

Starting a resident group or Tenant and Resident Association (TRA) *A guide*





Would you like to set up a resident group or Tenant and Resident Association (TRA)?



This guide is an introduction to resident groups and Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs). It includes advice on forming a group, how we can support you and your community, and how to make the group successful.

Our purpose is to 'Help people flourish'. We're dedicated to ensuring residents' voices are not only heard but followed up and acted on. This means understanding how you feel about our services, and how we can make improvements.

There's lots of ways to get involved and creating or joining a resident group or TRA is just one way to champion local issues. This guide will tell you everything you need to know about resident groups and TRAs.

We've included information about how to start a group, the different working styles, and how they can help you achieve your goals. If you'd like some advice on which group is right for you and your community, get in touch at get.involved@peabody.org.uk and we'll be happy to help you get started.

Where to start

Why start a resident group or TRA?

Here's three reasons to start a resident group or TRA



So your community can have their say.



To create a better sense of community.



To share ideas.

Where do I start?

Here's six things we think will help:

- 1 Find out if other residents are interested.**
Speak with your neighbours to find out if they're interested in joining, and how they'd like to be involved.
- 2 Build support for your group.**
See who's interested in joining and supporting the group from the wider community.
- 3 Decide who'll lead.**
The next step is to elect a small number of people to lead on developing the group.
- 4 Plan your first meeting.**
Your first public meeting could be held online, or in-person at one of our community venues. This is an opportunity to agree on the terms of your constitution.
- 5 Hold a meeting with your community.**
This is an opportunity to promote the benefits of having a resident group or TRA, agree your constitution, formally select your committee and secure more support.
- 6 Contact the Resident Engagement Team**
Let us know if you'd like to meet with us or if you'd like for the group to be formally recognised as a TRA.

How resident groups and TRAs work at Peabody

What do resident groups do?

There are two types of resident groups:

Resident groups are normally groups of people who are concerned about aspects of Peabody's service and want to come together to address their concerns.

TRAs are like resident groups but have a more formal structure that allows them to access funding from Peabody and other organisations like local authorities.

The type of group you form will largely depend on what you'd like to achieve, and how much administration you want to do.

TRAs usually have a constitution, elected officers and set meetings at least a few times a year, which can be too big a commitment for people alongside already busy lives.

We're here to support resident groups of any kind. We want you to feel empowered to form the type of group that will work for you.

If you'd like to know about how the different kind of groups work, check out our top tips in Appendix 1 to find out more!

Which type of resident group will work best for you?

Here's a checklist to help you decide.

What would you like to do?	Resident group	TRA
I'd like to work with Peabody to improve the service I receive.	✓	✓
I'd like to hold community meetings with local Peabody colleagues.	✓	✓
I'd like to arrange activities in the community that don't cost anything to run.	✓	✓
I'd like to arrange community activities that I'll need funding for.		✓
I'll like some training to help run my group.		✓

How the Resident Engagement Team can help

We can put resident groups in touch with Peabody colleagues who can help resolve any problems.

We can host meetings online or in-person so we can agree a way forward that works for everyone. We'll make sure that we keep any promises we make during the meeting and distribute meeting notes, action plans, and any other documents colleagues agree to share with you in a timely way.

How we support TRAs?

We offer the same support to TRAs and resident groups. The more formal governance structure of a TRA however means that we can provide additional support, such as training and funding.

Funding for TRAs

Following your first general meeting, we can provide funding once we've received a signed copy of the constitution and the minutes with the elected committee and membership list. This first meeting is where the constitution for the group is adopted and when the TRA is set up.

To receive the funding, the TRA's treasurer will need to set up a bank account in the name of the association with at least two, ideally three, signatories. The signatories should not be from the same household or be related.

Peabody will give you start-up grant of £300. You'll not be able to apply for a renewal annual grant of £300 until at least 12 months after your TRA has received the start-up grant. It will only be awarded after your TRA's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

To receive the annual grant, you'll need to complete a TRA Annual Review Form to demonstrate how the TRA has successfully met its aims over the year. If you need any help, contact get.involved@peabody.org.uk

If you'd like extra funding, you can apply for grants from your local council or external organisations like the National Lottery.

You could also consider charging residents an annual membership fee or hold a fundraising event.

