

Rents and service charges

RENTS

Your rent is used in the following way:

- To pay for repairs and maintenance
- To manage your housing service
- To repay money borrowed to build or modernise your home

YOUR TOTAL WEEKLY PAYMENT

You can pay your rent in different ways to suit you:

- At a Pay Point or Pay Zone in a local shop with your Allpay card
- By direct debit
- By standing order. Set this up by calling the Contact Centre on 0800 040 7989
- With telephone credit and/or debit card payments via Allpay. Call the Allpay telephone payment line 0870 243 6040. Tenants must have an Allpay rent card to do this, or call Origin direct on 0800 040 7989.
- In a secure area on the Allpay website. Please have your Payment Card Number ready when you enter the website. The link is: <https://www.allpayments.net/allpayments/allpay.aspx>
- With Housing Benefit direct to Origin Housing. To be arranged through your local council Housing Benefit department. Call the Contact Centre on 0800 040 7989 and ask for the Rent Arrears team.

RENT STATEMENTS

- We will send you a rent statement four times a year.

HOUSING BENEFIT

Housing Benefit provides financial help with paying your rent if you are on a low income. You can get information on Housing Benefit from your local council. If you think you are entitled to Housing Benefit, you should contact the council straight away. You may lose benefit if you delay.

YOU ARE STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR RENT EVEN IF YOU RECEIVE HOUSING BENEFIT.

SETTING RENTS

In the past rents were set using a points system, full details of which are available from the Association. However as from



April 2002 rents will normally be set according to a Government formula, which looks at property valuations and average earnings in an area.

RENT INCREASES

The way in which your rent is set and reviewed depends on whether your tenancy is secure or assured.

SECURE TENANCIES

If you became a tenant of the Association before 15 January 1989 you are a secure tenant.

If you are a secure tenant, you have a fair rent which is set by the Rent Officer. The Rent Officer is an independent officer employed by the Government. The Rent Officer bases your rent on what your home is like, not on your personal circumstances. Every two years, we apply to the Rent Officer to charge you the same amount of rent you would pay if you were an assured tenant. If the Rent Officer registers a rent in excess of the amount we wish to charge then we will only charge you the rent we need in each of the following two years, not the amount recommended by the Rent Officer. We will give you one month's notice each time we are going to increase your rent.

If you are not happy with the rent set, you can appeal to the Rent Assessment Committee. You must appeal within 28 days of the rent being set. The Rent Assessment Committee can reduce, confirm or increase your rent so you may end up paying more.

ASSURED TENANCIES

Your tenancy will be assured if you became a tenant of the Association on or after 15 January 1989. Your rent is set by the Association and is reviewed annually.

We will give you one month's notice of any change. Your rent is made up of the basic rent and the relevant service charge for your home.

SERVICE CHARGES

– WHAT DO THEY COVER?

Some Origin tenants pay a 'service charge' within their rent. This is to pay for any other services like caretaking, communal lighting, gardening, lifts, window cleaning and door entry systems. Your tenancy agreement will tell you if you pay a service charge. We will review your service charge every year for your property in accordance with the terms and conditions in your tenancy agreement. We will send you details of your new service charge information together with your new rent, 28 days prior to its effective date.