



WDH and Communities Together

Agreement



delivering promises, improving lives



**If you need this document in another format
please contact us**



0345 8 507 507 (Text Relay calls welcome)



communications@wdh.co.uk

(calls to OneCALL may be recorded for training purposes)

Communities Together Agreement - Formal and Informal Groups

Purpose



WDH will provide advice, support, resources and opportunities for participation and consultation. WDH will encourage the development of tenants' and residents' associations (TARA) by promoting fair and democratic practices for all participants and enable TARAs to become as properly representative as possible. This document sets out each partner's rights and responsibilities.

What is a community group or TARA?

WDH defines a community group or a TARA as a group of people who get together to work to improve their designated area. They campaign for better services, improvements to the environment and tenants' homes and organise activities that bring people closer together. WDH will work closely with TARAs to deliver its services and monitor how well it is doing. For the use of this document the term TARA will be used to describe all types of groups.

How the system of recognition works

Recognition is where WDH will acknowledge the role of a TARA in a particular area and will work with them to improve their homes, environment and wider community. WDH will only recognise one group representing a particular area.

This document outlines the difference WDH see between a formal and informal group. By completing the Agreement application form the TARA is agreeing to fulfil the stated criteria and in return WDH will make sure that the TARA has access to the benefits listed.

The Tenant Involvement Officer (TIO) will provide support and guidance to make sure the TARA successfully fulfils the agreed criteria and accesses the substantial benefits available from WDH.

WDH reserves the right to withdraw, suspend or decline from entering into the Agreement with a group. In such circumstances, the reasons will be clearly explained by WDH in writing to a nominated individual of the group within 10 working days of the decision. Examples of where such arrangements would apply include, but are not limited to the following.

- Where the group's arrangements for dealing with safeguarding of children or vulnerable adults in terms of group activities linked to the individuals are considered to be unsatisfactory.
- Activities carried out by the group which are considered to be in breach of its constitution.
- Any activities which could potentially cause reputational damage to WDH.
- Acts or omissions which adversely affect WDH's position as a housing association.

Agreement - Formal Groups

Community groups and TARAs



A formal TARA has agreed to represent and be accountable to residents in a certain location, be constituted and have an elected committee, which will include a chair, secretary and treasurer.

Your TARA will:

- Have a written constitution, which should contain an Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Have a democratically elected committee consisting of, where possible, a chair, a vice chair, secretary, treasurer and committee members.
 - **The chair** is responsible for making sure that the organisation runs well, promotes the interests of local residents and social activities, has effective meetings and acts as the spokesperson for the organisation.
 - **The vice chair** is responsible for making sure that the organisation runs well, promotes the interests of local residents and social activities, has effective meetings and acts as the spokesperson for the association in the absence of the chair.
 - **The secretary** is the person responsible for making sure that the committee runs smoothly and has the information it needs to run the organisation. They also plan and support the meeting, keeping records and deal with correspondence.
 - **The treasurer** keeps a check on the finances of the organisation and keeps the committee up to date with the financial position. This includes dealing with banks and cheques, recording and checking financial transactions, budgeting and planning for the groups' activities.
 - **Committee members** attend meetings regularly and contribute effectively to discussions.
- Have a committee that is responsible for making sure that membership is clearly open to all tenants and residents in the defined area and that no individual member is disadvantaged. This can be achieved by widely advertising open meetings through the distribution of flyers and posters.
- Have a clearly defined geographical area of cover and provide a list of streets covered by the group. This will be checked to verify the number of WDH properties covered by the group.
- Have open financial accounts that are independently audited at least every 12 months.
- Demonstrate that all members are invited to open meetings, as well as an Annual General Meeting.

- Keep its members regularly informed by producing a newsletter on an annual basis, this could be an A4 single sided sheet, and distribute them to every household in their stated area so that all residents have an opportunity to get involved and support the group.
- Listen and act on what their members have to say.
- Keep accurate accounts of the TARA income and expenditure.
- Where appropriate, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), formerly the Criminal Records Bureau, checks must be carried out where individuals undertake activities on behalf of the group that involve working with children, young people and vulnerable adults and have potential safeguarding implications. This must be carried out in line with the group's policies relating to safeguarding children, vulnerable adults and the DBS Code of Guidance.
- Actively represent the views of its members whenever and wherever possible.

What benefits and support formal TARAs can expect



Financial benefits

- **Annual Grant** – the value of this grant will depend on the number of WDH properties covered by the TARA and outlined in the constitution. This grant should be used to cover running costs such as meeting room hire, postage, stationery and committee expenses. It will be paid using a top up system. If the group only use part of their grant, the balance can be carried over to the following year, for example, if a group is eligible for a grant of £100 and only spends £50 then they can apply for the difference £50 in the following year, or alternatively, carry over the balance and top up when required.
- **Premises Grant** – where a WDH property is leased by a TARA, a fixed annual payment of £400 a year will be paid towards building running costs such as gas, electricity, water and phone. This grant will be paid using the top up system. If the group use part of their grant the following year the value of the grant will only cover the amount spent as detailed in the annual grant.

