



Case Study

Origin Housing is a charitable business that has been providing subsidised housing since 1928. It started life as St. Pancras Home Improvement Society, regenerating the slums of Somers Town, a neighbourhood sandwiched between St. Pancras and Euston stations in London.

They now work in 14 areas across North London and Hertfordshire. The business has expanded as a result of philanthropic endeavours in the early years, and latterly the support of public funding, together with mergers with other companies (Humanist Housing Association, Griffin Homes, Lee Housing Association and a number of smaller entities).

Back in 2014 Origin Housing were looking for a new Non-Executive Director with experience and knowledge of private sector house building. Karen Wilson, CEO of Origin said that *"the ideal candidate will have expertise in developing housing for private residential sales" along with "sufficient financial knowledge to contribute to an investment committee (albeit as a 'property expert' rather than as an 'investment/financial expert'".* With this brief in mind First Flight Non-Executive Directors embarked upon the project to find the ideal candidate. A shortlist of 7 candidates who met the detailed brief were presented to Origin Housing of which they selected 4 to interview.

Mash Halai was the appointed Non-Exec from this round of interviews. Karen described him as *"bright and enthusiastic with a relevant background and one that is clearly different from existing members so he will be able to challenge with a different technical knowledge".* She went on to say *"This was the first time I had used First Flight so I did not know what to expect. First Flight took full responsibility for the NED search. I found them to be very personable and easy to deal with"*

This Autumn (2015) Origin Housing got back in touch with First Flight as they were looking for another Non-Executive Director who they would like to be a *"qualified accountant who would be a Board member and chair of our audit committee"*. This person would replace the existing Non-Exec who was to step down in 2016 having completed a six year term. Specifically Karen said that *"the ideal candidate would have Finance and accounting experience, preferably as a qualified accountant. Risk management and Audit skills and prior experience as a Non-Executive Director"*

First Flight recommended a longlist of eight candidates who met the criteria. Origin Housing chose four of whom they wanted to interview face to face at their Head Office in London. These candidates were interviewed and the selected candidate, Gordon Wright was invited back to have a further a meeting with the Chairman and the rest of the Origin Housing Board. After this final meeting Gordon was then offered the position of Non-Executive Director.

Karen Wilson, CEO of Origin finished by saying that *"The communication was good so I always knew where things were up to. The whole process was well managed and straight forward for me as a client, and importantly the outcome (we wanted) was achieved."*

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About Origin Housing

- A registered social landlord
- Provides affordable housing within London & Hertfordshire
- Also provides related care & support services



Karen Wilson, CEO



Mash Halai, appointed Non-Exec



Gordon Wright, appointed NED

About First Flight

- Chair, NED & Trustee recruitment specialists
- Widest choice of high-calibre Chair and NED candidates
- Affordable, success-linked fees
- Specialising in Not for Profit – Charities, Housing Associations and Care homes