Training for TRAs

If you'd like to receive training on communications, chairing meetings, minute-taking or bookkeeping, we work with a national resident engagement training specialist, TPAS, who can help.

tpas.org.uk
0161 868 3500
info@tpas.org.uk



Other ways to get involved

Setting up or joining a resident group or TRA is just one of the ways you can influence the way we work. There's also Peabody Voice and our resident-led panel.

Peabody Voice

Peabody Voice is our database of residents who want to be involved, the topics they're interested in and how much time they'd like to give. Once you're registered, you'll have the opportunity to get involved in activities such as focus groups, consultation projects, policy reviews, procurement panels, engagement events and more!

Sign up here:

thegarden.peabody.org.uk/embeds/projects/24702/survey-tools/31008

Resident-led panel

Our resident-led panel has strategic oversight of all engagement activities ensuring Peabody is listening and acting upon the residents' voice at every level of the organisation. They can commission resident-led approaches to scrutiny, service improvement, policy

and strategic development based on performance information, insight and resident feedback. The panel holds Peabody to account by effectively challenging us, when we are not performing at our best whilst ensuring we are compliant with the Consumer Standard of Transparency, Influence and Accountability. The panel reports any issues and recommendation to the board through the Resident Experience Committee.

They're currently working with us to implement the [Co-design Action Group's recommendations](#) and [charter of commitments](#)

If you'd like to know more, contact us at get.involved@peabody.org.uk



Appendix 1 – Top tips for starting a resident group

How resident groups work

Resident groups are usually formed by people with a common interest in a set of issues that are reasonably easy to define.

The resident groups we work with have all sorts of different structures – some are built around a WhatsApp group or Facebook page, some hold meetings in local community buildings, or other public spaces, and some meet online.

The most common goal for resident groups is to improve the services they receive from us. To support these groups, we can facilitate meetings between the community and local Peabody colleagues and offer advice and support to ensure the issues raised are dealt with.

We're not able to provide financial support to resident groups. That's because our rules require that groups we support financially have a group bank account. If you need funding to achieve your goals, you'll need to set up a TRA.

How TRAs work

A TRA is a group of people who live in a neighbourhood, and decide that they want to get together to deal with concerns that affect their local community. The group can include residents of all tenures.

TRAs are different from resident groups because they have a formal governance structure, elected officers and in most cases a bank account. There's a bit more of a time commitment but an advantage of this is that there's scope to do more.

TRAs often put on activities in the communities they represent and can organise fundraisers.

Step one – find out if other residents in the area are interested.

Speak with your neighbours to find out if they're interested in joining a group, and how they'd like to be involved. Here's some ideas:

- Leaflet drops or door knocking.
- Using a neighbourhood WhatsApp, Nextdoor or Facebook group.
- Posting something on a communal noticeboard or setting up community suggestion box.
- Raising the idea at other community meetings.
- Speak with people in passing.

Step two – build support for your group.

Start gathering wider support for the group. You can do this through:

- Leaflet drops or door knocking.
- Displaying posters in communal areas (with a phone number or group contact email on it).
- Holding a meeting.
- Setting up a WhatsApp, Nextdoor or Facebook group.

For a group to be effective it should represent and include as many residents in your area as possible. It's important to give everyone the opportunity to be involved. Some people may have lots of views and suggestions, others may only want to get involved for specific activities, and some may not want to be involved at all. This is ok – everyone should be encouraged to get involved as much or as little as they like.

Another way to encourage interest is to talk to people about the benefits of starting a group, and how it's a great way to work positively with your landlord and other organisations. You can contact other local resident groups and invite them to talk about their experiences to encourage involvement.

Step three – decide who'll lead.

The next step is to elect a small number of people to lead on developing the group. The main task for your first meeting will be to draft your constitution. Peabody has a model constitution you can use [LINK] however, to make it relevant to your group you'll need to agree certain items, including:

- The name of your group (usually including the estate or block name).
- The area your group will represent.
- The aims of the group (this can be a short wish list of outcomes).
- How often the group will meet.
- Who your committee members will be and the roles they'll have.
- A date for your first public meeting.

Step four – plan your first meeting.

When planning your first public meeting, consider:

Where you'll hold the first meeting.

Schools and community centres usually have rooms available for hire. People are more likely to attend if you hold your meeting close to the homes your group's representing.

Is the venue fully wheelchair accessible.

If the meeting's not on the ground floor, check if there's a lift, and whether it is suitable for any wheelchair users.

