

## **Equality and Diversity Strategy 2011-2014: Summary**

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### **Introduction**

Origin has diverse customers, a diverse workforce and works in diverse communities. It is therefore important that equality and diversity is at the heart of everything that we do. This will help ensure that Origin's services are easily accessed and fairly delivered for all of our customers.

Origin's new Equality and Diversity Strategy outlines the progress that we made through our previous Strategy. It also explains the new areas that we want to focus on to help make things fairer for customers.

### **Why does Origin need an Equality and Diversity Strategy?**

As a social landlord, it is important that Origin is a fair service provider and employer. The Strategy outlines how Origin will seek to identify and address the different needs of both customers and employees. This will help ensure that, wherever possible, discrimination is removed and equality is promoted.

It is important that Origin:

- complies with equality legislation
- bases its business decisions on accurate information about our customers
- further develops and embeds its approach to equality and diversity.

The new Equality Act came into force in October 2010. It brings together previous equality legislation and extends equality law in some areas. The Strategy will help ensure that Origin meets the Act's requirements.

The Strategy will also help ensure that we continue to gather more knowledge about our customers. This will mean Origin can better tailor its services and shape its business strategies according to customer need.

### **The aims of the Strategy are:**

- To have customers who know about, can easily access and are happy with their experience of services provided by Origin
- To provide services and communications that are tailored to individual needs and preferences
- To have staff who consider equality and diversity issues as part of everyday life
- To be a fair and supportive employer that recognises and respects individual differences.

## **Where is Origin now?**

Significant progress has been made in our approach to equality and diversity over the past eighteen months, particularly in:

- increasing our knowledge of residents and employees and the needs and preferences that they have
- enhancing our Aids and Adaptations Service, which helps disabled and older customers continue to live in their homes independently
- enhancing staff knowledge through improved equality and diversity training
- carrying out Equality Impact Assessment (EIAs) which have helped to make some of our services easier to access
- extending our Assessment and Support Service
- improving some of the policies and procedures that support staff.

Origin must now ensure that systems are introduced and staff are trained so that the equality and diversity issues of our different customers can be identified and addressed.

### **The objectives of the new Strategy are:**

1. To implement intelligent systems to use customer profile data to monitor access to and satisfaction with services.
2. To tailor service delivery and communications to customer needs and preferences.
3. To develop and sustain a culture of equality and diversity where Board members, staff and involved customers retain appropriate levels of training and understanding about relevant equality and diversity issues.
4. To develop mechanisms to ensure that Origin engages with and utilises feedback from customers that reflect the diversity of its communities.
5. To develop a strategy for older people.
6. To identify and address equality and diversity issues that affect Origin's role as an employer.

### **The Strategy's objectives will be achieved by:**

- Continuing our customer profile work
- Ensuring that all services have tailoring services as a core part of delivery
- Developing a Vulnerable Persons Policy
- Updating our Customer Communications Policy
- Delivering a programme of Equality Impact Assessments

- Carrying out consultation with customers from identified minority groups
- Making communal areas easier to access
- Delivering more training to staff, Board members and involved customers
- Recruiting customers from underrepresented groups for our resident involvement initiatives
- Speaking to our older customers to find out how we can improve services for them
- Working in partnership with local and national agencies for older people
- Developing a plan to ensure we meet the requirements of the Equality Act.

### **Implementation, monitoring and review of the strategy**

To ensure that Origin delivers the objectives of its Equality and Diversity Strategy, a supporting Equality and Diversity Action Plan will be developed on an annual basis. The progress of the Action Plan will be monitored and scrutinised by Origin customers and managers at least every three months.

### **More information for customers:**

For copies of the full Strategy and Action Plan please visit the Origin website or speak with a member of the Service Improvement Team on 0207 209 9293.

To find out more about the Equality Act, visit the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission at [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

To complete a Customer Profile Survey please call our Contact Centre on 0800 040 7989 or speak with any staff member.