

GET INVOLVED

Getting
Started

Getting Started: Establishing your TRA

This section explains the first steps that you will need to undertake to set up a TRA. It takes you through the process from start up until the TRA's opening meeting.

What to Know and Do Before You Begin

- TRAs represent an area defined in their constitution. There should not be more than one TRA in any defined area
- To check if there is a TRA already in your area or to ask for help to set up a TRA, contact your Community Engagement Officer. See Contact List section
- You will need to find out how much support there is for a TRA in your area and how many people are willing to help out. The first thing to do is to talk with your neighbours about setting up a TRA. As long as you have at least six neighbours over 18 years old, you have enough members to get started
- When you have a core group of members, you should communicate with as many of your neighbours as possible (in a way you are comfortable with), finding out what issues and concerns they have about living in the area and how they find the housing services they receive
- If other residents are enthusiastic about setting up a TRA then ask them if they will help you to door knock and ask questions that are important to them
- Tenants, Leaseholders and Private Tenants renting from LBHF Leaseholders can all become members of a TRA
- TRAs should elect at least three lead committee officers. These roles are Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Some TRAs optionally elect a Vice-Chair
- You may elect an unlimited number of committee members. They should be listed on your registration paperwork
- The establishment of a new TRA is done by holding an Open Inaugural General Meeting that all households need to be invited to, with at least 14 days advance notice
- The election of the lead committee officers should be carried out at this Open Inaugural General Meeting and voting should be agreed by a show of hands, where a majority vote wins the position. Residents are allowed to nominate themselves for positions and each TRA member is allowed one vote per position. TRA members cannot vote for themselves
- Your meeting guest list should include your Local Housing Officer or Housing Manager. You could also invite your Community Engagement Officer, Ward Councillors, Neighbourhood Wardens and other relevant officers



A Few Pointers

When setting up a TRA, there are a few points to keep in mind:

- Try to include as many residents as possible in making decisions and sharing tasks and responsibilities. One or two people cannot do the work that is needed to make your TRA successful. The more people involved, the easier it is to delegate task and the more your TRA can achieve
- Keep all residents informed about what the TRA is doing. You could provide newsletters, letters, have open meetings, and provide a way to contact the TRA, via an official TRA email address and perhaps a TRA phone number
- Understand that volunteering to work as a TRA member will mean attending meetings and committing some of your time
- Successful TRAs plan for the future. The Resident Involvement Team have a training programme to assist lead committee officers, those wishing to take on more responsibility in the future and members standing in for leads when they are ill or unavailable. See the section on Training and Support for more information

Working in Partnership with the Council

The council are here to help; you can contact your Community Engagement Officer at any time. They will be able to advise you on:

- The access and support that comes with being formally recognised by the Council, achieved by adopting the council's model constitution, or an agreed constitution which meets the council's recognition criteria
- Advantages of a Code of Conduct: to help to make sure everyone understands the acceptable behaviour in meetings
- Identifying and organising any training that the TRA may need to get started and run effectively
- To be registered with the council there are some forms that need to be completed. This is so that the Resident Involvement Team can know who to contact and how. Your

Community Engagement Officer can assist you to complete these mandatory forms (see section Contact us)

Planning a Meeting to Establish Your TRA

At your first meeting you need to know what estate(s) block(s) or street(s) your TRA will represent. You should discuss this with your Community Engagement Officer who will ensure that a TRA does not already operate in the area you want to represent and that residents are happy for you to do so.

You also need to:

- Discuss problems raised when you canvassed resident's views and decide how you think these should be tackled
- Choose a date, time and venue to have a public meeting that will officially establish your TRA. The Resident Involvement team will support you to find a suitable venue for your meeting to take place
- Remember to choose a time and place that you think residents will be able to attend
- Agree an agenda for the official launch of the TRA and deliver the agenda to residents at least 14 days in advance of the meeting
- Invite your Community Engagement Officer and Housing Officer
- Discuss the lead committee roles that volunteers may want to stand for at your meeting to launch your TRA

The Inaugural Meeting to Launch Your TRA

This meeting should be chaired by an Acting Chair, Community Engagement Officer or a Housing Officer until the election of the TRA committee.