What time you'll hold the meeting.

Should it be a day or evening meeting? Think about commitments people may have such as work, college, caring and childcare for example. Try to arrange the meeting for a time that's convenient for as many people as possible. We find that any time between 6.30pm and 8pm on a weekday or 12pm and 2pm on a Saturday works well.

Advertising your meeting.

How will you advertise your meeting? Some ideas include posters, leaflets, social media or door knocking. It's also good to remind people a day or two before the meeting.

Setting the agenda.

Your agenda could include:

- **Welcome and introductions**
Explain the purpose of the meeting and ask everyone to introduce themselves.
- **Guest speakers**
If you've invited any guest speakers, make sure they know why they're there, and what they'll be talking about.
- **Adopt your constitution**
This should ideally be sent out prior to the meeting to give everyone the opportunity to read it beforehand and hopefully avoid any objections being made at the meeting. The constitution and the establishment of your group needs to be agreed by the majority of people present at the meeting (this does not include any guests or Peabody colleagues).

Step five – hold a meeting with your community.

This is the ideal time for you to promote the benefits of having a group, agree your constitution, formally select your committee and secure more support.

Here are some tips to make your meeting successful:

- Agree on roles for the meeting, for example, chair, minute taker(s).
- Have spare copies of any documents such as the agenda and constitution.
- Arrive early to set up the venue.
- Check the venue is accessible, for example, lifts are working.

- Offer refreshments (tea, coffee, water, fruit, biscuits, being mindful of dietary requirements).
- Allow everyone the opportunity to interact socially.
- Keep a record of who has attended.
- Be aware of the time and try to stick to the agenda.
- Encourage everyone to share their thoughts in whichever way they're most comfortable.

Step six – Contact Peabody

Let us know if you'd like to meet with us, the Resident Engagement Team, or if you'd like for the group to be formally recognised as a TRA.

If you'd like your group to be formally recognised, you'll need to:

- Have a constitution.
- Include an equal opportunities clause in your constitution that's agreed by us.
- Have a verified bank account into which the grant can be paid.
- Keep open financial records so members and appropriate Peabody colleagues can examine the records having given adequate notice.
- Hold an annual democratic election of your committee, usually at your AGM.
- Hold at least four general meetings throughout the year. This can include your AGM.

When we've agreed you meet these criteria, we'll send the chairperson a letter of recognition. See page 9 for what this means.

We review Resident Groups annually, usually around the date you apply for your annual grant, and you'll need to complete a TRA Annual Review Form. We pay the grant each year if you continue to meet the above criteria.

Appendix 2 – Setting up a TRA

The purpose of a constitution

A constitution is a list of rules which set out the aims of your group and how your group will work towards those aims. It's your governing document, and you'll need to refer to it regularly to run the TRA effectively. If you apply for funding from a body like your local council, they'll normally want to see a copy of your constitution.

The purpose of a committee

A TRA is run by a committee on a day-to-day basis on behalf of its members. The members of the TRA are the residents in the defined neighbourhood. The committee organises general meetings and AGMs, make decisions about the activities of the TRA and then make those things happen.

It's up to you how many committee members you want, how they're elected and how often they should meet. But whatever you decide, you need to state this in your constitution.

A committee is normally made up of officers and members, who are usually elected by the community. You can have officers who do anything – but the most common posts are a chair, secretary and treasurer. These roles can be shared if that works for you, your community and the people who volunteer to do those jobs.

The Chair

The Chair is elected to provide leadership, plan, call and chair meetings, and ensure the committee works well together and that the TRA keeps to its aims.

The Secretary

The Secretary's responsible for administration and communication. They set the agenda with the Chair, take minutes of meetings, distribute minutes and agendas and may write letters on behalf of the TRA. Members of the TRA can help the Secretary with their duties.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer manages the TRA's money, pay bills and keeps accurate records of what's received and spent. The treasurer works with the committee to carry out financial planning for the year. They ensure that all expenditure is agreed and noted in the minutes. They should prepare a financial report and bank statement for the committee at every meeting. At the end of the year, they prepare the annual accounts.

As much as possible, committee membership should reflect the diversity of the community regarding age, tenure, sex, ethnicity and disability.

What 'recognising' a TRA means

A formally recognised TRA has additional rights if there are leaseholders living in the area covered. We also only provide funding and training opportunities to recognised TRAs.

