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1.0 Introduction

This TRA handbook is for existing Tenants & Residents Associations (TRAs) and will help residents to set up new TRAs.
This is a step by step guide on what to do to develop a TRA and gives practical ideas on what you can do to keep it going. The handbook is laid out in sections so that you can dip in and out of it.

The TRA handbook will refer to the Community and Service Development Officers (CSDOs) who are your first points of contact for all TRA matters and who are there to support you. Your CSDO can be contacted at your area housing office.

Finally we would like to thank residents who attended our focus group meetings to tell us what they wanted from a TRA handbook. Their comments have been invaluable.

What is a Tenants & Residents Association?

A Tenants & Residents Association is formed by a group of residents living on an estate or in a street(s) who come together to form an Association to make their area a better place to live in.

A TRA gives residents more say in how their estate is run and allows them to work with Islington Housing Services to find solutions to problems affecting their area. A TRA can also be a way to organise events and activities for all residents to enjoy.

What are the benefits of setting up a Tenants & Residents Association?

Forming a TRA can bring many advantages for you and your neighbours. TRAs can:

• provide residents with an effective way to make their views known to Islington housing services and other organisations and give them a greater say in how their estate or block is managed
• address issues of concern to the whole community, by working with housing services to find solutions
• get opportunities to meet with the staff and the managers who are responsible for delivering services
• raise funds for their community
• provide information to residents about local issues
• develop a good community spirit, helping neighbours to get to know each other
• organise social projects and events for the local community
• bring a sense of achievement to those involved in running a group
• give people a chance to meet new people, gain invaluable experience, access training and gain new skills
• meet with the council to discuss the concerns and problems raised by residents and work together to find solutions
• attend an estate walkabout to inspect your estate and make suggestions for improvements
• recommend how the council spends money in their local area.
2.0 Establishing your TRA

Encouraging people to get involved can often be the hardest part...but don’t give up!
2.0 Establishing your TRA

Before starting a TRA there are two important questions that need to be answered:

Does my estate or street already have a TRA?

Do my neighbours’ want to get involved?

- there are many active TRAs on Islington estates. Currently only 50% of our estates have TRAs and we are keen to establish more associations across the borough.
- if there is already a TRA, a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), Cooperative or Estate Management Board (EMB) on your estate, your CSDO can introduce you to them.
- you cannot form a new additional TRA where these organisations already exist, but there will still be plenty of opportunities to get involved.
- to find out if your estate or block has a TRA, contact your CSDO.

- you need to find out how much support there is for a TRA in your area and how many people would be willing to help out. The first thing to do is talk to other people in the area about setting up a TRA. This will also give you a good idea about the issues that people feel are important.
- you should talk to as many people as you can to get a broad range of opinions. You could call round door-to-door or simply speak to people when you meet them. If others are keen on the idea, you could ask them to help you canvas opinion.

Get Together

If you think there is enough support for the idea, it is time to get together and think about setting up a TRA.

For a TRA to be established there needs to be 15 residents or one third of the total number of properties on your estate/ street at a general meeting. Remember 15 members of your family doesn’t count.

- both tenants and leaseholders can be members of a TRA and stand for elected positions such as chair/ secretary, treasurer.
- the number of leaseholders who can hold an elected position should be proportional to the number of leaseholders on the estate/ street.
- leaseholders cannot form a majority in the elected committee positions.
A few pointers
When setting up a TRA, there are a few points you should keep in mind:

- set realistic targets for your group which you are confident you can achieve
- try to get as many people involved as possible in making decisions and taking on tasks and responsibilities
- keep everyone well informed about what is happening
- make it clear that volunteers will need to commit some of their time and attend meetings regularly
- stress the positives of having and being involved in a TRA.