How to apply for a grant?

Formal TARAs can only apply for an annual grant and, where applicable, a premises grant once in any 12 month period. The TARA will be required to provide the following supporting documents:

- a copy of their current constitution;
- a copy of the TARAs independently checked accounts;
- be able to show that all members are invited to an open and annual general meeting; and
- a copy of a newsletter or information sheet.

If you need any further information or support completing the application, please contact the Engagement Team on 01977 788647 or email tenants@wdh.co.uk alternatively you can contact your local TIO, contact details are on page 8.

Additional benefits

- **Insurance** - WDH can arrange some insurance cover on behalf of TARAs. WDH can insure for public liability claims made by a third party which arise as a result of the TARAs normal business, including organised events. As Members of the TARAs are not employees they will be treated as third parties for the purpose of the policy.
If operating in WDH premises, WDH will arrange insurance cover for material damage to those premises.
Contents insurance will remain the responsibility of the group.
- **DBS check** – provide you with details of organisations who can and will carry out DBS checks on your behalf, WDH will advise the group on what will be required based on the individual circumstances, however WDH will not administer checks on groups behalf. Where there is deemed to be an issue with an individual DBS check it will be the responsibility of the group to take appropriate actions that would not compromise the group in terms of safeguarding issues and data protection.
- **TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) membership** - full access to a leading national tenant participation organisation providing independent advice and support for tenants and community groups.
- **Community premises** – WDH will consider requests from tenants' and residents' groups for premises to enable the group to run community activities, information sessions and meetings. The premises, repairs and maintenance will be the responsibility of the group. A copy of the Community Premises Guide is available from the Engagement Team.
- **Annual independent examination of accounts** - to ensure good practice, groups must have their accounts independently checked. WDH can provide an Accounting Service to provide an independent check of accounts, if required. Please contact the Engagement Team on 01977 788647 about this.
- **Photocopying, design and printing** – newsletters and flyers will be provided to promote meetings and events.
- **Learning opportunities** - for TARAs such as committee and treasury skills.
- **Bi-monthly information sheet** - with details of new funding streams and local training opportunities.
- **Computer, printer and broadband connection** - for TARAs subject to equipment availability and acceptance policy. Please contact the Engagement Team on 01977 788647 or email tenants@wdh.co.uk for further information.

- **Events** - a maximum of four representatives from your TARA will be invited to a minimum of two themed events. These events will provide an opportunity for networking, sharing good practice and ideas.
- **WDH attendance at meetings** - a minimum of 10 working days' notice (preferably in writing or by email) is required.
- **Neighbourhood Grant** – planning a community event and need some additional equipment or an entertainer? In addition to the Annual Grant groups can apply for a Neighbourhood Grant to cover items such as purchases of equipment or to assist your group with a community event. Applications to a maximum grant of £400 will be considered quarterly in February, May, September and November by the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group. Only one application for each group is allowed in one year. Please contact your TIO for an application form.

Agreement - Informal Groups



An informal TARA is a group of people that do not have an elected committee or a constitution. It may form to deal with a particular issue such as campaigning for improved lighting in an alleyway or combating antisocial behaviour, or may be constituted and do not want to have formal recognition.

WDH understands that not all groups want to be formal and offer support through local TIOs to help TARAs through the formal process if required. However, no financial support will be available for informal TARAs.

Your informal group will:

- make sure that membership is clearly open to everyone and that no individual member is disadvantaged; and
- actively represent the view of residents whenever and wherever possible.

What benefits and support informal TARAs can expect

- **TPAS membership** - full access to a leading national tenant participation organisation providing independent advice and support for tenants and community groups.
- **Photocopying, design and printing** - of newsletters and flyers to promote meetings and events.
- **Learning opportunities** - for TARAs such as committee and treasury skills.
- **Bi-monthly information sheet** - with details of new funding streams and local training opportunities.
- **Computer, printer and broadband connection** - for TARAs subject to equipment availability and acceptance policy. Please contact the Engagement Team on 01977 788647 or email tenants@wdh.co.uk for further information.
- **Events** - a maximum of four representatives from your TARA will be invited to a minimum of two themed events. These events will provide an opportunity for networking, sharing good practice and ideas.
- **WDH attendance at meetings** - a minimum of 10 working days' notice (preferably in writing or by email) is required.