If you want access to these additional rights, you'll need to meet the following criteria:

- You must have a written constitution, and you must be able to show that you're following the rules you set for yourselves about meetings, reports and elections.
- You must be able to show you're open to all in your community, and that there are plenty of opportunities for your community to get involved in your work.
- You should be able to demonstrate that you're communicating effectively with the community you serve – by sending regular newsletters, for example, or making minutes of meetings open, public and available.
- You should demonstrate and promote diversity and equality.
- You must have a code of conduct.
- You must keep a proper record of accounts and present them at the AGM.
- You must send your annual accounts and AGM minutes to Peabody within two weeks of the meeting.
- You must co-operate with Peabody's annual review to monitor representation on committees.

If you live in a scheme where we provide dedicated services to older people, you'll also need to show that you represent at least 51 per cent of the people living there. This is because we're members of the Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM) and their Code of Practice.

We understand that's quite a lot to think about! To help, we've created a model constitution template you can customise or just fill in the blanks, that's up to you and the community you represent. Our model has been designed to allow your TRA to be recognised, so we suggest using it as a starting point to create your own.

Appendix 3 – Tenant and Resident (TRA) Association Model Constitution

- 1 Name**
- 1.1 The association is known as XXXX
- 1.2 The area covered by the association is XXXX
- 2 Aims**
- The aims of the association are:
- To represent the interests of members.
 - To ensure that all members are consulted regularly and that all residents eligible for membership are encouraged to join.
 - To promote the interests and rights of residents.
 - To encourage a sense of community by promoting a multi-racial society and opposing racism, sexism and all other forms of discrimination.
- 3 Membership**
- 3.1 Membership is open, irrespective of factors such as race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion to all adults (16 years or over) living in the area of benefit who accept the aims of the association. As far as possible, the membership should reflect the diversity of the area.
- 3.2 It is a condition of membership that members always conduct themselves in a reasonable manner at meetings or in premises used by the association (see standing orders). A member may be suspended from the association for failure to observe this, or for any other conduct not in line with the aims of the association. Any member so suspended has the right of appeal to the following general meeting, before expulsion from the association takes place.
- 3.3 Harassment, bullying, intimidation, racist or sexist behaviour will not be tolerated and will be grounds for suspension of individual members. Those groups that knowingly allow members to behave inappropriately will not be eligible for support or funds from Peabody.
- 3.4 Membership will cease when a member moves away from the estate/area.
- 4 Subscriptions**
- 4.1 Subscriptions, if charged, will be set at the association's AGM, and will be kept as low as possible. Subscriptions may be reduced or waived in cases of hardship.
- 4.2 Subscriptions or other money raised by or on behalf of the association may only be used to further the aims of the association.
- 5 Conduct of business**
- 5.1 The business of the association will be conducted by a committee elected at the AGM, which will consist of a chair, treasurer, vice-chair, secretary and committee members. As far as possible, the composition of the committee will reflect the diversity of the community.
- 5.2 Peabody governors, sub-committee members and colleagues will not represent the association in its dealing with Peabody.
- 5.3 The election or removal of officers or committee members may only be carried out by a general meeting of the association. The committee may temporarily fill any vacancy arising among the officers of the association from its other members until the next general meeting of members.
- 6 Committee meetings**
- The committee will meet as necessary and not less than six times per year. Committee meetings will be open to any member of the association wishing to attend, who may speak with permission of the chair, but not vote.
- 7 General meetings**
- No fewer than two of the committee's meetings will be general meetings of the association, open to all members to speak through the chair and vote. The decisions of these meetings will be binding on the committee. All decisions will be taken by a simple majority of members present and voting. All members will be given not less than 14 days' notice of any general meeting. A representative of the landlord may also be invited to the general meeting.
- 8 Annual General Meeting (AGM)**
- 8.1 The committee will call an annual general meeting of the association each year and not less than 15 months following the previous AGM. Not less than 28 days' notice will be given of the AGM to all members and all those eligible for membership, together with a formal application for membership. A representative of the landlord (Peabody) will also be invited to attend.

