



DID YOU KNOW?

We do
that too!



DID YOU KNOW?

As an Octavia tenant you have access to a whole range of services. Some of these services are things that you will expect, like a responsive repairs service, planned works and maintenance for your building and shared areas, and support and advice about housing and benefits.

But we also offer many other services that you might not expect – and all at no cost to you. For example, we can support you with managing your finances and any debt you have, help you or someone in your household to take practical steps to get into work, and provide community care and support services for you and your family.

This booklet explains a bit about each of the ‘personalised’ services we offer. You can find out more on our website or you can ask a member of our team to send you a more detailed factsheet about a specific service.

To make things easy to follow, we have used the same section headings, symbols and colour coding in this booklet, on our factsheets and on our website.

To apply for any of the services we offer simply contact us via the website, call us or speak to your resident services officer.



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Employment and training

We offer a free employment and training service through the Octavia Foundation, our sister charity. The service is available to Octavia tenants and anyone in your household as well as other residents over the age of 16 who live in Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Brent or Hammersmith & Fulham.

We tailor our service to your needs and our aim is to build relationships and support people over long periods of time. We can provide help with:

- ▶ one-to-one mentoring and support during your job search;
- ▶ creating or updating your CV and preparing for interviews;
- ▶ completing application forms;
- ▶ free internet access to job sites; and
- ▶ finding work placements, training courses and volunteering opportunities.



"The friendly and helpful attitude that I received from the Foundation helped me to improve as an employable person and feel a lot more confident about myself. I'm loving my new job, I couldn't be happier. Thank you for all the help you gave me in finding work."

Freddie, tenant



- ✔ Aged 16—65
- ✔ Unemployed or working up to 16 hours per week
- ✔ British citizen or have the right to work in the UK

 Volunteering

Volunteering with us is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in your local community, meet new people and gain new skills and experiences that will help you to develop your CV and employment prospects.

We offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities in areas including our befriending service for older people; in the Octavia Foundation charity shops; helping with our youth activities; and in our offices. We provide training for all our volunteers and we reimburse agreed travel and lunch expenses.

"I would recommend volunteering to other people; my daughter is already saying that she wants to volunteer here when she turns 16. They want to help local people and it's a good cause. The team here are very friendly – they are part of my family now."

Bitia, shop volunteer

 Anyone

**We do
that too!**



Apprenticeships and paid internships

Octavia has a range of apprenticeships and internships. People who are unemployed and not in full-time education can apply to join our annual apprenticeship scheme. Those who have completed a degree can apply to join our internship scheme. Subject to funding every year, these schemes offer people the chance to work with Octavia and study or train at the same time.

We have kick-started a lot of careers into different industries and professions since the schemes began. We offer support and guidance along the way.



"When I first got the news that I had been successful I was literally jumping for joy. When you go to college, and you say I want to do this, it's never really certain. Octavia has given me an opportunity to become a professional."

Clifton, apprentice electrician



- ✓ Unemployed and not in full time education



Shared area improvements



Each year, we put money aside for making improvements to the shared areas at some of our homes. We use this money to pay for works that go beyond our normal responsibilities as your landlord. Shared areas are spaces inside or outside of our properties that are used by all residents, for example lobbies, shared gardens and recycling areas.

If you live in a general needs or a mixed tenure property and you have an idea about how we can improve a shared area, let us know, as you may be able to apply for a grant to have these works done. All you need to do is tell us a bit more about your request, and we will contact you to discuss whether it will be possible or not, and how to take your idea forward.

Examples of improvements can include bike storage, a new bin area, shared garden landscaping or additional security such as a gate.

- ✓ Octavia tenants
- ✓ Octavia homeowners living in mixed tenure schemes



 Debt advice

We offer free, independent, confidential advice to help you manage any debts you may have.

We work in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to offer one to one drop-in advice surgery sessions and we are partners with the debt advice charity StepChange, which provides free and confidential information over the phone and online.

If you are experiencing problems paying your rent, or struggling to repay debts from credit cards, fuel payments, overdrafts or bills from mail order catalogues, the one to one advice surgeries or the StepChange phone and online services offer practical guidance and can help you reduce the money you owe.

The Citizens Advice Bureau debt advice surgery is held at our offices on Kensal Road, W10 5BN, every Thursday from 9.30am – 12.30pm (no appointment needed) and 1.30pm – 4.30pm (appointments only). You can drop in in the morning for general advice and if you need more support an appointment will be booked for you.

You can also contact StepChange via their website www.stepchange.org or by calling **0800 138 1111** (free from all phones, including mobiles).



- ✔ Octavia tenants and shared owners

 Benefits advice

We work in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to offer one to one benefits advice sessions. The service is free, independent and confidential providing help with issues relating to benefits such as:

- which benefits you may be entitled to;
- how to go about claiming them;
- what the switch to Universal Credit means for you and how direct payments will affect the way you pay your rent; and
- help with appealing if you are having problems with your benefits.



