



Lanarkshire Housing Association Registration of Tenant Organisations guidance.

Introduction

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced tenants' rights to participate. Our tenant participation policy confirms the system for setting up and maintaining a register of tenant organisations. Tenant groups need to apply to become registered and must meet certain criteria to quality. The criterion for registration is set out by Scottish Government with further guidance enclosed.

Registered Tenant Organisation - RTO

A Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) is a group of residents, who wish to apply to their landlord to become registered and recognised as an RTO, as long as certain conditions have been met, as set out in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

RTOs are independent organisations set up primarily to represent tenants' housing and related interests. We are happy to assist groups through the registration process. Registration gives groups a recognised role in the decision making process.

What you need to do to become registered

A group wishing to set up as an RTO must fill in an application form. Application forms are available from our office. As part of the application process, you need to provide us with the following information.

- a copy of your constitution
- a list of office bearers and committee members
- a contact address for correspondence which can be made public
- a description of the area your group operates in
- details of any other landlords you wish to register within e.g. you may also apply to the local authority or other RSL with properties in your area.
- details of how you will invite residents to meetings.

Apply to become a RTO

An application form is available from our office, which you should complete and return with the information we need to allow you to apply to become a RTO

Constitution:

A RTO requires a constitution, which should detail:

- your objectives
- the area in which you operate
- your membership process
- how your committee operates and is elected
- how your business is conducted

- how your funds are managed
- when you meet including details of your AGM
- how your constitution can be amended
- your commitment to equal opportunities

You must elect a committee and make sure that:

- The committee is elected annually, with committee members required to stand down after a certain period as detailed in the constitution
- consists of at least three members
- reaches decisions democratically

You must operate within a defined area that LHA housing stock, and the group must be open to all tenants within that area.

You must have proper accounting records showing income and expenditure, your assets and liabilities. Your constitution must require an annual audited financial statement to be presented at your AGM

You must be able to demonstrate how you plan to represent the views of your members and how you will keep them informed

Application forms

If you meet the registration criteria and want to apply as a RTO, you can complete the application form. Once the application is received we will check that you have completed it correctly and supplied the additional information required. We will be happy to assist you with the application for and the registration process. We will let you know in writing that you have qualified and from what date.

If you don't meet the registration criteria we will tell you in writing of our decision not to place you on the register and the reasons why you don't meet the criteria.

What happens if we don't register?

If you don't register we will still keep your details on file and include you in any consultation that we do. However you will not be classed as an RTO and you will not have the statutory rights of an RTO

What rights and benefits will we have as an RTO?

As an RTO you will have a recognised role in the participation process. You will have the right to be consulted on issues affecting you. You will also have the right to have a representative from your group co-opted onto our Housing Services Subcommittee.

What help is there to become registered?

We will be happy to assist you and signpost you to local groups who will assist you in the preparation of you constitution that helps meet the registration criteria. We can also assist you by advising you where you can obtain advice and training.

Is the register a public document?

We are required by law to make the Register publicly available. The Register must include contact details for groups, however if you prefer you can use a box office or care of address.

Can a group be removed from the register?

A group can be removed from the Register if:

- It no longer meets the registration criteria
- A written request is received
- If the group ceases to exist or has been disbanded

Do we have the right of appeal if we are removed from the Register?

A tenant group may appeal against the landlord's decision not to register the organisation or:

- To remove the organisation from the register or
- Not to remove the organisation from the register

An appeal process will be considered by our Housing Services Sub Committee, following which a group will have the right to appeal to Scottish Government Housing and Investment Division, after the landlord's internal appeals procedures have been exhausted.

Our appeal process should be initiated within three months of notification.

Can we register with more than one landlord?

You can register with any social landlord who has housing stock in the area you cover.

How long will registration last?

Registration lasts for a three year period. We will automatically remind you when the registration period is complete and ask you to reapply.

Further information is available from our office: Telephone 01698 269119 or email enquires@lanarkshireha.com.