- 8.2 At this meeting:
- The committee will present an annual report of the association.
 - The treasurer will present the examined/ audited accounts of the association for the past year.
 - The officers and committee for the next year will be elected.
 - Proposed constitutional amendments should be submitted to the secretary at least 14 days prior to the meeting to be considered.
 - Other proposals submitted to the secretary in writing not less than seven days in advance of the meeting will be considered.
- 8.3 The minutes of the AGM must be submitted to the landlord (Peabody), together with the names and addresses of the association's officers and committee members.
- 9 Special general meetings**
The secretary must call a special general meeting at the request of a majority of the committee, or on receipt of a written request by at least [x number] members or one-third of the membership of the association. The secretary must give at least seven days' notice of the special general meeting to all members, which will take place within 21 days of the request.
- 10 Quorum**
The quorum for committee meetings of the association will be one third of its elected membership, or [x number] members, whichever is the greater. The quorum for all general meetings will be one-third of the membership.
- 11 Notice of meetings**
Notice of all general meetings will be sent to each member's home address and will include the date, time, and place of the meeting and an agenda of matters to be discussed. Notice of committee meetings will be displayed locally.
- 12 Sub-committees**
12.1 The committee may appoint subcommittees to carry out the activities of the association. Such subcommittees will be directly accountable to the committee. The committee will agree in advance the terms of reference for any subcommittee, which may then act and apply any finance raised within these terms. The chair and treasurer of the association will be ex-officio members of any subcommittees.
- 12.2 If any subcommittee continues after the AGM, its members must be re-elected at the AGM.
- 12.3 All subcommittees will keep proper accounts and records of all meetings. These reports and accounts will be made available as required to the committee or general meeting.
- 12.4 The committee or general meeting may dissolve any subcommittees. Whereupon all accounts, records and assets of the subcommittee pass to the committee.
- 13 Duties of the officers**
13.1 All the officers of the association have a duty to further all the aims of the association, including the promotion of a multi-racial society and opposing racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.
- 13.2 The chair will conduct the meetings of the association. If the chair is absent, the vice-chair will take over.
- 13.3 The treasurer will open and/or maintain a bank account in the name of the association. All cheques must be signed by the treasurer and at least one nominated committee member (not from the same household or family as the treasurer). Unless there are exceptional circumstances, approved by the landlord, there will only be one bank account for the association, into which all receipts, subscriptions etc are paid.
- 13.4 The treasurer will keep proper records of income and expenditure and report on them as required by the committee or general meeting. Such accounts must be subject to an annual independent examination and a report presented to the AGM.

- 13.5 The secretary is responsible for convening all meetings and giving the relevant notice to members. The secretary will ensure that a proper record is kept of all meetings of the association, its committees and subcommittees in the form of minutes; and provide them as required by the committee, general meeting, or representative of the landlord. The secretary will maintain a register of members of the association, including addresses.
- 13.6 Any member of office delegated to represent the association in consultation with any other body will act on the instructions of the association and will report back to the following committee or general meeting, whichever is the sooner.

14 Alteration to the constitution

- 14.1 Any proposal to alter this constitution must be submitted to the secretary, no less than 14 days before the meeting at which it is to be discussed. Any alteration requires the approval of two thirds of those present and voting at the meeting.
- 14.2 If a committee no longer exists, a majority of remaining members of the association can propose that the association should be dissolved. They must give at least 14 days' notice to all those eligible for membership of the meeting at which the matter will be discussed. For the sole purpose of dissolution, a quorum need not apply, and the association may be dissolved by a two third majority of those present. The assets remaining when the association has paid its liabilities will be applied for such purposes of benefit to the community as the meeting will decide, in accordance with the aims of the meeting.

Appendix 4 – Glossary of terms

Here's some of the terms we've used in the guide and their meaning.

Meetings

You can hold meetings in-person or online. There are several easy-to-use and free online options such as Google Meet, Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

Quorum

The quorum is the minimum number of members required at any meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

No general meeting or AGM should take place if less than one third of members are present. This may vary according to each TRA depending on the size of its membership.

AGMs

These are held once a year where:

- The committee will report on the TRA's previous year's activities.
- The committee will present a statement of accounts to members.
- The current committee will resign from their posts.
- A new committee will be elected for the next year.
- Members will vote on recommendations and any amendments to the constitution.

All members will be given 21 days' written notice of the meeting to encourage high attendance.

General meetings

Each year, the association will hold at least four general meetings (including the AGM) which can be open to the general membership. All members of the association will receive at least 21 days' notice of general meetings.

No general meeting or AGM should take place if less than one third of members are present. This may vary according to each TRA depending on the size of its membership.



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