The first meeting
The purpose of this meeting is to:

- get some volunteers who will help to run your TRA
- organise a public meeting to launch your TRA where all residents will be able to vote to fill various positions
- discuss the problems or common interests in your area and what would you like to do about them
- decide what estate(s), block(s) and/or street(s) your TRA will represent. You should discuss this with your CSDO as you will need to ensure that residents of all the areas you wish to cover are represented and happy to be included.

At your first meeting you will prepare for the launch of your TRA. You will:

- set a date, arrange a venue and invite your CSDO and everyone from your estate/ street
- you should think about what you want on your agenda (the agenda should be distributed to all invitees at least two weeks in advance of the meeting)
- you should discuss what positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and treasurer) volunteers would like to stand for
- you can invite your ward councillor
- think about how you want to get involved with your local ward partnership.
2.0 Establishing your TRA

Working with the Council
You may want to invite your CSDO who will be able to talk through your relationship with Islington Council and will be able to advise you:

◆ on the advantages of being formally recognised by the Council when adopting the Council’s model constitution
◆ advantages of a code of conduct
◆ your CSDO will be able to advise you on financial assistance to help with the running of your TRA
◆ your CSDO will be able to advise you of the circumstances when a TRA may be de-recognised. This decision will be made by the Area Housing Manager of your Area Housing Office
◆ offer practical advice on the next steps.

Public meeting to launch your TRA
This meeting should be chaired by your CSDO or a councillor if you wish your TRA to be recognised by Islington Council. The purpose of this meeting is to:

◆ hold a democratic election of a Chair, Vice Chair (this is optional), Secretary, Treasurer and at least four committee members
◆ adopt the model constitution and a code of conduct
◆ decide on what to call yourselves
◆ agree an email address for your TRA. (Your CSDO can help)
◆ agree the date of the next meeting.
A committee is usually made up of people who were on the initial steering group but others may have also joined at the public launch meeting.
Your Committee will be elected every two years at the Biennial General Meeting. The committee’s role is to ensure your TRA is run properly and is responsive to residents’ needs. The committee will liaise with your local area housing office and can be effective in raising issues on behalf of residents. Leaseholders and freeholders can be elected but they cannot form a majority of the Management Committee.

Your committee should:
- organise the day-to-day running of the group
- hold regular meetings
- discuss local issues and make democratic decisions
- represent the views of the members and local residents.

Committee roles

Outlined below is a summary of the roles of different officers on a TRA committee. The council provides free training to help you to carry out your duties effectively (see section 6 or go to www.islington.gov.uk/residenttraining for more on training opportunities.

The Chair

The Chair is the spokesperson for the group and makes sure that the meetings are run effectively. The Chair should:
- be aware of all activities carried out by the group
- make sure that other committee members are carrying out their tasks
- help plan and prepare the agenda and invitations for meetings (with the Secretary)
- represent the group at other meetings and events such as attending Tenants & Residents Panels

At the meetings, the Chair should:
- make sure that the meeting starts and runs on time
- agree a code of conduct
- introduce and summarise the purpose of the meeting
- introduce each item on the agenda, giving the necessary background information, making sure that everything is covered and decisions are made when necessary
- stop people dominating meetings or straying away from the agenda
- help the group to deal with differences of opinion and conflicts
- make sure that everyone in the meeting gets a chance to take part
- be positive and help the group find solutions
- be unbiased.

The Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair stands in for the Chair when necessary and provides administrative support. He or she also represents the views of the group at other meetings.
The Secretary

The Secretary makes sure that everyone is kept informed. The secretary’s role is to:

- take notes at meetings, recording who attends, what decisions are taken and who agrees to do any tasks
- circulate notes to members after meetings
- make sure that notices of meetings or agendas are drawn up and sent out beforehand
- invite staff from your Area Housing Office. Staff can also arrange for guest speakers from different services in the council
- make sure that a suitable room is booked for the meetings
- raise any matters at meetings that the members need to make decisions on
- make sure that the right number of meetings takes place, in line with the group’s constitution
- deal with correspondence
- send out publicity or other information
- keep a record of the members.

