportunity to participate in organised sports our customers also have the chance to train as sports coaches.





So... what's in it for you?

If you're still wondering whether or not to get involved, have you considered that supporting our work could.....

- Generate positive publicity for you and your organisation
- Improve staff morale and provide opportunities for their development
- Help address issues for your business (e.g. a building contractor funding a local youth club may experience less incidences of vandalism and graffiti on site)
- Provide tax benefits

but most importantly.....

- Could improve the lives of many people

There are lots of ways that you could support our work. You may wish to sponsor a specific project such as a training course or football team, or perhaps you could provide services or materials in-kind.

For more information about our Community Development Work or how you could support us, please contact:

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