



Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd

Registered Tenants' Organisation Starter Pack

1. Introduction
2. Draft Model Constitution
3. Getting Involved: Your Options 2017-20
4. Tenant Focus Groups
5. Registered Tenants' Organisations
(East, North and West areas)
6. Membership of the Association
7. Guidance Note on the Role of the Chairperson
8. Guidance Note on the Role of the Secretary
9. Guidance on the Role of Committee Members
10. Guidance Note on Accounts and the Use of Grant Fund

1. Introduction

The following information is set out to give your group some information on setting up a Registered Tenants' Organisation and the associated benefits.

Background

The idea of Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTOs) comes from the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

The aim is to give Tenants' Organisations, which meet certain criteria, a recognised role in the tenant participation process.

What is a Registered Tenants' Organisation?

A Tenants' Organisation is a group of tenants who meet to discuss matters which affect their development.

The aim of a Tenants' Organisation is to promote the interests of all its members.



Why start a Registered Tenants' Organisation on your development?

A Tenants' Organisation encourages all tenants on a development to meet and discuss any issues which may affect them or the development where they live.

- You can put forward your views as a group to Hanover, local authority or other agencies
- You can arrange meetings to inform tenants about issues of concern e.g. benefits, budgeting
- You can arrange social activities, events and outings that may be of interest to your tenants

A Registered Tenants' Organisation allows you to have your say and be heard.

What can a Tenants' Organisation do for you?

- Help solve problems on your development
- Communicate with staff, Hanover and the wider community
- Organise social events and activities within the development and wider community
- Fundraise for the development and other chosen charities
- Offer friendship to tenants on the development

The next stage: how to get started

- Meet up with other tenants who have shown an interest in setting up a Registered Tenants' Organisation
- Decide the aims of the proposed organisation e.g. organise social activities and be involved in decisions which affect your development
- Organise a Steering Group of three or four tenants who are willing to work towards electing a Committee
- Contact your Sheltered Housing Manager, Housing Officer or the Customer Engagement team who will be able to provide you with more details about how to set up a Registered Tenants' Organisation including a copy of a Constitution that may be used.

Will Hanover recognise our Tenants' Organisation?

Yes we will, providing that your Organisation has adopted an appropriate Constitution, as we need to be sure that your Tenants' Organisation is genuinely representing the interests of the majority of tenants on your development.

Where to go for help and assistance?

- Your Sheltered Housing Manager
- Your Housing Officer
- The Customer Engagement team at Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd on 0131 557 7469 or 95 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS or email CustEngage@hanover.scot
- Outside agencies such as the Tenant Information Service at Suite 128 Baltic Chambers, 50 Wellington Street, Glasgow, G2 6HJ
Tel: 0141 248 1242, email: info@tis.org.uk
- RTOs which are already in place (please contact the Customer Engagement team for contact details)

Key points to remember

- Start with issues affecting your development
- Keep everyone on the development informed as to what is happening
- Find out what your tenants can contribute in terms of skills and experience toward your Registered Tenants' Organisation
- Listen to all viewpoints
- Remember that support is available from Hanover staff and other RTOs
- Don't forget to have fun!

2. Draft Model Constitution

[Name of Organisation] Constitution

1. Name of the Tenants' Organisation

The name of the Tenants' Organisation will be the
{ _____ ***name of the Organisation***}.

2. Aims of the Tenants' Organisation

The aim of the Tenants' Organisation will be:

- a) To represent the interests of the tenants who live at
{ _____
name of development & location} (the Development) on the delivery of housing services, and
- b) To help promote social activities for the tenants of the Development. ***{If tenants choose to include social activities as part of their Organisation Aims}***.

3. Tenants' Organisation Membership

- a) Membership is open to all Hanover tenants living at the development.
- b) Membership is usually limited to tenants of the Development. The Tenants' Organisation will encourage all tenants in the development regardless of age, disability, gender, language differences, race, religious belief or sexual orientation.
{Optional: Tenants can become members by paying an annual membership fee. This will be decided by members of the organisation. The amount will be agreed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) }

