



Residents' Associations

Customer Guide



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Introduction

A Residents' Association is a formal or informal group formed by people living in the same residential area, such as a neighbourhood or a wider housing scheme. Its primary purpose is to represent the interests of residents, foster community spirit, and address common concerns ranging from maintenance issues to planning and development.

A Residents' Association typically has several legal rights, but these can vary depending on where the association is located. In many cases, they can create and encourage rules within the community, work with local authorities to tackle shared concerns, and even handle funds collected for community projects. They might also push for changes to laws or challenge decisions about local planning that impact the area, as long as they meet the legal criteria to represent the community. Ultimately, these associations act as a united voice for residents, giving them more influence when it comes to solving issues or dealing with local government.

At L&G, we're keen to have a positive relationship with all our customers and the communities you live in, and are here to support you to set up, run and grow your Residents' Associations by providing you with the tools you need and providing formal recognition when criteria are met.





What will you need?

To be formally recognised, a properly organised Residents' Association needs:

- A committee
- A constitution
- Representative membership (we ask that at least 50% of the residents you represent support the Residents' Association)
- Meeting agendas
- Notes of meetings
- An AGM (Annual General Meeting)

Membership should be open to all residents over the age of 18 and should not discriminate against members of the community because of race, age, sex, disability, sexuality, religion or background.

Membership should be open to all tenure types living in the defined area, with membership reaching over 50% within one year of setting up (i.e. over 50% of households in the defined area express permission for the Residents' Association to represent them where they live). They do not necessarily have to be directly involved, but receive updates and can provide feedback to the committee directly.

It's important to note that Residents' Associations don't have the legal right to the access of personal information of other residents in any circumstances. This type of information can be requested from residents and provided only if permission is given.



What are the Benefits?

There are many benefits of setting up a Residents' Association in your local community:

Strengthening Community Voice

A Residents' Association amplifies the collective voice of residents, making it easier to address shared concerns with local councils, housing associations, or other organisations. By presenting a unified front, the association can negotiate for improvements or changes more effectively.

Improved Communication

Residents' Associations serve as a bridge between residents and decision-makers, ensuring that important updates, changes, or opportunities are conveyed effectively. They create a platform for dialogue and feedback, fostering transparency and trust.

Community Cohesion

Through meetings, events, and collaborative initiatives, a Residents' Association brings residents together, encouraging a sense of belonging and unity. It helps people from diverse backgrounds connect and work toward common goals.

Advocacy for Local Improvements

Whether it's campaigning for better lighting, safer roads, improved waste collection, or new community facilities, a Residents' Association provides the structure to advocate for projects that enhance the quality of life in the area.

Access to Funding and Resources

In some cases, Residents' Associations can apply for grants, funding, or assistance from local authorities or organisations, enabling them to undertake projects like playground upgrades or community events. L&G will also provide an initial set up grant of £300, and will provide this annually to help with running costs.



Conflict Resolution

Disputes or misunderstandings among residents can sometimes arise. A Residents' Association offers a neutral platform to discuss and mediate issues constructively.

Empowerment and Representation

Being part of an RA empowers residents by giving them a formal avenue to influence decisions that affect their neighbourhood. This is particularly important in ensuring that diverse voices are heard.

Building a Safer Community

Collaborative initiatives like neighbourhood watch schemes or safety awareness programs can be organised through a Residents' Association, making the area more secure and fostering a shared sense of responsibility.

By setting up an RA, residents not only gain a mechanism for addressing their needs but also build a stronger, more connected, and proactive community.





Setting up your Residents' Association

1. What is the Purpose?

Usually, Residents' Associations are set up in response to a problem, but it's important to make sure there are some long-term goals as well.

2. Your Neighbours' Views

Once you have a clear idea of what you want to achieve, you can check to see if other residents in the area feel the same. There are different ways you can do this, including informal chats, surveys, social media and door knocking. Be sure to handle any personal information in line with data protection guidelines. You can find those [here](#).

At L&G, we recognise that whilst it is important your group is representative, it can take time to gather the support you need. This is why we give you a year to meet the 50% membership requirement (at least half of residents in the area you're representing must support your Residents' Association).

Once you have the interest of your neighbours, you can hold an initial meeting for everyone to share and agree the goals for your Residents' Association. Your management provider may be able to assist with promotion and finding a local venue. It's important to ensure the meeting is well advertised, so think about the different ways that this can be done (e.g. using notice boards for posters, social media to create events). Take care to consider the date, time and venue, thinking about how accessible your venue is and whether the time would work for those working or with other commitments.

At this meeting, you may want to talk about current common issues, if there is a need for a Residents' Association, and if there is any interest from anyone to be on a committee. If there are enough residents at this meeting, you can decide together whether to set up a Residents' Association. Where possible, take notes at this meeting, including the number of residents in attendance.