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- ✓ Octavia tenants and shared owners

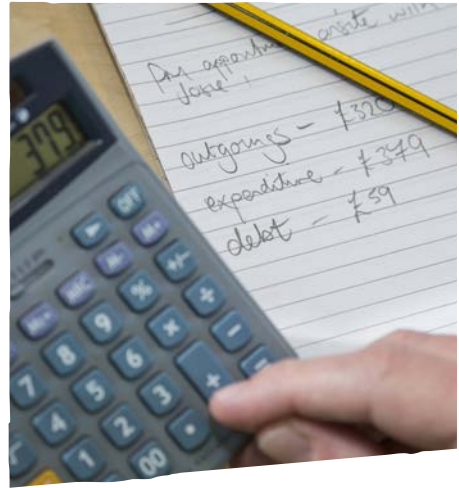


£ Budgeting help

We can help you to manage your money better by:

- ▶ working with you to develop a budget for your household;
- ▶ helping you to identify suitable bank accounts and related financial products, including affordable credit;
- ▶ advising you about utilities, welfare benefits, debt, hardship grants and help with jobs and training; and
- ▶ informing you about how new welfare reform changes might affect you.

We also have a financial inclusion officer who can offer greater support with budgeting, making the most of your income or reducing debts.



"I was in a lot of debt. The bills just kept coming and I got scared. The advice service is brilliant. They take the first step with you and now I can go by myself. I've learnt so much about how to save money and hopefully not get into more debt."

Jackie, tenant



- ✓ Octavia tenants and shared owners



Energy advice



Rising gas and electricity prices are a real cause for concern for many of our residents. Our energy team can support you to take simple steps towards reducing your energy bills without making your home less comfortable. The advice we offer includes:

- ▶ home energy checks to help you understand how you use energy in your home and the changes you could make to save money;
- ▶ help with comparing energy suppliers so that you can see if you are getting the best price for your gas and electricity; and
- ▶ information about grants and other funds that could help you to reduce the amount of money you spend on energy, for example by making your home more energy efficient.

✓ Octavia tenants and
homeowners



 Floating support

If you are a resident with support needs, we have a team who can provide you with a flexible support service. Your support worker can visit you at home or elsewhere. Things they may be able to help you with include:

- ▶ help with managing your tenancy;
- ▶ talking to you about physical or mental health concerns;
- ▶ accessing local health services;
- ▶ managing money, benefits and debts; or
- ▶ keeping your house safe and secure.



✔ Octavia tenants only

 Affordable banking

As an Octavia tenant you are eligible to join Your Credit Union, a not-for-profit bank based in the borough of Kensington & Chelsea. As you are an Octavia tenant, you do not have to live in the borough to join the credit union, which would normally be required.



Credit unions are not-for-profit financial co-operatives that are owned and controlled by their members. Your Credit Union offers fair, ethical and affordable borrowing and saving facilities. Their loans have much lower interest charges than payday loan companies or loan sharks.

When you save with Your Credit Union your money is 100% safe as it is guaranteed by the Financial Conduct Authority.

To find out more about Your Credit Union, visit www.yourcu.co.uk or phone 020 7605 6341.

- ✓ Octavia tenants and homeowners





Handyman service

We offer a free handyman service for residents aged 60 or over or who are receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments. We deliver this service in partnership with 'Silver Saints' – a professional handyman service. Silver Saints provide help with small jobs around the home that are usually your responsibility so are not covered by our repairs service. They can help with jobs such as moving furniture, fitting home safety equipment, assembling flat-pack furniture and connecting washing machines and dishwashers.

You can order up to two visits each year and you can ask the handyman to complete several jobs when they call. You will not pay anything for the handyman's time as long as their visit is under 1.5 hours. We will pay for up to £50 of materials per visit.



"I've used the service many times, they are absolutely fantastic. I couldn't do without them."

Mrs Harrop, tenant

- ✓ Octavia tenants only
- ✓ Aged over 60 or tenants receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments





Day care and activities



If you are aged 50 or over, we offer a range of day services and activities. All our low-cost activities and services promote independence, wellbeing and quality of life and can provide some respite for carers and relatives. It could be as simple as having lunch with other residents, yoga and chair-obics classes or accessing personal care services like hairdressing, chiropody, advice and support about health and more. You can get involved as a little or as much as you like and we have staff available to help meet your individual needs.

Our staff are friendly and welcoming, and each member of our team is experienced and skilled in working with individuals who have dementia, mental health issues and physical disabilities.

- ✓ Aged over 50
- ✓ Costs apply depending on activities or personal care packages





Adaptating or finding a new accessible home

If you or someone in your household has a disability, you may need to make changes to your home or think about moving to one that meets your needs to help you live more comfortably. We will do what we can to help. The first step is for you to contact us and ask to speak to our Support and Adaptions Assistant who will arrange to meet with you and discuss your needs. We can help with minor (for example grab rails or installing a shower seat) or major adaptations (such as installing a stair lift or fitting a ceiling hoist), or supporting you to review your housing options.