4. Tenants' Organisation Committee

- a) The Committee will be elected from the Tenants' Organisation membership to carry out the aims of the tenants' organisation.
- b) The Committee will meet every {_____x weeks or quarter}
- c) The Committee will include:
 - **Chairperson,**
 - **Vice Chairperson (optional);**
 - **Secretary;**
 - **Social Secretary (optional);,**
 - **Treasurer;** and
 - a minimum of {_____} general Committee members.
- d) The Committee will be elected at an AGM of the Tenants' Organisation.
- e) The Committee can co-opt new members between Annual General Meetings. Co-opted members will have full voting rights on the Committee.
- f) In the Chairperson's absence, the {_____ **Vice Chairperson**} will assume the Chairperson's role.
- g) Each Committee member will be allowed one vote. If a vote is tied the Chairperson will have the casting vote.
- h) All Committee meetings will be minuted and the minutes will be available to all Tenants' Organisation Members.
- i) Committee members must ask for the views of Tenants' Organisation Members for:
 - development social activities
 - consultation meetings with Hanover (e.g. tenant focus groups). Committee members will provide feedback from any such meetings.

5. Tenants' Organisation General Meetings

AGMs

- a) The Secretary will advertise details of an AGM on the Development at least 14 days before the meeting. b) The purpose of the AGM will be:
 - for the Committee to report on its annual activities;
 - for the Treasurer to present a statement of accounts;
 - for the Committee to vacate their positions;
{you can decide whether all, half or one third resign every year}.
 - for Tenants' Organisation Members to elect a new Committee;

- for Tenants' Organisation Members to vote on any changes to the Constitution;
 - to set the level of any membership fee, if required.
- c) Resigning Committee members may immediately stand for re-election.
- d) Nominations for Committee members should be given to the Secretary before the AGM and will also be taken from the floor. If more members stand for the Committee than are places available, a vote will be taken.
- e) Committee members will elect office bearers at their first meeting after the AGM.

Special General Meetings

- f) A Special General Meeting will be held if 25% or more Tenants' Organisation Members make their request in writing to the Secretary, stating their reasons for requesting a meeting. g) On receiving the request the Secretary shall arrange a meeting to take place within 14 days.

General Meeting points

- No Annual or Special General Meetings will take place if less than 25% of Tenants' Organisation Members are present.
- Tenants' Organisation Members will have one vote per **{ _____ person/household }**.
- All General Meetings will be minuted and made available to Tenants' Organisation Members.
- Any behaviour or language (including racist, sexist or other inflammatory remarks) considered by the Chairperson as offensive will not be permitted.

6. Financial Information

- a) The Treasurer must give a financial report at every Committee meeting.
- b) At the AGM the Treasurer must present an independently verified statement of accounts, verified by an independent financial examiner or by Hanover.
- c) The Treasurer cannot spend more than **{ _____ £50 }** on any single transaction without the consent of the Committee.
- d) In the event of dissolution, all funds to which there is no prior claim shall be given or transferred to such other charitable

4. Tenant Focus Groups

Tenant Focus Group meetings are held in the Spring and Autumn of each year and are open to representatives from Registered Tenants' Organisations (RTO) (normally up to four people from each RTO) and interested tenants.



Meetings are held in the East, North and West areas, usually at a development.

Issues such as policy changes are discussed at these meetings and they give tenants the opportunity to raise any general topics they may wish to talk about. The meetings also give RTO members the chance to visit

other developments and meet tenants from other developments in their area.

The Association will pay any reasonable costs for travel to and from the meetings and will also help with travel arrangements, if required. A buffet lunch is also provided.



5. Register of Tenants' Organisations: North Area

Name of Group	Address	Telephone	Date of Registration
Hanover Court, Banchory Residents' Association	c/o SHM Office Hanover Court Station Road Banchory AB31 5ZA	01330 822921	02/09/2005
Go Ahead Tenants' Organisation	c/o SHM Office Glebe Court The Glebe Kingussie PH21 1HG	01540 661 785	14/11/2013
Hanover Inverbervie Club	c/o SHM Office Hanover Court Inverbervie DD10 0TR	01561 361 188	12/06/2014

Name of Group	Address	Telephone	Date of Registration
Hanover Social Club (Buckie)	c/o SHM Office Hanover Court Newlands Lane Buckie AB56 1PW	01542 834 591	12/08/2014
Taylor Court Tenants' Association	c/o SHM Office Taylor Court Broomhill Road Keith AB55 5FE	01542 882 803	24/03/2015
Burnside Court Residents' Association	c/o SHM Office Burnside Court Netherha' Road Buckpool AB56 1EG	01542 831 343	30/06/2015

Register of Tenants' Organisations: East & West Areas

Name of Group	Address	Telephone	Date of Registration
Hanover Residents (Wilson Street, Paisley) Tenants' Organisation	c/o SHM Office Hanover Gardens Wilson Street PAISLEY PA1 2NB	0141 889 5930	04/11/2005
Hanovarians Tenants' Organisation	c/o Housing Officer Kirktonholme Crescent East Kilbride G74 1BA	01355 222039	12/11/2010

6. Membership of the Association

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF HANOVER?



