

An introduction to setting up a tenants and residents association



This introductory guide covers:

- What is a tenants and residents association?
- What is involved in running a tenants and residents association?
- Becoming a Hyde-recognised tenants and residents association
- Getting started – first steps to setting up a tenants and residents association

What is a tenants and resident association?

A tenants and residents association (TRA) is a group of people who live in the same area who have come together to work for common aims and objectives such as:

- Trying to solve problems that affect residents in their area
- Helping to make their neighbourhood a better place to live through environmental improvements or through organising community events and creating a sense of 'community spirit'



Activities that TRAs might get involved in include:

- Holding their housing association or local authority to account for carrying out repairs
- Campaigning on local issues affecting residents or for improvements to their local area
- Organising community activities or events
- Helping to promote local activities such as Neighbourhood Watch

Many landlords (including the Hyde Group) consult with TRAs on housing management issues and they can often become the main representative of residents' views in their area. For this reason it is important that they are inclusive and try their best to represent the views of all residents in the area they cover.

Recognised TRAs also have a legal right to be included by their landlord in any Section 20 consultation in the area they represent. (For more info, please see guide on 'Understanding Section 20 consultation' available in the TRA section at www.gototheoak.hyde-housing.co.uk/)

There are many active TRAs across the Hyde Group's geography, some large, some small, some old, some new, what they all have in common is a willingness to work together to improve the quality of life in their community.

What is involved in running a TRA?

- Your group will need to have a **constitution**. This is the governing document detailing the formal rules of your association which will help it to operate fairly and democratically. The constitution gives the group a legal status, for instance, when opening a bank account. This should also include a **code of conduct** for members. (We can provide you with a model constitution.)
- You should also have a **diversity and inclusion policy or statement**, this is especially important if you want to apply for external funding at some point and is part of the essential criteria for Tier 1 recognised tenants and residents associations – more on this overleaf. (We can provide you with a model diversity and inclusion statement.)
- Your group will need to have an **elected committee** which should include, at a minimum, a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer* and Secretary. (The officers of the committee should be from different households and not related to each other.)
- Meetings will need to have an **agenda** and **minutes** will need to be taken at each meeting.
- Your group will need to hold an **annual general meeting** (AGM) each year.
- Your group will need to have a **bank account*** with at least two authorised signatories (although we recommend three), who are from different households and not related to each other.
- Your Treasurer will need to keep open up to date **accounts** which are independently **checked** each year before the AGM.*

*If you do not think that your group will require any funding or need to administrate finances, the Hyde Group now offers a Tier 2 recognition option. Tier 2 TRAs will not be eligible for funding but will still be consulted with and offered non-financial support by us.

Becoming a Hyde-recognised TRA

To register your group as a Hyde-recognised TRA, you will need to complete the following online form:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HydeResGroupReg/>

Hyde offers two tiers of recognition:

- **Tier 1** – where your group is eligible for an annual TRA grant but must meet certain criteria
- **Tier 2** – where your group will not be eligible for funding but will still be consulted with and offered non-financial support by us (there is no specific criteria that Tier 2 groups must meet)

Annual TRA Grant

Tier 1 TRAs will be eligible for an annual TRA grant from the Resident Engagement Team of up to £300 for TRAs with a membership of up to 600 members. TRAs which can evidence a membership of over 600 members will be granted an additional £2 per property for each property over 600, up to a maximum of £500 per annum.

Criteria for Tier 1 recognition by the Hyde Group:

- A minimum of 50% of the geographical area as per the TRA constitution must be Hyde residents (tenants, leaseholders, freeholders or shared owners).
- Membership which is open to all residents based in the estate/block/area the association represents. (The geographic area and or estate that the group represents must be defined in the group's constitution.)
- Agree and adhere to a written constitution based on Hyde's model or approved by the Hyde Resident Engagement Team.
- A diversity and inclusion policy or statement.
- Plans to hold an annual general meeting and at least one open meeting per annum. The dates, times and venue of the AGM and open meetings must be advertised to everyone living in the area represented by the TRA.
- Open financial records with annual independently checked accounts. A copy must be forwarded to the Resident Engagement Team. We recommend that in order to obtain external financial support, e.g. grant funding, the TRA get their accounts professionally audited.
- An association name and a bank or building society account in that name.

Getting started

First steps

Start by speaking to the other residents in your area to find out what people think about starting a group. If there is enough interest, arrange an informal meeting with the interested people to discuss:

- What are the issues and what do people hope to achieve?
- What area will your group cover?
- Who is willing to be part of a steering group to help get the group off the ground?



The role of the steering group

The role of the steering group is to help get the group up and running; this includes:

- Drafting a constitution that will be adopted at the first meeting. We also recommend your group adopts a diversity and inclusion statement which is

especially important if your group ever needs to apply for funding. You can use the Hyde Group's model constitution and diversity and inclusion statement to use as starting points. (To make sure your adapted documents meet our recognition criteria, we suggest you send them to us to check before they are adopted at your public launch meeting.)

- Organising a public launch meeting and inviting all the residents in the area the association will cover. At the launch meeting you will need to adopt the constitution (and diversity and inclusion statement if you are having one) and elect your committee.

Organising your public launch meeting

1. Try to arrange a date and a time that best suits the people who will be coming along to the meeting. Try to avoid any clashes with things like major sporting events to maximise attendance.
2. Book a venue – opt for somewhere that is easy for people to get to, accessible and somewhere that people will feel comfortable going to
3. Produce flyers, posters and any other publicity for the event. (The Resident Engagement Team can help you with this.) Include information about the date, time, venue and the purpose of the meeting (including what you will discuss and decide), as well as who to contact for more information and/or for copies of the draft constitution etc. before the meeting. It may also be a good idea to include a nomination form with any flyers to nominate the officers of the committee.
4. Make arrangements for any refreshments you'll be providing.
5. Decide who will act as Chair (to lead the meeting) and Secretary (to take the minutes).
6. Prepare an agenda.
7. Invite all the residents in the area you will be covering to your public launch meeting (e.g. by delivering flyers).

Sample agenda for a public launch meeting

- 1) Welcome and introductions
- 2) Adoption of constitution and other documents
- 3) Nominations for officers of the committee
- 4) Election of the committee
- 5) Membership arrangements
- 6) Arrangements for future meetings – frequency, location, timing
- 7) Plans for the coming months
- 8) Date of next meeting

On the night

- Have somebody ready to welcome people in.
- Have a signing in sheet ready to collect people's names and contact details, including email addresses.
- Have copies of the agenda and any other key documents, e.g. the constitution and diversity and inclusion statement available.
- Have refreshments ready.
- Stick to the agenda.
- Make sure somebody takes minutes (this will then become the job of the Secretary).



After your public launch meeting

- Your Treasurer will need to set up a community bank account (if applicable) with at least two signatories (although we recommend three) who are from different households and not related to each other. These will usually include the Chair, Treasurer and/or Secretary.
- Your Secretary should complete the Hyde Group's Tenants and Residents Association's Recognition Form for your group so that your group can be recognised and you can receive your first annual grant.
- Set some goals for your group (see guidance on 'Planning and setting goals').

Contact details

More information about running a tenants and residents association is available at www.gototheoak.hyde-housing.co.uk/

A please email residentengagement@hyde-housing.co.uk or contact Customer Services on 0800 3 282 282 and a member of the Resident Engagement Team will get back to you.