The role of the Secretary can be split into three positions:

- Minutes Secretary (taking notes at meetings)
- Correspondence Secretary (responding to letters/emails/texts)
- Membership Secretary (keeping a record of your members’ contact details).

The Treasurer

The Treasurer looks after the money. The Treasurer’s role is to:

- open a bank account (you will need three signatories)
- keep a record of all money going in to and out of the groups account
- keep petty cash for paying out day-to-day expenses
- pay bills promptly and keep a record of money spent
- give an update of income and spending at each meeting
- help the group to plan its earnings and spending activities
- prepare financial statements for the committee, Annual General Meeting and auditor.

It is important that there are three people from different households willing to act as ‘signatories’ for the groups bank account. Two out of the three people will have to sign cheques on the groups behalf.

The CSDO can assist you in opening a community account with a bank or building society of your choice.

The Treasurer can be provided with training and ongoing support to help them with these tasks.
3.0
Your Committee

What is the role of the committee member?

Committee members are the backbone of a TRA. Their role is to:

- attend meetings, or send apologies if not able to.
- ask neighbours for their views on important issues
- help organise events
- contribute to discussions
- volunteer if a job needs doing
- request that items are added to the agenda
- report back if they have carried out a task or gone to a meeting on behalf of the group
- respect confidentiality and not discuss the private affairs of individuals
- not let differences of opinion cloud the workings of the group
- support the committee and accept majority decisions
- have a team spirit and positive attitude
- help produce or distribute leaflets.
4.0 Getting your neighbours involved

It’s important to let all of your neighbours know about your TRA meetings. Here are a few ideas to help you with promoting your meetings and some pointers on where and when to meet.
4.0 Getting your neighbours involved

Getting your neighbours together

- produce a leaflet to put through your neighbour’s letter boxes
- ask your CSDO to put a poster in estate notice boards
- do some door knocking to tell people what the meeting is about
- ask your neighbours to spread the word and get the whole estate/street talking
- ask your CSDO to help. They can help you with designing and printing of posters and leaflets
- create your own TRA website or blog
- email your neighbours using your TRA email address.

Useful tips to promote your TRA

Create posters and leaflets which will advertise:

- up-coming events
- improvement works being done on your estate/street
- fundraising successes
- how you spent your monies

Do’s and Don’ts

- do include contact details for the group
- do make sure it is easy to read
- do ensure your poster is non-political
- don’t overload posters with text. Try to make them eye catching and keep it simple.

Where to meet

Finding the right place for a meeting is important. Try and make it easy for people to come along. You can meet anywhere just make sure it’s suitable and accessible to all residents on your estate/street.

- Islington Housing Services manage a number of housing managed community centres. You may be able to use one close to your estate/street. Go to www.islington.gov.uk/communitycentres for more information
- meetings can also be held at Council managed community centres but you will need to speak to Centre Managers about availability and if there are any associated costs. See section 9 for a list of all community centres
- some TRAs have use of their own TRA flat for meetings and other community activities but other TRAs operating locally can also make use of them at no cost.

Make sure the venue you choose for your meeting is appropriate and accessible for all attendees.
Here are some points to think about when deciding where and when to meet:

- is it local and easy for everyone to get to?
- is there disabled access, a toilet and adequate lighting and are tables and chairs available?
- what dates and times is it available and do you need to book?
- what are the arrangements for opening and locking up?
- how much will the venue cost?
- is there space for children to play, or crèche facilities
- is the room large enough?

Don’t forget you can use your local public spaces, e.g. parks, cafés, libraries, area housing offices.
Now your TRA is up and running you will need to organise meetings to discuss and take decisions about matters which are important to you, you will need to look after your finances and to keep your residents involved and interested.
Monthly/ six-weekly meetings

TRAs generally meet once a month or on a six weekly basis. For your general day to day meetings you will need to consider drawing up an agenda.