Other community groups



Consideration will be given to requests for support with printing and the provision of computer equipment to other community based organisations where there is a clear benefit to WDH tenants. These requests will be considered on an individual basis.

Tenant management organisations (TMOs)

Did you know that you can manage your own estate?

There are already a number of TMOs operating across the UK where tenants have chosen to take formal control for their housing service, including the management of their estates. If you would like to find out more about running a TMO in your area, please contact the Engagement Team.

In all instances please contact the Engagement Team on 01977 788647 or email tenants@wdh.co.uk for further information.

What if your application is not successful

If your application is not successful we will explore all options available to help groups meet the criteria set out in this agreement. In the event this cannot be achieved we will explain our decision and the reasons why.

Complaints and compliments

We encourage feedback from customers to help us improve our services, and people can contact us in a number of different ways:

- by phoning OneCALL on 0345 8 507 507;
- through our website www.wdh.co.uk;
- by fax;
- by letter;
- in person at one of our service access points; and
- through our service information points.

We value complaints as a positive source of feedback, and our complaints procedure will generally deal with dissatisfaction about:

- our standards of service;
- something we have done; or
- something we have failed to do.

Where we receive a complaint from a group of customers we will request a nominated person with whom we can liaise.

In some circumstances we may decide to deal with complaints in a different way. If this is the case we will explain why and give a full explanation of how we will deal with the complaint.

On many occasions we receive compliments about the services that we provide and it's always useful to know if tenants and residents think we're doing a good job. If people want to tell us about a positive experience they have had they can contact us using any of the above methods.

Monitoring and review

We will monitor the progress of the agreement once a year through the Resident Involvement Monitoring Group. Where any part of the agreement is not being met or where we receive information of an alleged breach of the agreement, we will investigate and develop an appropriate response.

At a glance benefits

Benefits	Formal	Informal	Other
Annual grant	✓	x	x
Premises grant	✓	x	x
Insurance	✓	x	x
TPAS membership	✓	✓	x
Annual check of accounts	✓	x	x
DBS checks	✓	x	x
Photocopying and printing	✓	✓	✓
Learning opportunities	✓	✓	x
Bi-monthly information sheet	✓	✓	x
Computer, broadband and printer	✓	✓	✓
Events	✓	✓	x
WDH attendance	✓	✓	x
Neighbourhood Grant	✓	x	x
Community premises	✓	x	x

