



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## **Guidance Note Setting up a Residents Association**

This guidance note outlines the information you need to set up a residents association.

### **What is a Residents Association?**

There are lots of definitions of what a residents association is but we define it as:

“A group of people that live in a defined area and work together to take up issues of common concern in relation to their housing, community and environment and build a sense of community”.

### **Why start a Residents Association?**

There are a number of reasons why people living in an area may get together to form a residents association and having a residents association in your area can provide a number of benefits:

- To campaign for something e.g. a better caretaking or repairs service, play facilities, residents parking etc.
- To campaign against something e.g. the closure of local facilities, problems with traffic, local antisocial behaviour.
- To gain a greater voice than you would have as an individual, when talking to the council or landlord about things you would like to see changed.
- To build community a sense of community.
- To keep people in the area informed of all the issues that affect them.

### **How do you set up a Residents Association?**

#### **Step 1: Talk to the Customer Engagement Team**

If you and your neighbours think that your area could benefit from a residents association, the Customer Engagement Team can help you take the first steps. We can help you:

- Promote the role of associations to your neighbours and enlist their support.
- Deliver a public meeting to explain the benefits of setting up an association and how we will support you.
- Host your inaugural meeting to elect key officers and committee members.

You can contact the Customer Engagement Team on 01895 277308 or by email at [customerengagement@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:customerengagement@hillingdon.gov.uk)

## **Step 2: Get everyone's views**

Speak to as many people as you can in the area you think would benefit from having a residents association. You could do this in the following ways:

- Door knocking and collecting peoples' views,
- Creating a flyer and putting it through people's doors (give them a way of providing feedback),
- Going to places in the local area where people meet socially and talking to them e.g. community clubs and community centres.

It will be helpful to find out the following from the people you make contact with:

- What do they think of their local area?
- What are the good and bad things about the area and what could improve?
- Do they think having a residents association would be good for the area?
- Would they like to be involved in a residents association or kept informed?
- If they would be willing to be a part of a small group to help develop the residents association.

Some people may be enthusiastic and others may not want to get involved but you only need a core group of interested people to get things started.

## **Step 3: Plan your inaugural meeting**

By this point you will hopefully have an idea of the level of support for a residents association for your area and a small group of people ready to move things forward. The next step is to hold an inaugural meeting to elect your committee. You will need to do the following:

- **Find a venue for the meeting**
  - It is best to try and find a venue as close to the proposed catchment area of the residents association as possible. The closer to home the meeting is the more likely people are to attend!
  - Community centres, churches and schools are often happy to let out rooms and some venues give discounts on hire charges to community organisations.
  - The Customer Engagement Team can help with finding a venue and venue hire costs for your inaugural meeting.
- **Pick a date and time for the meeting.**
  - Try and pick a date and time that will allow the majority of people in your catchment area to attend.

- Often a weekday meeting held early in the evening (for example around 6 or 7 pm) can allow for the best attendance. This gives people that work a chance to attend and people with children to get home before it is too late.
- Don't make the meeting too long or try to discuss too much at the first meeting. An hour is plenty of time for an inaugural meeting.
- **Publicise the meeting.**
  - It is important to ensure that all residents in the proposed catchment area are informed of the inaugural meeting and that they are all given the opportunity to nominate people for committee roles.
  - The most effective way of doing this is to create a flyer and deliver it to all of the properties in the proposed catchment area. You will find a template for an inaugural meeting flyer on the Residents Association Web Portal but
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The information you should include is as follows:

- The purpose of the meeting;
- The date, time and venue of the meeting;
- How to nominate someone to be a part of the residents association's committee;
- A date by which nominations must be received.