



Developing a Terms of Reference





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This short information guide sets out the key principles for you to use when developing a Terms of Reference (ToR) for any group, committee, or panel.

Introduction

A ToR is another element in your Governance and resident engagement framework. It is usually used in conjunction with other documents such as Code of Conduct or a Constitution. There is no single ToR that can be applied to every group or organisation because they may have different circumstances.

A ToR provides clarity on how a group will operate and defines roles and responsibilities.

The key areas that a ToR should aim to cover are listed below:

- What must be achieved?
- Who will take part in it?
- How it will be achieved?
- When it will be achieved?

More areas could be added to the ToR, and it is up to your group to decide what these will be as each group will have specific needs.



Developing the Content of the ToR

The content of a ToR should include but not be limited to:

Introduction

This is where you provide some context regarding the group. You could include how the group fits into the wider resident involvement structure of the landlord, and what relationship it has with other tenant panels.

Purpose and aims of the group

This is where you explain the functions of the group.

You could also include the work plan of the group and how they will deliver it.

The remit of the group

How will the group work, and who is responsible for different aspects of the work.

Equality and Diversity

Outline how the group intends to be representative, inclusive and non discriminatory.

Decision making and accountability

Set out the minimum number of members needed to be present at a meeting to make a decision (to be quorate). Also describe the voting procedures that will be used by the group and which decisions will be made by a consensus.

Code of Conduct

This can be a separate document. It sets out what behaviour is expected within the group and what the consequences are if not met. See [Tpas Information Guide: Code of Conduct](#).

Finance

If the role of the group includes financial business, this should be stated here.



Changes to ToR

Outline what happens when changes to the ToR are made (including how often the ToR will be reviewed).

Your ToR should be developed in a democratic way ensuring there is input from residents and the landlord. Reviewing and comparing other ToRs is useful when developing your own. However, it is important that your ToR is relevant to your group.

Further information

Examples of ToRs for various groups:

Housing Ombudsman Residents Panel
<https://tinyurl.com/n2c3fbdd>

Scrutiny Panel – York Council
<https://tinyurl.com/y4pmcm34>

If you have any questions regarding this document or if we can help in any other way, call us on **0161 868 3500** or email info@tpas.org.uk