

Four Million Homes

Knowledge and action for change in social housing

www.fourmillion.org
@fourmillionhomes

CCH The Confederation
of Co-operative
Housing

PPCR Public
Private
Partnership
Councils

RI Housing
Institute
of England
(formerly
Riverside
Councils)

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Running your residents' association

Social housing residents training session 9

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What is a residents' association?

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A residents' association (RA) is a group of people who live in a neighbourhood and decide that they want to get together to deal with issues that affect their local community.

Groups can include tenants, shared owners, leaseholders and homeowners, and will have a set of simple rules, usually known as a constitution:

Membership should be open to all residents in the community.

- All members will have an equal vote and voice
- All members should actively seek to represent the various needs of the area and must not discriminate on any grounds

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Why have a residents' association?

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People coming together to deal with issues that affect their local community, such as:

- campaigning for something positive (e.g. a better play area)
- campaigning against something, to get something changed or get services improved
- giving the community a greater voice than individual voices would have
- creating a better sense of community spirit and pride
- organising social activities
- keeping residents informed of what's happening in their neighbourhood
- taking positive action to tackle local issues

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Exercise: What can a residents' association improve where you live?

What kinds of actions might it undertake?

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Feedback and discussion

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Comfort break for 10 minutes

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How to set up a residents' association

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Setting up a Residents' Association

- Before you start
- Getting started
- Some nuts and bolts of running an effective association
- Understanding officer roles
- Agreeing how to engage with the landlord
- Agreeing when and where you'll meet
- Running effective meetings

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Before you start

It is worth asking some straight questions:

- What are we trying to achieve?
- What do we have to do to get there?
- What will success look like?
- Will people support setting up a RA?
- What will we do when we've achieved our aims?
- What will we do if our landlord is obstructive?
- What will we do if we don't achieve our aims?

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Getting started

- Agree what area you are going to represent
- Talk to residents in the local area to estimate their interest
- Talk to as many people as possible, in as many ways as possible
- Find out the common concerns of local residents
- Don't get caught up on your own opinions or those of a particular group of residents
- Organise a public event or meeting to discuss setting up a RA
- Think about online activities, communications and inclusivity

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Some 'nuts and bolts' of running an effective association

Things to think through when setting up an association:

- The size and role of the Committee
- How often will you meet and how will you meet
- What will be the purpose of your meetings and what will be the key topics
- How will decisions be made?
- How will you get and keep people involved?
- What will the constitution cover
- What officer roles will there be; how will they be appointed?
- How will the membership be kept informed?
- What happens when the 'founding members' don't get their own way?

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Running effective residents' association meetings

Meetings need to be publicised and held on a regular basis, whether it is monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly (consider holding online or hybrid meetings)

The success of a meeting depends on four core issues:

1. People being clear about the reasons for the meeting – an agenda with a list of topics to be discussed
2. The venue and time of the meeting being suitable for all
3. The meeting being well run and effectively managed
4. People being clear if the meeting is:
 - (a) about only information and discussion or/and
 - (b) if decisions on the way forward will be made

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Exercise: Would a residents' association work where you live?

How would you get people involved and what are the barriers?

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Feedback and discussion

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Officer roles in a residents' association

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All residents' associations have key people taking on key roles to make sure the association works and functions effectively

The main ones are:

- General membership
- Committee members
- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Landlord liaison

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Effective chairing of residents' association meetings

- ✓ Start and finish meetings on time
- ✓ Welcome everyone and introduce new people and guests
- ✓ Be clear about the purpose of meeting and a reminder about Code of Conduct
- ✓ Introduce items; a good chair does not seek to dominate and force their opinion but seeks others and sums up at the end of each topic
- ✓ Ensure there is understanding and encourage participation and input into discussions
- ✓ Encourage people to 'speak through the chair'
- ✓ Manage speakers; don't allow certain people to dominate

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What to do if things don't go so smoothly...

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Thank You

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in the UK

PPCR Publicly Provided
Care Services

HM Housing Market
Reform

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Evaluation Survey

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FMTraining2025>



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