

Residents Associations FAQs



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What is a Residents' Association (RA)?

A Notting Hill Genesis Residents Association (RA) is defined as a group made up of local residents living in a particular estate, building or area. It plays a part in dealing with problems at a local level, as well as organising activities such as social events and finding ways of improving the local area. They represent the views of their membership and local residents to their landlord, the local authority and any other relevant agencies.

What does it need to have?

A properly organised association will need to have:

- A constitution
- A committee
- Support from at least 50% of the community it represents
- Meeting agendas
- Notes of meetings
- An annual general meeting
- A bank account

How big does it need to be?

Membership should be open to all residents over the age of 18 and should not discriminate against members of the community because of race, age, sex, disability, sexuality, religion or background. Membership should be open to all tenure types living in the defined area, with membership reaching over 50% within one year of setting up (i.e., over 50% of households in the defined area support the RA and agree to be a member or be represented by them).

How does setting up a Residents' Association (RA), in a sheltered scheme or tower block differ from other places?

It doesn't! In fact, it may be easier to set up an RA in sheltered housing or a tower block because you know exactly what area your RA will cover. It's important that you publicise your meetings to everyone individually in the sheltered scheme or tower block by posting letters or leaflets through the door or by word of mouth. In the case of sheltered schemes, you should involve your scheme manager and/or support staff.

What legal regulations do RAs have to follow?

It is essential for an RA to have a constitution, as this states the aims and objectives of the group and how it is run. Notting Hill Genesis will not recognise a RA that does

not have a constitution, a bank account, a committee or 50% plus membership. Whilst not considered a legal body, Residents Associations recognised by Notting Hill Genesis do have the legal right to:

- Request information about service charge costs
- Be consulted on appointments of managing agents
- Be notified by us of any upcoming major works

Residents' Associations do not have the legal right to the access of personal information of other residents in any circumstances. This type of information can be requested from residents and provided only if permission is given.

Will we need to open a bank account?

Even if you don't plan to use any grant money, it may be something you may want to do later. Therefore, we ask that all Associations set up a bank account when being formed. It must be opened in the name of the RA, not in the name of individual committee members.

Our RA has recently experienced difficulties trying to open a community banking account. Do you have any advice, or can you recommend a bank to approach?

Notting Hill Genesis cannot recommend any banking provider or product. There are several organisations and accounts that groups could investigate. Ask any high street bank or building society to see if they offer an account for RAs. The Resident Involvement team will be happy to write a letter to your chosen bank to support the set-up of a bank account.

You can also investigate opening an account with a credit union. As a Notting Hill Genesis resident, you can apply to the **London Plus Credit Union**. Please visit <http://londonpluscu.co.uk/> or ring 020 7471 2620 for more information.

Will we need insurance?

Generally, the RA will not need insurance. However, the RA will need public liability insurance for any formal outings or events that it organises. You may also need to insure premises or equipment that you are provided with. Residents' Associations are entitled to ask for a written summary of NHG's insurance cover should this be relevant. Please contact your housing officer, property management officer or Resident Involvement team if you have any questions.

Will members of the committee need Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks?

DBS checks are not normally required for meetings to take place. However, committee members will need to organise DBS checks before they organise anything that involves unaccompanied children or unaccompanied vulnerable adults. Please contact the Involvement Team for further information or visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

Should we invite a Notting Hill Genesis representative to a meeting?

This is up to you. Existing RAs have found it beneficial to invite Notting Hill Genesis staff (e.g. Housing Officers) for information to be provided. Please give at least two weeks' notice to enable this to happen (see 'good practice guide' for more information).

Can a councillor or someone who works for Notting Hill Genesis who is also a tenant or leaseholder be a member of the RA?

This is something that the RA will need to consider to guard against any potential conflict of interest. RAs should allow them to be members but not a member of the committee.

We don't have printers. How will we advertise meetings and events?

Get in touch with the Resident Involvement Team by emailing involvement@nhg.org.uk

or contact your Housing Officer or Property Management Officer who will be able to do this for you for your first meeting. However, do remember, word of mouth is a good way to encourage involvement, and part of your grant can help with printing costs from print shops.

We don't have space large enough to meet, what now?

Get in touch with your local housing team as they may be able to find a suitable venue. RAs can use their grant money to cover some of these costs Alternatively, you may wish to hold some of your meetings online.

What financial support will we receive?

All RAs that are registered by Notting Hill Genesis will receive an initial grant of £350. Once recognised you are entitled to receive £300 each year. Both grants are offered with conditions (updated and accurate documents must be provided). Please note, you don't need to apply for your grant if not needed.

What can we spend our RA grant on?

The grant can only be spent on things which support the group to meet its stated aims and objectives. The grant should not be used for making repairs or improvements or cover legal costs. It would be helpful to see evidence of grant money being spent each year, rather than accruing grants year on year without using it.

Examples of how funding can be used:

- Meeting space hire (if you need any)
- Stationery (e.g., pens, account books, envelopes, paper)
- Photocopying
- Postage costs
- Equipment hire costs
- Affiliation fees (fees that need to be paid to join another organisation, such as the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).
- Refreshment costs
- Travelling expenses (for attending meetings in other areas on behalf of the association)
- Special requirements (e.g., childcare, crèche, translators and interpreters)

What evidence do we need to provide on a yearly basis?

Regardless of whether the RA is applying for the grant, each year and following the RA's most recent AGM, they will still need to send the following:

- AGM minutes
- Proof of existence (including details of any new committee members, list of issues being looked at and evidence of 50% plus membership)
- Signed expenditure reports and bank statements

We only have a couple of issues that we'd like to find a solution to. Do we need to set up a RA to do this?

If you only have one or two issues that you are enquiring or challenging Notting Hill Genesis about, setting up a RA is not always the solution. In such circumstances you are advised to contact your Housing Officer or Property Management Officer in the first instance.

How does GDPR affect my Residents' Association?

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals. Residents' Associations who collect and store personal data should be mindful of the procedures which came into effect in May 2018. GDPR gives individuals a greater level of control over how their data is managed and requires organisations which hold personal data to explain and justify how this is done. The shift is to greater transparency and accountability. Please contact us for any advice regarding GDPR, or access some useful links below:

- ICO guide <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>
- ICO self-assessment: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/resources-and-support/data-protection-self-assessment/>
- [Data protection for community groups | Resource Centre](#)
- [NHG Privacy Policy](#)

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