Major adaptations take longer because we have to ask the local occupational therapy service to visit you to assess your needs and make their recommendations. We also apply to the local authority on your behalf to help pay for the works.

If the occupational therapist does not agree that you need an adaptation, or if your council refuses funding, then



we will contact you to discuss possible alternatives but we keep you informed along the way.



- ✓ Octavia tenants only (and subject to assessment)

 **Support Service**

If you need additional support to help you manage your home or sort out a problem, our support service provides fast, short-term help.

The support service linked to your tenancy will help you to complete forms, offer advice on accessing services or approach charities on your behalf to obtain essential items that you may need. They can also get in touch with other organisations who can offer more long term assistance if necessary.



- ✓ Octavia tenants and homeowners



 Outreach

Our outreach service is available to older or vulnerable adults living in Westminster who are over the age of 50. The service is designed to encourage and support independence and to reduce isolation. An outreach worker can help you to join in with activities in the community – there are more than 100 to choose from and they range from singing groups to yoga or book clubs.



"I just thought why not – [the outreach service] gets you out the house and otherwise it gets very boring at home. I had started to count the tiles on my ceiling – I've got 250. The group are really friendly and I feel better for getting out the house"

Mrs Macpherson, Westminster resident



- ✓ Aged over 50 and
- ✓ Living in Westminster only currently.

 Befriending

London can be a lonely place, particularly for older members of our communities. If you or anyone you know is lonely or isolated we introduce you to a volunteer befriender who shares your hobbies and interests. They can arrange to spend time with you for an hour a week, at home or somewhere else if you prefer. This service is available in Westminster for over 55s and in Kensington and Chelsea for isolated adults aged 18 and up.

- ✓ Aged over 55 in Westminster
- ✓ Octavia tenants and homeowners in Westminster
- ✓ All members of the community in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea who is isolated and are over 18 years old



Hardship and education grants

We can sometimes offer financial grants of up to £400 for individual tenants who are experiencing hardship or have education or training needs.

The Octavia Foundation give out a limited number of grants on behalf of the Friends of Octavia charity. The grants are intended to cover the cost of essential household items such as:

- ▶ cookers, fridges and washing machines;
- ▶ beds and furniture; or
- ▶ paint for walls and ceilings, and help to get the painting done if needed.

We also offer education and training grants which can cover costs such as travel to course venues, books, computer equipment or clothes for an interview.

You can apply for a grant at any time but you cannot get a hardship grant if you have received one in the last two years. Funding for the grants is very limited and it is not possible to guarantee that you will receive one.



"Thank you so much for my new cooker, I'm so grateful to have it and to be able to cook hot meals."

Mr Sargent, tenant



 Octavia tenants only



Sheltered housing



We provide sheltered housing in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster for local people who want to live independently in their own flat, but with the security of knowing they can contact a mobile Scheme Manager for help if they need it. If you or someone you know would be interested in moving to one of these flats, please speak to our Sheltered Housing team who can advise you about your options.

- ✔ Aged over 50
- ✔ With a local connection to Westminster or Kensington and Chelsea

"I love this flat. I find all the support workers very helpful. We have numbers to ring if we have any difficulties or if we want to know something. Do I feel looked after? Absolutely! And of course we have our alarm system – I can pull a string if I am in difficulties, as I had to when I had my fall. It is very good indeed."

Elaine, shelterd housing tenant





Garden Guardians



Residents who have a private garden are responsible for keeping it in a good condition. We know that this can sometimes be difficult for older tenants, so we work in partnership with the Octavia Foundation and Age UK Kensington & Chelsea to offer these residents practical help with garden maintenance tasks.

The Garden Guardians service is available free of charge to residents who are over the age of 55 or who are vulnerable because they have particular support needs. The service is provided by volunteers who offer help for up to 30 tenants per year with tasks such as clearing overgrown gardens, cutting grass, weeding and pruning.



- ✓ Octavia tenants only and
- ✓ Aged over 55



Opportunities for young people

Children and young people can come along to BASE, a creative and learning space run by the Octavia Foundation in Pimlico. Sessions take place three times a week and are free of charge. Each session includes a nutritious meal and we reimburse agreed travel costs. Tuesday nights are for juniors aged 7-12 and Mondays and Thursdays are for people aged 13 and over.

We also run youth projects specifically for residents of Octavia, a children's summer sports programme and other activities throughout the year. We have a great reputation for our youth-led media and film-making projects, which provide young people with practical experience and training in film-making and production. Many of the young people we have worked with have gone on to work in the creative industries or have won community awards for their contributions to their local neighborhoods.

- ✓ BASE – aged from 7–21 or 25 if disabled and living or studying in Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, Brent or Hammersmith and Fulham. Octavia tenants only.
- ✓ Summer sports – aged 7–11. Octavia residents and wider community.



If you or anyone in your household would like more information or to apply for any of the services in this booklet please visit our website at octaviahousing.org.uk or contact our customer contact team on [020 8354 5500](tel:02083545500).





Please contact us if you need any part of this information in Braille, on audio tape or explained in a different language.

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