

Yorkshire Housing



Tenant and Residents Association Financial Guidance Handbook



Introduction

This booklet outlines our policy and strategy on getting involved and how we wish to encourage more involvement in the future.

It tells you

- what support we offer
- how tenant & resident groups can get started
- how they are funded

We want to provide the kind of service you, our customers want. Together with our customers, our vision is to maximise opportunities for customers to become more involved in the decision-making process of the Yorkshire Housing Group, embracing their views and striving to widen opportunities for them to influence the way in which services are delivered by the Group.

Our Customer Involvement Strategy looks at different ways in which we can provide opportunities for us to listen to your views and how to get involved. All our customers are different and want to get involved in different ways at different times. Some customers get involved through the TalkBack panel or become more active on the range of forums and groups we have.

Our Strategic Objectives for Customer Involvement are to:

- Achieve excellence in tenant and resident involvement.
- Create new and innovative opportunities for all tenants and residents to become involved.
- Be inclusive.
- Work in Partnership with tenants and residents.
- Make tenants and resident involvement an integral part of our business.
- Comply with regulatory and statutory guidance.
- Provide comprehensive support packages.
- Empower tenants and residents to take an active part in the business.
- Create minimum standards of tenant and resident involvement across the Group.
- Achieve value for money.

Tenant & Resident Associations (TARA's)

Tenant & Resident Associations are groups of people who work together to improve their community in various ways. Some are set up to organise social activities, others to tackle important issues like crime, anti social behaviour or improving estates and communities.

Groups work best when everyone can get involved, whatever their ethnic or cultural background. We want to support and work in partnership with all our groups that represent the interests of everyone in their community.

Yorkshire Housing supports TARA's each year through financial grants which are made available for groups of tenants & residents. See page 4.

All TARA groups will have full Membership of the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and will receive regular information on training, events, information and guidance.

Administration Grants, Start Up Grants and Social Activities Grants are to be administered by the Tenant Involvement Advisor, checking that applications meet the criteria and monitoring. Applications can then be approved for payment. Information and all receipts of expenditure have to be supplied and sent to the Tenant Involvement Advisor.

The role of the Tenant & Resident Associations (TARA) is to:

- find ways of increasing tenant and resident involvement in the management of their homes and estates.
- develop new and innovative approaches to tenant participation.
- establish and develop the tenant and resident group.
- explore local issues.
- explore the options to address issues.
- engage with the wider community.

The group must be committed to being representative of and accountable to all sections of the local community, they are required to consider.

- the group must have the support and co-operation of Yorkshire Housing.
- the group must be committed to operating openly, accessibly and democratically.

In addition the group needs to be aware they are there to:

- support tenant empowerment, e.g. through training and capacity building.
- enhance tenant participation.
- involve the community including minority and 'hard to reach' groups.
- develop effective partnership working between tenants and residents, the landlord and other organisations.

Tenant & Residents' Groups and other Groups

Yorkshire Housing wishes to support and encourage the development of independent tenants and resident groups, and informal groups in order to provide a voice for tenants at a local level, that may also feed into involvement at a more strategic level. This can be through the Federation Forum Link Up Association for Yorkshire Metropolitan area customers or the Yorkshire Housing Tenants Focus Group which covers all areas. For more information and contacts please contact the Tenant Involvement Advisor. Contact details on page

This can assist in resolving housing management issues, creating a sense of community and help make homes and areas more attractive places where people want to live.

Start up Grant for New Groups

The start up Grant is available to new groups who are exploring the possibility of developing into an informal group. New groups will receive £50 regardless of the size of the group. The Start up Grant can be reconsidered if a previous group has stopped operating for a period of time in an area and new tenants and residents wish to restart the group.

Annual Grant for Constituted Groups

Tenant & Resident Associations can apply to the Tenant Involvement Advisor for the annual grant to help with day to day running costs of the group. The Administration Grant application form must be completed and returned for the records of Yorkshire Housing.

The grant can be used for the following:

- Room hire for meetings and other activities.
- Providing light refreshments.
- Stationery or small items of equipment.
- Postage, telephone calls, broadband costs for tenant involvement.
- Travel costs to take a group to a meeting in the area (mini bus hire).
- Printing newsletters and delivery.
- Audit costs at the end of the financial year.

The grant cannot be used for purchasing furniture for the communal room or community centre. The scheme warden may be able to help with these costs or your area office.

The grant is paid directly to the group's bank account and is linked to number of tenancies in the area of benefit of the group.

- Up to 100 tenancies £110
- Up to 200 tenancies £220
- Up to 300 tenancies £330

Each group will be required to have

- A recognised constitution that does not exclude anyone* (a model document can be provided)
- A Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
- A group bank/building society account with 2 nominated people to sign cheques.
- Show all income and expenditure in the account books.*
- Retain up to date records of all receipts, income and expenditure for audit purposes.
- Produce audited accounts at their AGM during the current financial year.*
- Copies of the audited accounts need to be submitted to the Tenant Involvement Advisor for records.*
- Complete and return the administration grant form for your funding for each year*.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting, open to all members, at which major decisions are taken and officers democratically elected.

