



# Residents' Association Recognition Policy

## Introduction

Our vision is to create thriving communities with a mission to improve the quality of life for our residents. SHA recognises that residents meeting regarding local or service issues by recognised residents associations or as informal groups can provide a platform for residents to be a useful channel for communication.

Our 'Residents Involvement' policy states 'Promote the setting up of residents associations (RAs) to develop a local voice and help us build active and sustainable communities' and 'We will formalise RAs and offer opportunities to engage with us and continue to support existing and new residents associations'.

## Purpose

This policy will provide the guideline for all the current and future residents associations about criteria's they need meet to be recognised as a formal residents association. The policy is also emphasises on representation and diversity. This policy consists of a model constitution which should be adopted by all old and new residents associations which will bring consistency in the operation and representation of the residents association.

## Recognition Criteria

1. The main aims of the RAs must be to represent the views, concerns and interests of residents on housing related issues on SHA estates/areas.
2. Residents associations should have clearly defined geographic boundaries e.g. an estate, block or named streets.
3. Resident associations must adopt a constitution similar to Spitalfields Housing Association (SHA) model's constitution. This constitution can have addition to reflect the group's specific aims and objectives but it must be agreed with SHA.
4. Resident associations need to have a majority of residents in the agreed area as members of the residents' association's and they must be representative of the community in which they operate and systems for monitoring membership in terms of equal opportunities must be in place. The membership of a recognised residents association should represent at least 60% of the properties in the block/area. Where the estate/area has mixed tenure of tenants and leaseholders the membership and the committee needs to reflect this proportionately.

5. Membership of residents associations must be open to all members of residents' households over the age of 16 years although each household is limited to a single vote. Residents association must provide signed membership list to SHA. All members must live in SHA properties. Where the estate is part of a consortium this rule will not apply.
6. Residents Associations must keep attendance records and ensure these records are kept up to date. Membership must be renewed every three years.
7. Residents Associations must demonstrate commitment to Equal Opportunities.
8. Residents associations must keep clear and accurate financial records showing the income received and how it has been spent. All cheques must have two authorised signatories and it is recommended that those signatories are the Treasurer and one other committee member.
9. The rules of the residents association should be fair and democratic and cover the following matters, among others:
  - a. openness of membership
  - b. payment and amount of subscription (optional)
  - c. notices of meetings
  - d. voting arrangements and quorum election of officers
  - e. independence of the landlord
10. Residents Association committee members must have a DBS certificate and a copy lodged at SHA office.
11. The rules should be such that where the residents association is being consulted by the landlord on proposed works and estimates; any view put forward by the residents association would be that of the majority of those members who express a view subject to any rules about quorum.
12. Financial Statements for the year end must be submitted to Spitalfields Housing Association within three months of the year end.
13. Where the residents group fail to meet the above criteria SHA will treat the group as an informal group and the group will not qualify for annual grant. Any issues brought forward by such group will be treated as individual concerns and group members have to communicate SHA as an individual regarding the

issue. No informal group will represent block/area. SHA will still listen to any concerns of such group and will do its best to mitigate any common problem.

**Responsibility:** Residents Involvement Team will oversee the implementation and success of this policy from SHA. The committee for the residents association will have full responsibility to meet the criteria set out in this policy and any associated work required. SHA will help the residents association to plan to achieve the criteria.

This policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is a need to do so earlier than due time.

## **SUGGESTED RULES AND CONSTITUTION FOR A RECOGNISED RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

**1. NAME:** The name of the Association shall be the Association (of that area, block etc.), herein after called the Association.

**2. OBJECTS:** The residents association shall have as its objects the furtherance of the community interest of its members and the housing services provided by SHA affecting those members.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP:**

- Membership shall be open to all SHA residents
- Voting shall be restricted to one vote for each property (including joint tenancy or ownership).
- Membership of the residents association shall be an acknowledgement of the acceptance of the Rules and Constitution.
- All members must live in SHA properties. Where the estate/property is part of a consortium this rule will not apply.
- Where the estate/area has mixed tenure of tenants and leaseholder the membership needs to reflect this proportionately.

**4. ORGANISATION:** The Committee shall consist of at least a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and a maximum of six members. The election of the Committee and its officers shall take place at the Annual General Meeting. Committee members elected shall hold office until the following Annual General Meeting, when they shall be eligible for re-election without re-nomination. New nomination for membership of the Committee shall be proposed and seconded by two members of the Association and notified to the Secretary seven days in advance of the Annual General Meeting and shall include the written consent of the nominee.

**5. THE COMMITTEE:** The Committee shall be empowered to fill any vacancy occurring on the Committee or among the officers for the remainder of its term of office. The Committee shall also be empowered to appoint sub-committees from the membership, whose decisions will be subject to confirmation by the Committee. The Committee shall meet as and when required, its quorum consisting of a simple majority of committee members, at least two of whom must be officers. Where the residents association is in mix tenure the committee needs to reflect it proportionately.

**6. MEETINGS:** The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held annually. A Report will be given at the Annual General Meeting of the year's work of the association. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association may be

convened at any time by the Secretary, either upon written instructions of the Committee, or at the written request signed by no fewer than 51% members of the association.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association, or at any Extraordinary General Meeting, or at general meeting 25% of the membership shall constitute a quorum, and if not present, the meeting shall be adjourned to another day when members present shall form a quorum. Where the residents association is in mix tenure the quorum needs to reflect it proportionately. An ordinary general meeting should take place at least twice every year and notice of the meeting should go to every member one week in advance.

**7. VOTING:** Voting at a meeting of the Association shall be by a simple majority and be by the show of hands unless a ballot is demanded by a majority. In the case of equality, the Chairman shall have the casting vote.

**8. FINANCE:** The property and funds of the Association shall be held and administered by the Committee; a resolution of the Committee shall be sufficient authority for any payment therefrom. The financial year shall end on March 31 up to which date an Annual Statement of Accounts and Balance Sheet shall be submitted for approval at the subsequent Annual General Meeting. A banking account should be opened in the name of the association. All cheques shall be signed by two Committee members, of which one must be an officer.

Financial Statements for the year end must be submitted to Spitalfields Housing Association within three months of the year end.

**9. AUDITORS:** Auditors may be appointed by a resolution at the Annual General Meeting. Committee members shall not be eligible for appointment as auditors.

**10. ALTERATION TO THE RULES AND CONSTITUTION** No alteration to the Rules and Constitution of the Association shall be made except at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting and later should be accepted by SHA. All complaints or suggestions on matters regarding the residents association shall be made to the Committee, preferably in writing. In the event of the residents association being wound up, any surplus funds shall be disbursed to a suitable registered charity to be decided by a simple majority of the membership.