The agenda

- an agenda is a list of issues that you wish to discuss at your meeting
- an agenda makes sure that meetings are effective, structured and don’t go on too long. They tell those at the meeting what will be discussed and you can also include a time limit for each item to keep the meeting on track
- the Secretary and Chair should prepare an agenda for all meetings and give committee members the chance to suggest any items for discussion.

Agendas should include:

- the name of the group
- the date, time and place of the meeting
- items in priority order
- the time limit for each item (if appropriate)
- a brief description of each item
- an early spot for guest speakers
- up to four main items.

A sample agenda:

1. Apologies (for absence)
2. Minutes of previous meeting (these are formally approved by a vote)
3. Matters arising from previous meetings.
4. Correspondence (details of any written correspondence are read out)
5. Report back (from committee members)
6. Items for discussion
7. Any other business.

Minutes of your meeting

The secretary will take minutes of your meeting – see section 3 for more on the secretary’s role.
Looking after the TRA finances

You should follow some basic rules when it comes to the TRA money:

- adopt a single and clear book-keeping system which shows your income and expenditure
- check the book-keeping regularly – at least once a month. It’s easier to correct a mistake if you identify it early. Find a safe place to keep all items; cheque books, receipts and records of all transactions are as important as the money itself
- present a brief update of your accounts at each TRA meeting and a Treasurer’s report and full accounts for the BGM
- pay income into the bank as soon as you get it. Many groups find it convenient to use cash income as petty cash – don’t. By paying this income into the bank there is a clear and independent guarantee that your organisation really received the income
- keep as little cash in hand as possible. Try to make as many transactions as possible through the bank by paying by cheque

Please remember the rules regarding the representation of leaseholders, outlined in the introduction. The council cannot recognise your TRA if this rule is not met.

- keep a receipt for every item of spending, no matter how small. If a receipt is lost or was not provided, ask the person claiming the money back to sign a petty cash slip, which authorises the spending
- keep cheque stubs as a separate record of spending
- the accounts should be open and available to all members at any time on request
- make sure that you receive bank account statements as often as your bank will allow – ideally every month. Contact your bank for help.
The biennial general meeting (BGM)

The BGM is held once every two years and is an opportunity to elect committee members and review documents such as the constitution and code of conduct and also gives you a chance to let your community know about your successes.

The TRA will make arrangements:

- to invite everyone who lives in the group’s catchment area. You must tell them they have the right to stand for election and vote
- for the existing committee to present a report on the activities of the TRA during the previous two years and report on how much money was raised and how much was spent
- to re-adopt the Council’s current model constitution and see if you need to update your code of conduct. (Substantial amendments to the constitution will require Council’s approval)
- the committee can add other items of interest to the agenda.

You are now ready to hold your election:

- the CSDO, council officer or ward councillor will chair the election process
- all the existing members must step down
- all residents including previous TRA members are given the opportunity to nominate themselves or other residents for any of the positions
- an election is held and this may be done by a show of hands or ballot.

How to keep your neighbours interested

People need to feel involved and the more people who are involved the more likely you are to achieve good attendance for your meetings.

What works well?

- the personal touch such as door to door canvassing – people are more likely to get involved if they feel that they are personally recognised
- return slips to gain views and interest in the group on newsletters and surveys
- holding a community event and recruiting members at these events
- reviewing times of meetings and venue details regularly to ensure certain times and venues do not exclude people from attending
- making sure that everyone who attends a meeting is kept up to date with your news and progress.

What stops people attending:

- poorly structured meetings
- meetings that do not keep to time
- boring / irrelevant agendas
- if people don’t feel welcome or involved
- Inaccessible venues.
6.0 Support for TRAs

Islington Council has dedicated Community and Service Development Officers and a Resident Engagement Team providing help, advice and support for groups.
The Community and Service Development team

Community and Service Development Officers (CSDOs) are your first point of contact for all TRA matters. Your CSDO is based at your local area housing office. Go to www.islington.gov.uk/areaoffice for more information.