Accounts and records must be freely available to Yorkshire Housing Group staff for review.

All Administration Grants must be applied for at the beginning of a new financial year by completing the Grant application form, (which will be sent out in advance) and returned with all supporting documentation as listed above*.

Social Activities Grant

The Social Activity Grant is available to constituted and non constituted groups to organise social activities in their area for the benefit and well being of tenants in the community. Any group wanting to plan an event and require funding can apply for grant from the Tenant Involvement Advisor. Please see a copy of the form on page 9.

The grant can be used for organising an event to attract hard to reach groups in the area or for a one off event such as a fun day for the community.

Conditions of applying

- A subsidy of £3.50 per head will be allowed for the estimated numbers attending.
- The maximum entitlement is up to £300 per year per group
- All groups must complete and return the Social Activity Form describing what the aims and objectives of the activity are, the numbers attending and estimated costs.
- This is paid direct to the group's treasurer and bank account for constituted groups
- All receipts are required as evidence of expenditure and must be sent to the Tenant Involvement Advisor.

- Non Constituted groups are subject to the same amounts, with monies being claimed against receipts for expenditure, which will be paid once all receipts are submitted.
- Money cannot be paid to any staff member on behalf of the group.

Travel Expenses

Travel expenses are paid to activists who attend meetings for tenant involvement, Operational Committees and Board Meetings. Expense forms should be completed on a regular basis and returned to the office identified at the bottom of the form. Claims must be submitted as soon as possible and not over run more than 3 months. The current rate from the 1st April 2008 is 60p per mile and 5p per mile for a passenger. We encourage car sharing to fit in with our initiative to help the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

All groups need to consider

The training requirements of the group, particularly around certain core issues, such as equal opportunities, team working and the roles of officers and committee members.

Training

We offer training so you can extend your skills and represent your community more effectively.

Training may include:

- Membership of national tenants organisations such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).
- In house training courses.
- Providing funding for you to attend external training courses or residential courses.

To access any training you can either contact the Tenant Involvement Advisor or go to the Yorkshire Housing website to download the Training Request form. Once the form is completed, post it to the Tenant Involvement Advisor. Each person requiring training needs to complete a form, and contact the organisation running the training to identify if there are places available. Once your request has been submitted to the Tenant Involvement Advisor you can then confirm your place on the course with the provider. A copy of the training form is on page 8.

Areas too small to sustain a TARA or Community Group

Some of our customers live in areas with too few properties to have a tenant group but people are still willing to become actively involved in their community.

These small areas can get involved through joining in with an estate walkabout with staff and other tenants, attend housing officer surgeries. Individuals can become garden monitor to record the quality of work undertaken by the contractor or join the Talk Back panel.

Funding will be available for small groups through payment for travel or phone calls, light refreshments for a meeting. For more information and advice please speak to your Housing Officer or Tenant Involvement Advisor.

Other Funding

There are a range of opportunities for funding from local authorities, charities, and the lottery. Advice and information is available from Yorkshire Housing staff, the Community Initiative Advisors, and Tenant Participation Adviser. Local Councils for Voluntary Services and local authorities may also be able to assist where to access funding and help to apply for funding.

Wider Customer Involvement – Hi Awards

Every year through the Hi magazine holds the Hi Awards. Nomination forms are generally inside the Spring edition which explains how to nominate someone. The award winners will be announced in the following edition of Hi.

The awards are for the following categories:

- Best Garden
- Hi Achiever
- Hi Good Citizen
- Hi Best Community Initiative – New for 2008

Grassroots Magazine

This magazine is for all Yorkshire Housing customers to promote community building events or funding they may have applied for. If for example you have held a successful event in the community and want to promote it in Grassroots send it to the Tenant Involvement Advisor with photographs and a text with contact names and telephone numbers. If you need any more information, help or guidance on tenant involvement please contact the Tenant Involvement Advisor

Helen Cowton

Tenant Involvement Advisor

Yorkshire Housing, Yorkshire House, 6 Innovation Close, Heslington. York, YO10 5ZF

Tel: 01904 754441

Mobile: 07967 042801

E mail: helen.cowton@yorkshirehousing.co.uk



TRAINING REQUEST FORM

Name:		Tel:
Your Address:		
Title of Training Course:		
How many training sessions will you be attending?	Length of Training Sessions:	
Location of Training:	Date/s of Training:	
Cost of Training:	Estimated Travel Costs:	
Name of Organisation providing the Training:		
Name and Contact Details of Individual who can take your place if you are unable to attend:		

FOR COMPLETION BY PERSON ATTENDING THE TRAINING

Please provide details of how this training will benefit yourself and/or your tenant group.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Signature:	Date:
-------------------	--------------

PLEASE NOTE: If a place is booked and you fail to attend without giving sufficient notice it could result in you being charged a cancellation fee. Failure to attend may also affect your chances of future training sessions.

Please return the completed form to Helen Cowton, Tenant Involvement Advisor. Yorkshire Housing, Yorkshire House, 6 Innovation Close, Heslington, York. YO10 5ZF