We encourage a wide membership to help the democratic process within Hanover. For a once-only payment of £1 to buy a share, you will have a stake in Hanover and an opportunity to say how it is run.

If you or someone close to you lives in a development managed by us, receives a service from us or has a particular interest in the work we do, then we'd like to hear from you.

As a member of Hanover, you will:

- be involved in the arrangements for selecting board members;
- receive the annual report and annual financial statements;
- appoint auditors; and
- be involved in approving changes to the rules of the association from time to time.

Our annual general meeting takes place once a year and we will invite you to attend.

Beyond your £1 subscription, you bear no personal liability for any decisions or actions by us. Full responsibility for running Hanover rests with our board.

Our Company Secretary deals with all applications monthly.

You can resign at any time by giving one month's notice.

ABOUT US

We were formed in 1979 and have grown to become one of Scotland's leading housing associations for older people.

Housing

We manage more than 5,000 homes on more than 200 housing developments, offering rented housing and acting as factoring agents to more than 2,000 homeowners.

The majority of our housing is classed as sheltered, retirement or very sheltered, but we also provide amenity housing for more active older people and general needs housing for anyone over 16 years of age.

We also offer an innovative care at home service on some of our developments.

Community alarms

As well as our housing, we also provide community alarms to thousands of people across Scotland, including those on our own housing developments as well as to other individuals.

Services for organisations

Hanover Commercial is a round-the-clock service helping more than 45,000 people across Scotland. We work closely with other housing associations, local authorities and charities, supplying community alarms, telecare and a range of other services.

We are a Scottish charity and are registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator as a social landlord.

How to become a member

Becoming a member is easy. Just complete the application form on the next page and return it to a member of our staff or post it to:

**The Company Secretary
Hanover Scotland
95 McDonald Road
Edinburgh
EH7 4NS**

You can also call our Company Secretary on **0131 557 0598** or email **companysecretary@hanover.scot** if you have any queries or would like to find out more about what becoming a member means.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please complete as many sections as possible. Those sections marked with an asterisk (*) must be filled in. We will keep any information you supply us with confidential as required by law, except your name and address which we may be required to disclose to regulatory authorities.

Title* (e.g. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr):

Full name*:

Address*:

Postcode*:

Telephone number:

Email:

(continued overleaf)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP (CONTINUED)

Please tell us something about yourself:

I apply to become a member of Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Limited. I enclose a cheque for £1, made payable to Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association Ltd, for my share. This will be returned to me if my application is unsuccessful. I am not employed by Hanover and I am 16 years old or over.

Signed*:

Date*:

For office use only
Fee received:
Application acknowledged:
Application accepted:
Certificate issued:

7. Guidance on the Role of your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Chairperson

Success of a meeting can depend on how it is chaired. The Chairperson is the person who makes sure things get done – not the person who does everything.

There are two basic jobs of the Chairperson:

1. Guide the Organisation to achieve its aims
2. Chair the meeting of the Organisation

Some of the duties of the Chairperson are as follows:

- Know the Constitution and have a copy available at all meetings
- Liaise with the Secretary on the agenda and meeting arrangements
- Welcome members and introduce guests
- Ensure fair discussion
- Stop anyone taking over, dominating discussions
- Sum up problems, points, decisions
- Keep order / ensure a chance for all to have their say
- Get through the agenda on time
- Help prepare agenda
 - Ensure decisions are carried out

A Chairperson should always have:

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meeting, agenda, minutes, reports
- Notepad / pen
- Folder to keep paperwork
- Chairperson's Hammer (to keep order if everyone is talking at once)
- Watch (to ensure meeting keeps on time)



8. Guidance on the Role of your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Secretary

A good secretary must be reliable and efficient. He/she will pay strict attention to matters of detail and ensure incoming correspondence receives prompt replies.

It is important that the secretary's name, address and telephone number are well publicised to landlords and organisations that want to make contact with the Committee.

