Tpas Information Guide

TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS
tpas

Setting Up a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)

www.tpas.org.uk

Setting Up a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)

This information guide explains the purpose of Tenants and Residents Associations, what they do, and how to set one up.

What is covered:

- What is a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)
- Benefits of a TRA
- Establishing your TRA
- Engagement and Participation from other residents
- Bank Accounts
- TRA Constitution and its role in TRAs
- Training and Support
- Other useful information

What is a Tenants and Residents Association (TRA)?

In a social housing setting, a TRA is a great mechanism for holding your landlord to account and developing positive relationships. TRAs provide a route for residents to be involved in the management of their homes and is a useful communication channel between landlords and residents.

The role of the TRA is mainly to represent the views of other residents within a particular geographical area.

Some benefits to having a TRA are:

- Tenants who live within the same community can share their experiences of services received, and work with relevant organisations (including landlord), to find the best solutions to problems.
- Tenants can provide local intelligence and information about issues that affect the quality of life for residents.
- Tenants can share skills and knowledge and develop a good community spirit and increase capacity building.
- It's easier for Landlords to know who to consult with on their proposed projects.
- Tenants can apply for wider funding to improve where they live.

Some TRAs are formally recognised by their Landlord. This means that the TRA has to meet the Landlords set criteria for recognition.
You should check with your Landlord to find out more about their recognition policy, to see what criteria you might need to meet.

If you are formally recognised, there may be additional benefits, these may include:

- A route of communication to the landlord that will foster better relationships between tenant and landlord.
- Training and support.
- An annual grant that will help with running your TRA.
- Support from staff to assist with some administrative tasks, e.g printing, publicity, minute taking.

Stage One
Setting up the TRA

Planning

If you are setting up a TRA, you will need to decide on the following first:

- What area the TRA will cover
- Is there any other TRAs in the area.
- Find out whether there is support and interest in the local area for setting up the TRA. You can do this by speaking to other tenants, utilising social media and posting on notice boards.
- Find out what resources and support are available for the group. These may include funding streams and landlord grants.
- Check that the people who want to be involved with running the TRA, have the right skills and level of commitment.

Stage Two
Launching the TRA

Once you have established that tenants would like to set up a TRA, you can hold your first meeting. Make sure you advertise and promote this well in the area.

At the meeting you can decide on the following:

- The name for your TRA.
- The aims of the TRA.
- Who the committee members will be (this will require a democratic vote). See **Tpas Information Guide: The Role of Committee Members.**
- Present and agree the TRA constitution. See **Tpas Information Guide: Developing and Writing a Constitution and Code and Conduct.**

Something to Note

Try to encourage a wide and diverse range of people to stand for the election for your committee.

This will help ensure that your TRA is representative of the wider community.

Other tips to ensure inclusivity in your TRA are:

- Avoid using stereotypes.
- Challenge racist, sexist, derogatory or other discriminatory behaviours.
- Show respect and allow tenants the right to express their views whether or not everyone is in agreement.
- Arrange meetings to suit as many people as possible.

Stage Three
Running the TRA

A - Finances and Bank Account

It is important that there is accountability for funds managed by the TRA. One of the ways to safeguard funds is by opening a bank account in the name of the TRA (not an individual). Do check around for bank accounts that have no or very low charges. If you are doing an internet search these accounts are usually referred to by banks as "clubs and societies".

Make sure that you let the bank know that you are a non-profit organisation to prevent your account from being treated as a small business that may incur extra charges. There should be at least 3 authorised signatories on the bank account. Please check your constitution about the rules for who should be signatories.

It is important that the Treasurer keeps receipts and accounts up to date and provides regular financial statements to the membership.

Ensuring your TRA finances are open, transparent and available to audit is very important.

B - The Constitution

It is important that the committee and all TRA members understand and are familiar with the constitution.

The constitution is a document that sets out and defines the rules for running the TRA.

The constitution should include the following:

- The area the TRA covers.
- The agreed aims of the TRA.
- How decisions are made.
- What the financial procedures are.
- How the TRA would be disbanded.
- How all members can have a voice.

Some landlords may offer model constitutions which covers their essential criteria. You may also create your own constitution.

See **Tpas Guide to Developing and Writing a Constitution.**

C - Training and Support

You may need help and support to run your TRA.

The good news is, there is lots available, check out the Tpas website for our latest training courses and also contact your Landlord as they may have help and support available.

D - Insurance

Depending on what your TRA is doing, or whether you have your own premises, you may need to obtain insurance.

For example, if have your own meeting venue or you are running a community event, you may need public liability insurance. For more information on insurance speak to your tenant engagement team or Councils Facilities team.

Check out The Volunteering England website (**www.ncvo.org.uk**) as it recommends insurance companies that provide insurance for voluntary groups.

Use our Tpas connect site to see what others do about Insurance (**www.tpas.org.uk/tpas-connect**)

Useful information

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**