3. Vote in your Committee



If your initial meeting was well attended, you can vote in your committee at the end of the meeting. If not, a vote can be carried out in other ways, such as online or by ballot box. For support with this, please contact us using the details at the bottom of this guide. The committee coordinates the activities of the Residents' Association and works to meet its objectives. Roles include:

- **Chairperson:** Leads meetings, represents the Residents' Association in discussions with external organisations, and ensures the committee works effectively towards its goals.
- **Secretary:** Handles communications, prepares agendas, takes minutes during meetings, and ensures records are properly maintained.
- **Treasurer:** Manages the finances of the Residents' Association, maintains accurate accounts, and ensures transparency in all monetary transactions.
- **Committee members:** Offer support by contributing to discussions, assisting with tasks, and representing the interests of residents.

4. Adopt a Constitution

A constitution is a written statement covering the aims, objectives and rules of your Residents' Association. The aims state what you want to achieve, with the objectives detailing how you will do this. The constitution clarifies who your group represents, how it is run, the roles of the committee and the rules for meetings. L&G requires all Residents' Associations to have a constitution to be registered and formally recognised. This will be approved during the registration process. We can provide a template for your constitution, however if you would prefer to create your own, please include the following:

- **Name of your Residents' Association**
- **Area that it represents**
- **Aims & objectives**
- **Membership**
Note that all tenures should be welcome where applicable, and residents must opt in to become a member/ support the Residents' Association.
- **The committee**
Including how many members, duties, election method and frequency of any meetings (such as AGMs, committee meetings and any public meetings). Quorum (minimum number of committee members for a meeting to go ahead and for decisions to be made) and a code of conduct for meetings should also be included.



- **Changes to the constitution**

Outlining the procedure for any alterations made to the constitution. Please note that L&G should be notified of any changes.

- **Equal opportunities**

Ensuring everyone has the opportunity to participate, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, faith, disability, sexuality, gender or age (as long as your members are over the age of 18).

5. Open a Bank Account

Finance is the responsibility of the treasurer, who will need to account for finances at each AGM. The treasurer will:

- Open a bank account in the name of the Residents' Association (L&G can provide a letter for your chosen bank if needed). The treasurer and one other committee member should be a signatory for the bank account.
- Ensure money raised is for the benefit of meeting the aims of the Residents' Association.
- Ensure all money is kept in the Residents' Association's bank account.
- Put forward any expenditure to be agreed by the committee.
- Provide audited accounts at each AGM.
- Ensure the bank account is closed upon dissolution of the Residents' Association, and that any funds are given to a charitable organisation (providing evidence of this to L&G).

6. Register your Residents' Association

To be a registered Residents' Association, you will need to have:

- Demonstrated you have obtained or made steps to obtain wider support from residents in the estate, building or area you will represent (for example through sign-ups or meeting attendance).
- A defined area the Residents' Association aims to represent with open membership to all residents of all tenures.
- A signed constitution approved by L&G.
- An elected committee in place.
- A bank account in the name of your Residents' Association.



7. Hold your First Committee Meeting

Your first meeting for the committee, where normal business for the Residents' Association is conducted. Ensure only committee members can vote at these meetings (particularly if observers are allowed to attend), and that minutes and actions are noted.

8. Gain Formal Recognition

All Residents' Associations must be formally recognised by L&G within one year of registration. Residents' Associations that are formally recognised by their landlord for the purposes of section 29 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 acquire additional rights in law. This includes the right to:

- Request information about service charge costs.
- Be consulted on appointments of managing agents.
- Be notified by us of any upcoming major works.

To be recognised, you will need to provide evidence of the following each year:

- Financial records (with an annual account summary).
- Minutes from meetings, including an annual general meeting (AGM)
- A completed form after each AGM of any changes to your committee or constitution.
- Ways to make sure all residents are aware of the Residents' Association and are encouraged to get involved.
- Open membership to all residents and proof of membership to be shared each year.

Without the above, customers are welcome to form informal local groups, but may not be entitled to ask for the same level of information that a formally recognised Residents' Association can request. If after one year, a registered RA is unable to show proof of membership, no formal recognition will be given and any funds should be donated to a local charity or community organisation.



Running your Residents' Association

1. Types of Meetings

Committee meetings

General meetings of the committee, where you may also wish to invite representatives of your Management Provider (check the 'Working Relationship' section further down for best practice on communication and giving notice for meeting attendance). These meetings can also be held virtually if everyone is comfortable to do so, using applications such as Zoom or WhatsApp.

Annual General Meetings

Each year, the committee will report on the activity of the Residents' Association. All committee members will stand down at this meeting, and new members are elected. Your constitution should state when and how this meeting will be held, and how you'll inform other members. The meeting should cover:

- Annual report of activities (Chair).
- Accounts for the previous year (Treasurer).
- Report of activity from any sub-committees that may have formed.
- Re-election of the committee.
- Re-confirmation of membership status (ensuring 50% of residents still support the Residents' Association).