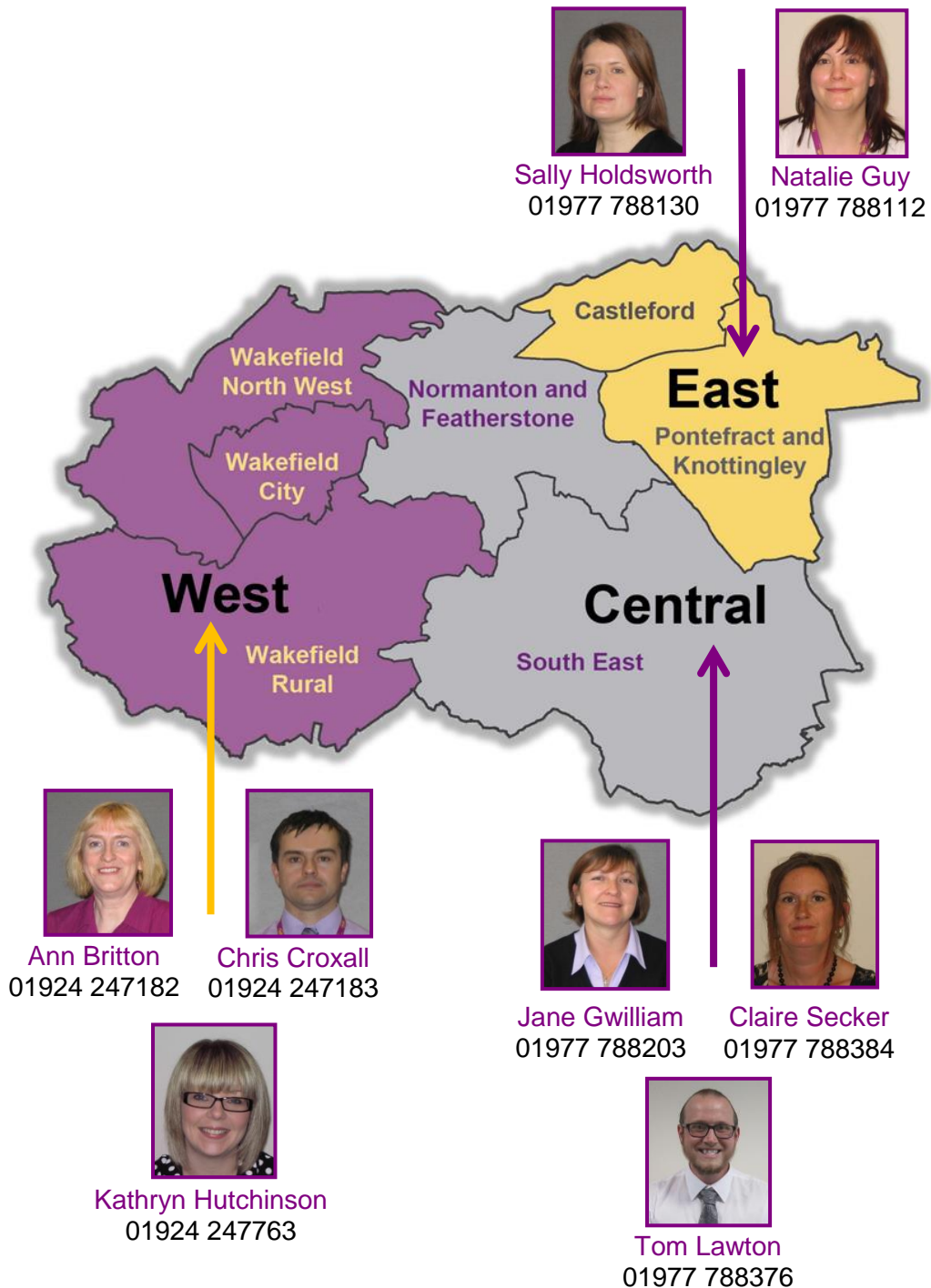
Contact Information

Central Engagement Team

WDH
Merefield House
Whistler Drive
Castleford WF10 5HX

Phone: 01977 788647
Email: tenants@wdh.co.uk
Website: www.wdh.co.uk

Tenant Involvement Officers



TPAS

TPAS
Suite 4b Trafford Plaza
73 Seymour Grove
Manchester
M16 0LD

Phone: 0161 8683500
Email: info@tpas.org.uk
Website: www.tpas.org.uk

Homes and Communities Agency

Maple House
149 Tottenham Court Road
London W1T 7BN

Phone: 0300 1234 500
Email: mail@homesandcommunities.co.uk
Website: www.homesandcommunities.co.uk

Arpley House
100 Birchwood Boulevard
Warrington
WA3 7HQ

Wakefield Council

Wakefield Council
Town Hall
Wood Street
Wakefield
WF1 2HQ

Phone: 01924 306090
Email: customerservices@wakefield.gov.uk
Website: www.wakefield.gov.uk

Nova Wakefield District Ltd

11 Upper York Street
Wakefield
WF1 3LQ

Phone: 01924 367418
Email: info@nova-wd.org.uk
Website: www.nova-wd.org.uk

Disclaimer

Please note that partnership in the context of this document does not constitute a 'partnership' as defined by the Partnership Act 1980.



Communities Together Agreement Application Form

Name of group: _____

Area served: _____

How many WDH tenanted properties are represented by the group?
If unsure, please contact your TIO who will be able to help. Please tick.

Up to 49 50 to 149 150 to 249 250 and over

Please indicate whether you are applying for formal or informal status?

Formal (financial support) Informal (no financial support)

Name of secretary: _____ Signature _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone (including area code) _____

Email _____

We may share your details with other partners.
If you don't want WDH to share your details please tick this box

Name of treasurer: _____ Signature _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone (including area code) _____

Email _____

We may share your details with other partners.
If you don't want WDH to share your details please tick this box

Name of chair: _____ Signature _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone (including area code) _____

Email _____

We may share your details with other partners.
If you don't want WDH to share your details please tick this box

Would you like to apply for a grant, if so, please indicate which grant you are applying for.

Premises Grant

Annual Grant

Not applying for a grant

Annual Grant Information

Annual Grant for those groups eligible:

1 to 49 properties £150

50 to 149 properties £300

150 to 249 properties £400

250 plus £450

Top up amount £ _____

Premises Grant Information

Premises Grant for those groups eligible:

£400

Top up amount £ _____

Payment Type

Cheque

BACS

Sort Code

Account Number

Payee Name

Application check list

Please make sure you enclose the following supporting documentation.

- Completed form
- Current copy of group constitution
- Record of meetings (notes, minutes or similar)
- Copy of newsletter(s)
- Copy of independently checked accounts

I verify that to the best of my knowledge the information given above is accurate.

Signed on behalf of group:

Group name

Office role

Date

Please return to: Engagement Team
WDH
Merefield House, Whistler Drive, Castleford WF10 5HX



Vision

to create confident communities

Mission

to inspire, transform and promote excellence

Values

to be creative, inclusive and work with integrity

delivering promises, improving lives