Before a meeting

- Arrangements and an agenda for the meeting should be prepared in consultation with the chairperson
- A suitable venue for the meeting should be arranged and speaker arranged if necessary
- A notice of the meeting and agenda should be sent to all Committee members so that they will receive them at least a week before the meeting is held. Agendas should be sent out for all meetings, even if they are held at the same time and place each week or month
- The Secretary must keep a complete, approved and signed up to date set of minutes
- Ensure that all correspondence has been dealt with, and when necessary, obtain replies for the next meeting
- Keep an accurate filing system

After the meeting

- Keep a record of everyone attending the meeting or collect their signatures in an attendance book. Apologies for absences should also be recorded
- Ensure that a quorum is present before any business is done

- Read the minutes of the previous meeting (unless already sent out) and obtain the Chairperson's signature for the official copy
- Read out all correspondence received and report any action taken since the last meeting
- Ensure that the Chairperson is supplied with all the necessary papers and information relevant to the meeting

The Secretary should have:

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meetings: agendas, minutes, reports
- Notebook / pen
- Folder to keep all paperwork in
- Headed notepaper
- Stamps / envelopes
- Access to a computer or typewriter

Minute Secretary

To lighten the duties of the Secretary some groups consider dividing the duties and having a Minute Secretary.

The Minute Secretary should:

- Compile minutes of meetings, recording decisions and action to be taken and by whom
- Ensure minutes are available to all Committee members prior to or at Committee meetings
- Retain copies of all minutes for future reference

The Minute Secretary should also have:

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meetings: agendas, minutes, reports
- Notebook / pen
- Folder to keep all paperwork in
- Access to a computer



9. Guidance on the Role of your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Committee Members

A Committee member may not have any special title or task, but their presence on a Committee is just as important as that of the Office Bearers.

Some duties of the ordinary members are as follows:

- Attend meetings regularly / ensure they start on time
- Stick to the agenda
- Support the Organisation as a team
- Take action on tasks identified from the previous minute
- Vote on issues
- Discourage domination of discussions by one or a few
- Assist with projects, fund raising etc.
- Support and encourage quieter members to take part in discussions
- Abide by the decisions of the Organisation
- Encourage membership
- Listen to each other
- Feedback to the Committee
- Aim towards constructive discussion and decisions
- Help with advertising, distributing pamphlets etc.
- Elect office bearers
- Make suggestions
- Accept the authority of the Chairperson

A good Committee member should always have:

- A diary
- Necessary paperwork for the meeting, agenda, minutes, reports
- Notepad / pen
- Folder to keep paperwork



10. Guidance on Keeping Your Registered Tenants' Organisation's Accounts, and the Use of Grant Fund from the Association

Every Registered Tenants' Organisation should make sure a Treasurer is appointed to manage the finances of the Organisation.

- The Treasurer should keep a clear and accurate book-keeping system and should be comfortable dealing with figures.
- The Treasurer is responsible for the proper accounting of the finance of the Organisation, but not the actual raising of money.
- The Treasurer will be one of three officers of the Committee authorised to draw out money from the RTO's bank account. Normally two out of three of these signatures are required when money is withdrawn.

Before a meeting

- The Treasurer should prepare a financial report before each meeting.
- The Treasurer should check members have paid their subscription (if applicable) and ensure all approved bills have been paid.

At the meeting

- The Treasurer should present a report of money paid into and taken from the account.
- The Treasurer should bring all the account books, receipt books and any other financial records required to the meeting so that he/she can answer any questions.
- The Treasurer should advise on the amount of money available for the Organisation's work and monitor expenditure.
- The Treasurer should collect any subscriptions (if appropriate).
- The Treasurer should account for any monies distributed in the event of the RTO ceasing to operate.

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- The Treasurer should prepare a financial statement for independent examination prior to the AGM.
- The Treasurer should present the balance sheet and financial statement at the AGM after they have received the examined accounts.

A Treasurer should have:

- Diary
- Money box
- Cheque book
- Accounts book
- Folder for expenses
- Receipt book
- Bank book
- Petty cash book
- Note pad
- Paperwork for meetings

Useful Tips

- Set dates for regular meetings several months in advance – reduces the chance of double booking yourself.
- Find out the public holiday dates in order that you can arrange meetings around them to avoid the need for last minute cancellations.
- Make sure that your wider membership knows who you are and how to contact you.
- Make your meetings as interesting and enjoyable as possible – HAVE FUN!
- Make sure you publicise your successes.

Grant Fund

The grant given to you by the Association is to be used to help set up your Organisation. There is no need for this to be kept in a separate bank account, but it would be useful if you kept a note of how this money was spent.

The grant may be used for items such as:

○ Photocopying	○ Postage
○ Stationery	○ Publicity for meetings
○ Phone calls	