- Have an attendance list that records the residents that attend. Ask permission to hold names and contact details in confidence for TRA purposes only
- Adopt the Resident Involvement team's code of conduct for meetings

- Decide on a name for the TRA
- Hold a democratic election of the TRA lead committee officers; Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and optionally a Vice-Chair
- Ask if anyone wants to become an additional committee member
- Agree on a main contact person, telephone number and email address for TRA correspondence
- Agree a date for the next meeting
- Try to agree the next agenda in advance of the next meeting
- Return registration forms to Resident Involvement team with 14 days of the meeting. Your contact details will also be held in confidence
- Minutes of the meeting should be taken and be available

Opening a Bank Account

It is very important that the TRA's money is kept safe and that there is accountability for funds. A bank account helps to put safeguards in place and also assists with record keeping for the end of financial year audit. Also, if a TRA applies for any funding (including the annual resident TRA grant provided by the Council) the funds will need to be made payable to the TRA rather than an individual. A bank account should therefore be opened as soon as possible in the name of the TRA.

The account should not be a personal account but on the TRA's behalf. The TRA should be prepared to shop around for an account that does not have any charges. When looking for information on the internet, remember that most banks refer to community and voluntary organisations as 'clubs and societies'. Some recommended banks to approach for a TRA bank account are:

Metro Bank Community Account for Clubs, Societies and Charities- 0345 08 08 508

Locations: Fulham Retail Centre Unite 3, Fulham Broadway; 160-166 Kensington High Street; 137 Chiswick High Road

<https://www.metrobankonline.co.uk/Commercial/Bank-Accounts/Community-Accounts-for-Clubs-Societies-and-Charities/>

- No monthly charges
- Free Online/Telephone Banking
- No Overdraft facility
- Credit reference required when setting up account

Lloyds Bank Treasurer's Account- 0800 056 0056

Locations: 21-25 King Street, Hammersmith; 417 North End Road, Fulham

http://www.lloydsbank.com/business/retail-business/current-accounts/treasurers-account.asp?WT.ac=RBB_Accounts_Treasurer_FOM

- No monthly charges
- Free Online/Telephone Banking
- No Overdraft facility
- No Credit Reference
- Only for balances of up to £50,000
- Can change signatories on bank account by post.

The bank/building society will require evidence of the identity of each signatory. Unless they have an account with that bank already it will be necessary for them to provide:

- Proof of identity – e.g. driving licence, passport
- Proof of address – e.g. utilities bill, benefit book, bank statement.

The signatories should be people with good credit ratings. Make sure that you tell the bank that you are a non-profit-making organisation. If you do not make it clear, the TRA will be treated as a small business and you will pay additional charges for services that the TRA does not need such as overdrafts. The TRA may, however, be charged for going overdrawn, stopping cheques, or requesting extra statements.

There should be at least three authorised signatories on the bank account of which no two signatories should be close family members or live in the same house. Two signatories should be required to sign cheques.

Housing Representatives Forum

Housing Representatives Forum (HRF) meetings are held seven times a year in the month when a Borough Housing Forum is not taking place, with each meeting lasting approximately two hours.

Membership is drawn from the TRAs, Sheltered Housing Forum and the Chairs of Housing Improvement groups. Every TRA should send one representative from their lead committee officers to each meeting. It is agreed by the Officers and Administration of the Forum that the recommendations will form an integral part of the decision-making process.

The role of the Housing Representatives Forum is to:

- Act as the central representative body for residents
- Co-ordinate the work of the groups and ensure that residents' views are reflected in all aspects of housing services across the Housing Department
- Make recommendations on all matters relating to the delivery of housing services

TRA representatives and other forum representatives are expected to fulfil the ongoing commitment to send representatives to this meeting.