General meetings

Public meetings which all residents in the defined area can attend. You should aim to arrange at least two of these each year, to give residents a chance to bring up issues that the committee may not be aware of.



Special general meetings

More infrequent meetings, also known as 'emergency general meetings'. These meetings are called when an urgent matter has arisen that cannot wait until the next general meeting.

2. Grants

L&G provide you with a start-up grant of £300 and will continue to provide this to you each year following receipt of your annual accounts, AGM minutes and proof of ongoing membership from the wider community. To apply for the start-up grant, Residents' Associations simply need to send an email or letter to L&G attaching the following:

- A signed constitution.
- List of current committee members and contact details.
- A letter from your bank with your account details (or bank statement).

Once formally recognised, you can apply for further funding each year to help with running costs. To apply for the yearly grant, you'll need to provide the following:

- Your AGM minutes.
- Up to date contact details for the committee.
- Income & expenditure for the past year.
- A written request for the grant by email or letter.

You can use your grants for things which support your Residents' Association and its objectives, such as meeting space hire, stationary, administration costs, refreshments, or towards community events.

3. Voting

Any member can make a proposal, but for it to be officially voted on, the proposal must be seconded/ supported by another member. No member shall exercise more than one vote, and in the event of an equal vote, the chairperson shall make the final decision.

4. Communication

As a guide, advertise your meetings with an agenda around 2 weeks prior to the meeting. If resident members are not permitted to observe committee meetings, ensure updates and actions are shared with everyone on a regular basis, such as through newsletters. Minutes



of meetings should also be available to everyone, so be sure to inform others of the details on how to request these.

5. Working Relationship – Residents' Associations and your Management Provider

We're keen to ensure your Residents' Association runs as smoothly as it can, so we ask for the following considerations to be taken into account when communicating with your management provider or directly with L&G:

Residents' Associations will:

- Foster and maintain a productive and respectful relationship with your management provider and/ or L&G.
- Contact your management provider initially with any queries. L&G may get involved with problem solving upon request, in partnership with your management provider.
- Ensure meetings requiring staff attendance end by 8pm.
- Give at least 2 weeks' notice when inviting staff to meetings, sharing the agenda so we can find information/ answers where needed.
- Allow us to respond to queries in line with our usual service standards.
- Provide updates on relevant issues being discussed, including communicating meetings from meetings and AGM meetings where applicable.

We will:

- Foster and maintain a productive and respectful relationship with Residents' Associations.
- Work alongside you, acting as a representative voice to resolve local issues.
- Attend meetings where required and possible.
- Support the running of your Residents' Association.
- Communicate and consult effectively with you on any changes to services or updates on local issues.

6. Dissolution of your Residents' Association

If you decide that your group is no longer functional or no longer needs to exist, you can dissolve the Residents' Association. Members need to agree that this is the best action to take (usually at an AGM, with at least two thirds of members voting for the dissolution). At least 21 days' notice needs to be given to members if this is an item for discussion and



agreement. If an AGM is not possible, the committee should provide a signed declaration from all committee members with an explanation for the decision being made. Any money should be given to a charitable organisation, and the bank account must be closed.

Please note, if we haven't heard from you in over 12 months and haven't received the relevant documents to continue the formal recognition of your Residents' Association, we may choose to dissolve it for you (we'll always make several attempts to contact you, including speaking with your management provider).

7. Top Tips: Agendas, Minutes & Handling Money

Agendas

Clear agendas are the key to a successful meeting, dealing with shorter items first to allow time for more important topics after. Keep agendas focused with time limits for each item, and always include the acceptance of the minutes from the last meeting. Where possible, include the purpose on your agenda items, such as 'item for discussion' or 'item for approval', and allow time for 'Any Other Business' at the end of the meeting.

Taking minutes

Minutes should show what went on at a meeting and what decisions were reached. Include the name, place and date/ time of the meeting, a list of who was present, key points discussed and any actions (including who will carry them out). Where possible, also arrange the date and time of the next meeting and include the details in the minutes. Share the minutes of the meeting with the rest of the committee after the meeting.

Handling money:

All accounts should be kept up to date and be available for inspection at committee meetings. If the Residents' Association receives cash for any reason, it should be banked and receipts kept. If you would like to keep a petty cash float for the group, an agreed amount can be withdrawn from the bank account to use for refreshments, stationary etc. Any payments over £30 should have the consent of the committee first, and any payments online should be made safely and securely. Committee members should inform the chair and treasurer of any conflicts of interest.



8. Useful links

Community events: [Organising a voluntary event: a 'can do' guide - GOV.UK](#)

Data protection: [Data protection: The UK's data protection legislation - GOV.UK](#)

Community funding: [Apply for Funding for Community Projects - GOV-UK Find a grant](#)



Questions about this guide?

Contact customerexperience@landgah.com for more information or to get started.