

Recognising and supporting resident associations policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out Peabody's approach to recognising and supporting resident associations.
- 1.2 Peabody is committed to involving residents in the way we make decisions and in empowering communities.
- 1.3 We recognise that residents associations provide a platform for customers and are a useful channel of communication. Residents associations in local communities are an important part of resident's options for getting involved.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all Peabody customers including tenants, leaseholders and shared owners. It does not apply to Town and Country Housing customers.

3. Key terms and definitions

- 3.1 A **Residents Association** is formed by a group of people living in a specific geographical area, who come together as an organisation to represent their mutual interests.
- 3.2 A residents association can be made up of tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and other residents. Peabody encourage mixed tenure associations. However in some cases the residents association (often because of the area it is set up to represent) may be specific, for example to leaseholders or to sheltered housing residents at a particular scheme.
- 3.3 Recognised residents association are groups that meet the Peabody requirement (recognition criteria) set out in this policy, are recognised within the meaning of s29 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and can receive the support offered.

4. Our approach

- 4.1 We require residents association to meet reasonable standards for formal recognition and eligibility for grants, and it is essential that formally recognised groups do not exclude people based on their age, disability, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender.

Recognition Criteria

- 4.2 Resident associations wishing to be formally recognised must show annually that they are democratic, accountable and meet the following criteria:
 - Resident associations must have a written constitution (RAs should adopt our model constitution on Peabody only estates or have a constitution approved by Peabody);
 - Resident associations must demonstrate an active involvement and a wide membership, for example, well attended open meetings;

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- Resident associations should have membership clearly open to all potential members in their catchment area and demonstrated by distributing newsletters, leaflets etc. encouraging everyone to join;
 - Resident associations should send newsletters etc to residents (at least 1 per annum) giving information about activities and encouraging everyone to join;
 - Resident associations should make minutes of meetings open, public and available;
 - Resident associations should demonstrate and promote diversity and equality;
 - Resident associations should hold regular meetings including an annual general meeting (AGM) with a quorum, annual reports and democratic elections;
 - Resident associations must have a code of conduct;
 - Resident associations must keep a proper record of accounts and present them at the AGM;
 - Resident associations must send AGM minutes, reports and accounts to Peabody prior to their AGM;
 - Resident associations must co-operate with Peabody's annual audit to monitor representation on committees
 - Resident associations should abide by the 'Code of Excellence' for residents groups to reinforce good standards
- 4.3 In the case of resident groups in schemes managed by the retirement service, the ARHM(Association of Retirement Housing Managers) Code of Practice for England ('the Code') places additional requirements on us. The Code is a published document available on the ARHM website.
- 4.4 Peabody are members of ARHM and therefore any recognised resident group within the retirement service will need to comply with these additional requirements to ensure that we are complying with our duties under the Code. Therefore, where we are asked to recognise a resident group in a scheme which is designed to provide services to older people, the following criteria must also be met in addition to those listed above:
- the group represents at least 51% of the people living at the scheme.
 - the group has a proper constitution.
 - the group has elected officials.
- 4.5 For the purposes of this policy, we consider that a resident group in a retirement scheme has a 'proper constitution' if it meets our overarching requirements for recognition, as stated in this policy.
- 4.6 We will recognise a leaseholder resident association where the membership represents not less than 60% of those paying a variable service charge. We will look to work with formally constituted groups for a block or estate that cannot be recognised under the relevant legislation where:
- The group has a formal constitution.
 - The group has a formal procedure for membership.
 - The officers of the group have been democratically elected.
 - Group membership is significant in number for the size of the block/estate it has been set up for.
- 4.7 In the case of multi-landlord resident associations, Peabody require written permission from other landlords to be considered as a recognised association.

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Annual reviews and continued recognition

- 4.8 Each year, resident associations will have participation, accountability, activities and accounts reviewed by Peabody using the recognition criteria. The recognition of the group will be renewed provided that:
- Resident association income has been used for the intended purpose
 - The resident association demonstrates the ability to maintain proper accounts, run meetings etc;
 - The resident association (or its officers) has not been subject to a vote of no confidence or official complaint.
 - The resident association can demonstrate that decisions have been made democratically and in the interests of the wider membership.
 - The resident association (or its officers) has not been in breach of the Code of Conduct
 - The resident association has members who are willing to take up officer posts.
- 4.9 Additionally, recognition may be suspended as a result of disputes between two or more groups, between resident groups and Peabody, or between committee members of the same group. This is to allow time to investigate the cause of a dispute and to make recommendations to resolve it.
- 4.10 Where resident associations fall short of any of the above criteria, Peabody will, where appropriate, agree a support and action plan with the committee to help them to achieve the required standard.

Support and Training offered by Peabody to Resident Associations

- 4.11 Neighbourhood Customer Specialists are the main contact for support and advice to resident associations. The Resident Involvement team will provide advice and support to Neighbourhood Customer Specialists when setting up or working with resident associations.
- 4.12 Training is important for all resident groups so that they develop skills and gain confidence.
- 4.13 The Customer Engagement & Resident Involvement team will provide training and support for resident associations. This can include a mix of internal and external training and support, and will include:
- Chairing meetings
 - Secretarial skills
 - Basic book keeping
 - Equality and diversity awareness
- 4.14 Colleagues should also explore joint delivery of training with local authorities and other registered providers. Details of training opportunities will be advertised on our website and via mail outs to recognised resident associations.
- 4.15 A list of recognised resident associations, property numbers covered and their key contact details will be maintained by the Customer Engagement and Resident Involvement team. This list or contact details for resident group members will not be passed onto anyone outside of Peabody or given to resident association members without first the consent of each member listed.

Funding

- 4.16 New resident associations will receive a start-up administration grant of £300. The administration grant will be payable annually if the group has met the recognition criteria.

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- 4.17 Every year, following their annual review to confirm recognition, and their AGM, the residents' association is eligible for a flat rate annual administration grant of £300. In addition, a grant of £2 per property, up to a maximum of £1000, will be paid provided the recognition criteria and the 'Code of Excellence' are being fully met.
- 4.18 On multi-landlord estates, a grant will be given based upon the number of Peabody residents represented by the residents association. For example, if 10% of the residents are Peabody residents, a £30 annual grant will be paid.

5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 5.1 We value diversity and promote equality, ensuring people are treated accordingly to their individual needs. This ensures that no person or other organisation is discriminated against on the grounds of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origins, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy, unrelated criminal activities, illness or any other matter that may cause a person to be treated with prejudice.
- 5.2 We will endeavour to ensure that services are delivered fairly and equally to all and to the highest possible standard. We provide all customers, prospective customers and other stakeholders with the information they require, in a format to meet their individual needs, using clear language which is easy to understand.

6. Legislation and Regulation

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1 Head of Customer Engagement has overall responsibility for delivery and compliance with the policy.

Approval

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Policy owner	Director of Community Strategy, Partnerships and Funding