When setting up your TRA a CSDO will help you to:

◆ arrange your first meeting
◆ invite the relevant people who you wish to attend e.g. Police / Councillors / Housing staff
◆ produce a poster to advertise your meeting
◆ distribute the poster / leaflets around the estate / street
◆ find a suitable venue
◆ help set the agenda
◆ produce copies of attendance sheets, agendas and other paperwork for the meeting
◆ take the minutes at your first meeting.

After your first meeting CSDOs:

◆ will send out minutes / notes of the meeting
◆ help you complete funding applications
◆ inform you about training opportunities
◆ help identify members of staff to invite to future meetings
◆ help set up a generic email address
◆ add your TRA email address to the Islington Council website.

The Resident Engagement Team

The Resident Engagement Team offers a variety of engagement opportunities for all residents including TRAs who can help improve services by giving their feedback, telling us what your priorities are and working with us on designing better services.

The team supports:

◆ TRA training
◆ residents and other voluntary organisations to engage with housing services
◆ the Residents’ Improvement Taskforce to review housing services
◆ the Housing Executive
◆ Resident Involvement Register

It also:

◆ provides a programme of resident training
◆ oversees the youth engagement programme
◆ carries out surveys and discussion group meetings
◆ runs the mystery shopping and the residents inspectors programmes
◆ provides funding for community run events.
Grants available from Islington Council

Islington Housing Services provides those TRAs recognised by the Council with financial assistance to help with the running costs of managing your TRA.

Start Up grant

- all new TRAs who are formally recognised by Islington Housing Services are entitled to a one off start up grant of £100.00. Your CSDO will arrange this payment after receiving a copy of the minutes of your first meeting.

Administration & publicity grant

- all recognised Tenants & Residents Associations can apply for an Administration and Publicity grant on an annual basis worth £200.00 plus 50 pence per unit on the number of properties that you represent on your estate
- the grant is payable from April of each year. You will need to complete an application form and give details of your bank account, minutes of your first meeting or a biennial general meeting and details of your financial accounts showing how the previous grant was spent.

Discretionary grants

If you are having a one off event on your estate and need additional resources you can contact your CSDO, who will be able to let you know if we are able to support your event.

Environmental Improvement Budget

This budget allows TRAs to bid for funding to make improvements to communal areas and estate grounds. Your application has to show how the scheme will benefit residents and significantly improve the environment of the estate. The type of works may include:

- landscaping of green areas which will encourage better use
- improvements to concrete surfaces to make them more attractive
- signage and notice boards
- improving play areas to encourage greater use
- improving walk ways through estates.

Estate security budget

This budget allows TRAs to bid for funding to help improve security and safety on estates through small improvements that make a significant difference on your estate. The type of works may include:

- improving lighting
- additional cameras on a CCTV system to improve security in a particular area

Go to www.islington.gov.uk/TRAresources for more information and application forms for Start-up and Administrative and publicity grants.
• schemes that contribute to prevention of anti-social behaviour or help promote safety (e.g. positive activities for young people).

Application forms will be sent to your TRA annually and are available at [www.islington.gov.uk/TRAresources](http://www.islington.gov.uk/TRAresources)

**Other ways of getting money**

**Community fundraising**

You can raise your own funds to pay for trips out for the elderly, social events, children’s parties and other community events. You should record any fundraising money separately in your accounts to identify the amount clearly. Examples of ways to raise funds are:

- raffles
- bingo
- jumble sales and car–boot sales
- fun days
- street parties.

**Other funding**

There are various organisations that have funds and grants available for voluntary groups to apply for. They have conditions about who can apply and what the money can be used for. These funds are particularly useful for groups who would like to expand their activities and deal with issues like:

- facilities for young people
- play and sports facilities
- buying IT equipment
- crime and safety
- environmental improvements
- local businesses.

