



WDH and Communities Together

Agreement

W0055



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**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



We will provide advice, support, resources and opportunities for participation and consultation. We will encourage the development of tenants' and residents' associations (TARAs) 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?

We define 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. We will work closely with TARAs to deliver our services and monitor how well we are 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 we will acknowledge the role of a TARA in a particular area and will work with them to improve their homes, environment and wider community. We will only recognise one group representing a particular area.

This document outlines the difference we 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 we 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 us.

We reserve the right to withdraw, suspend or decline from entering into the Agreement with a group. In such circumstances, we will clearly explain the reasons 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 us reputational damage.
- Acts or omissions which adversely affect our 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, posters and use of social media.
- Have a clearly defined geographical area of cover and provide a list of streets the group represent. This will be checked to verify the number of properties we own covered by the group.
- Have open financial accounts that are independently checked at least every 12 months.
- Demonstrate that all members have the opportunity to attend open meetings of the group.

- Keep all residents informed so that they have an opportunity to get involved with the group at a level they wish to choose.
- Listen and act on what your members have to say.
- Keep accurate records of income and expenditure.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks must be carried out in accordance with your safeguarding policy or statement.
- Actively represent the views of its members.

What benefits and support formal TARAs can expect



Financial benefits

- **Annual Grant** – the value of this grant will depend on the number of properties we own 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, DBS checks 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 property which belongs to us, is leased by a TARA a fixed annual payment 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 a copy the following supporting documents.

- Their current constitution.
- The TARAs independently checked accounts.
- Evidence that all members are invited to an open and annual general meeting.
- 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.

Additional benefits

- **Insurance** - We can arrange some insurance cover on behalf of TARAs. We 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 our premises, we will arrange insurance cover for material damage to those premises.

Contents insurance will remain the responsibility of the group.

- **Communities Together Forum** - tenant group representatives come together to provide a voice for tenants and residents groups across WDH homes and estates. Influencing change, organising networking events, share good practice, information and resources.
- **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** - We 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.
- **Annual independent examination of accounts** - to ensure good practice, groups must have their accounts independently checked. We can provide an Accounting Service to provide an independent check of accounts, if required. .
- **Digital support** - help to design newsletters and flyers can be provided, as well as training to use digital methods to help communicate messages to your local community.
- **Learning opportunities** - for TARAs such as committee and treasury skills.
- **Electronic bulletins** - we will provide appropriate information from both voluntary and statutory agencies, consultation documents and funding opportunities.
- **Our support** - help with funding applications and attendance at meetings (a minimum of 10 working days' notice preferably in writing or by email is required).
- **Neighbourhood Grant** - need some additional equipment or planning a community event? In addition to the Annual Grant, groups can apply for a Neighbourhood Grant. Applications to a maximum 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.

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.

We understand 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.
- **Digital support** - help to design newsletters and flyers can be provided and training to use digital methods to communicate messages to your local community.
- **Learning opportunities** - for TARAs such as committee and treasury skills.
- **Electronic bulletins** - we will provide appropriate information from both voluntary and statutory agencies, consultation documents and funding opportunities.
- **Our support** - help with funding applications and 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 digital support and the provision of computer equipment to other community based organisations where there is a clear benefit to our tenants. These requests will be considered on an individual basis.

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.

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 want you to be happy with the services you receive. However, sometimes you may feel you want to complain about our service or something you feel we have done or failed to do.

You can make a complaint:

- online using our [complaints form](#);
- by emailing [OneCALL](#);
- by letter addressed to any of our [service access points](#);
- by phoning [OneCALL](#) on **0345 8 507 507**; or
- in person at any of our [service access points](#).

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 is 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 our TARA survey. 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.

Benefits at a glance

Benefits are slightly different based on the type of group these are detailed below.

Benefits	Formal Group	Informal Group	Other
Annual grant	✓	x	X
Premises grant	✓	x	X
Insurance	✓	x	X
Tpas membership	✓	✓	X
Annual check of accounts	✓	x	X
Digital support	✓	✓	✓
Learning opportunities	✓	✓	X
Electronic bulletins	✓	✓	X
Our support	✓	✓	✓
Neighbourhood grant	✓	x	X
Community premises	✓	x	x
Communities Together Forum	✓	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

Tpas

Tpas
4B Paragon House
48 Seymour Grove
Manchester
M16 0LN

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

Homes and Communities Agency

Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

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

Wakefield Council

Wakefield Council
Burton Street
Wakefield
WF1 2EB

Phone: 0345 8 506 506
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

Nothing in this Agreement shall constitute or be deemed to constitute a partnership between WDH and the group. The group shall not have any authority to bind WDH in any way.



Communities Together Agreement Annual Membership Application

Name of group: _____

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

Please include a copy of your current constitution



Communities Together Agreement Grant Application 20__

Name of group: _____

How many tenanted properties that we own 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

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

150 to 249 properties £400

50 to 149 properties £300

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 _____

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