**Voluntary Action Islington (VAI)**

VAI have many years of experience in dealing with volunteers and they are happy to offer support and advice to organisations looking to recruit volunteers.

For information on funding go to the VAI’s funding booklet [www.vai.org.uk](http://www.vai.org.uk)

**Contact details**

**W:** www.vai.org.uk  
**E:** volunteer@vai.org.uk  
**T:** 020 7832 5833

**Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS)**

TPAS act as a hub between tenants, landlords and government by informing tenants how to challenge, influence and control how their housing services are delivered.

**W:** www.tpas.org.uk  
**E:** info@tpas.org.uk  
**T:** 0161 868 3500

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Often, part of the fun of running a group is organising fundraising events that involve everyone.
The Big Lottery Fund

The BIG Lottery Fund gives funding from the National Lottery to many good causes such as community groups and projects that improve health, education and the environment.

W: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk
T: 0845 4 10 20 30

Training opportunities to help your TRA

- Islington Housing Services run a variety of training courses for residents from helping to run a TRA to skills for life courses such as cookery and DIY classes
- To find out details of our programme go onto the Islington Council’s website www.islington.gov.uk/residenttraining or email Resident.Engagement@islington.gov.uk
- We offer specific training related to helping TRAs develop their organisation. The following sessions start in October and run until March:
  - Running effective meetings
  - Chairing meetings
  - Negotiation skills
  - Managing money
  - Tenants & Residents Association – duties and responsibilities
  - Getting more people involved
  - Representing the community
- We will also be running training on how to carry out estate inspections and Mystery shopping. Look out for details on our the Council’s website.

Helping young people on your estates

We deliver a programme of sport, education and creative arts for young people living in council homes. As well as positive opportunities for young people the programme provides an opportunity to engage with our young people and get their feedback.

To find out more about our work with young people visit www.islington.gov.uk/housingyouth

Ideas for other clubs

Gardening/ sewing/ reading/ badminton/ table tennis/ mothers & toddlers/ social.
Forums provide an opportunity for exchange and sharing of information between the council, TRAs and borough-wide organisations. Getting involved will empower your TRA to influence local decision making.
As a TRA you can have your voice heard on issues which matter to your members and which relate to your estate/ street.

There are a number of formal and informal bodies that your TRA should know about so that you can decide which ones you can get involved with to improve services.

**Council’s Executive**

**Ward Partnerships Meeting**

**Housing Executive**

**Residents’ Improvement Taskforce**

- Taskforce Service Review Panel
  - Resident Involvement Register
  - TRAs
  - Disability Panel
  - TMOs

**Tenants’ & Residents Panel**

- Old Street Panel
- Highbury House West Panel
- Highbury House North Panel
- Highbury House South Panel
- Whittington Panel
- Elthorne Panel

**Tenants & Residents Associations**
The Council
◆ the Council is composed of 48 councillors, elected every four years. The overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents
◆ all councillors meet together, approximately six times a year, as the Council. The Council decides overall policies and sets the Council’s budget each year. Some of the meetings are ceremonial, such as the Annual Council in May each year and the Mayor’s Awards and, although open to the public, there is no provision for the public to ask questions at these meetings
◆ council meetings are held in public (unless there are confidential or exempt matters for discussion, which is very rare), in the Council Chamber, at the Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD
◆ members of the public are entitled to a copy of the agenda for the meeting and any non-exempt/non-confidential papers. The agenda and accompanying papers are available five working days before each meeting. They can be downloaded by going to www.islington.gov.uk/democracy

Ward Partnerships
◆ the partnerships are a way for people and organisations in a ward to get involved, meet their councillors, share their knowledge and to help tackle local issues
◆ Ward Partnerships have replaced Islington’s area committees and must be consulted by council departments on a range of issues that affect local residents including: planning and community benefit from developments; traffic and parking; road maintenance; utility works; crime and anti-social behaviour; environmental improvements; tree felling; litter, dog fouling and neighbourhood clean-ups.

For more information Ward Partnerships go to www.islington.gov.uk/wardpartnerships or you can telephone 020 7527 6768 or email partnerships@islington.gov.uk

Housing Executive
◆ Islington Housing Executive is an advisory body to the Council’s Executive and housing directors. It is made up of residents and councillors and looks at all housing matters that affect council tenants and leaseholders
◆ you can find out everything about the Housing Executive by going to www.islington.gov.uk/housingexecutive or if you’re interested in becoming a member of the Housing Executive you can contact the Resident Engagement team on 020 7527 2903 or by emailing: resident.engagement@islington.gov.uk
Resident Improvement Taskforce

- the Residents’ Improvement Taskforce has been set up to directly involve residents in reviewing housing landlord services within Islington Council
- the Taskforce will work to improve housing landlord services through resident led reviews and for the benefit of all residents
- the Taskforce meets on a quarterly basis, make decisions on service reviews topics, and volunteer to be trained to participate in reviewing a service
- recommendations for service improvements that are made by the taskforce are considered by the Council’s Housing Executive
- all council tenants and homeowners are welcome to attend Taskforce meetings
- you can find out everything about the Resident Improvement Taskforce by going to www.islington.gov.uk/taskforce or if you’re interested in becoming a member of the Taskforce you can contact the Resident Engagement team on 020 7527 8630 or by emailing resident.engagement@islington.gov.uk

Partners for Improvement Forum

- resident representatives on the Partners for Improvement Forum represent the interests of PFI tenants and leaseholders
- the Forum is made up of up to 20 tenants and up to 10 leaseholder representatives, who meet every two months. Any recognised Tenants and Residents Association that covers Partners’ properties can nominate a representative to the membership of the Forum
- residents are invited to nominate themselves for election every two years. If there are more nominations than there are spaces on the Forum, there will be an election
- you can find out about the Residents Forum by going to www.partnersislington.net/residents-forum or if you’re interested in becoming a member of the Forum you can the Customer First Manager, on our freephone number 0800 587 3595.
Tenants and Residents Panels

- the Tenants and Residents panel is a public meeting open to anyone to attend. The meeting is intended for the benefit of anyone living in council housing or in a property where they receive a housing landlord service from the council or one of its managing agents.
- the panels have been set up so that council tenants and homeowners can meet directly with housing staff and have their say about what is happening in their local area and other issues.
- the Panels have the opportunity to select schemes for environmental improvements.
- panels will decide how often it wants to meet, whether it wants to continue or develop sub-panel arrangement, when and where it wants to meet and most importantly what it wants to discuss.
- as a TRA you may wish to nominate a representative to attend your local Tenants and Residents panel.
- for more information on Tenants & Residents panels go to www.islington.gov.uk/residentpanels.

Estate inspections

- the estate services team regularly carry out estate inspections to assess caretaking services, check the communal areas and identify any repairs that might need doing.
- TRAs often take an active interest in the upkeep and maintenance of their estate and are invited to attend estate inspections with staff four times a year to identify any areas of concern and agree what should be done about them.
- to find out more about estate inspections, contact the estate services team in your area housing office.
- If you are interested in becoming a Resident Inspector you can contact the Resident Engagement team on 020 7527 2511 or by emailing: resident.engagement@islington.gov.uk.

Community Conversations Network

- the Community Conversations Network (CCN), was established in May 2013 and serves to keep Tenants and Residents Associations (TRA) and Tenant Managed Organisations (TMO) up to date on the latest resident led activities; provide information on available funding and support and give community groups a place to come together to share their good news and best practice.
- the CCN meets twice a year and the Community Conversations News e-newsletter is circulated to TRAs and TMOs to keep everyone informed between meetings.
- to find out more about CCN or to join the News team, contact the Resident Engagement Team on 020 7527 2903 or by emailing: resident.engagement@islington.gov.uk.