

Setting up a resident's association

Setting up a formal resident's association in the UK involves several key steps. Here's a comprehensive guide:

1. Gauge Interest and Initial Discussions:

- **Talk to your neighbours:** Start by discussing the idea with your neighbours to gauge their interest and identify common concerns.
- **Identify key issues:** Determine the primary issues the association will focus on, such as maintenance, security, or environmental concerns.
- **Define the area:** Clearly define the geographical area the association will cover, ensuring it encompasses a cohesive community.

2. Organise an Initial Meeting:

- **Publicise the meeting:** Inform residents in the affected area about the meeting's date, time, and purpose.
- **Find a suitable venue:** Choose a location that is accessible and convenient for residents, such as a community hall or a local library.
- **Prepare an agenda:** Outline the topics to be discussed, including the purpose of the association, potential issues, and next steps.

3. Hold the Initial Meeting:

- **Discuss key issues:** Encourage residents to share their concerns and prioritise the issues the association should address.
- **Form a steering group:** Identify volunteers to form a steering group responsible for drafting a constitution and organising the association's structure.

4. Draft a Constitution:

- **Include essential elements:** The constitution should outline the association's name, objectives, membership criteria, committee structure, meeting procedures, and financial management.
- **Seek guidance:** Utilise templates or seek advice from organisations like the National Federation of Residents' Associations (NFRA) or your local council.
- **Ensure inclusivity:** Include clauses that promote equality, diversity, and non-discrimination within the association.

5. Hold a General Meeting:

- **Present the constitution:** Share the drafted constitution with all residents and allow for discussion and amendments.
- **Elect a committee:** Conduct elections for key positions, such as chairperson, secretary, and treasurer.
- **Agree on membership fees:** Decide whether to charge membership fees and determine the amount.

6. Register and Formalise:

- **Register with the CVS:** Seek advice from the CVS, who will support you to become a registered association. You can then inform the Council that you have become a formal entity.
- **Open a bank account:** If you are looking to secure funds for any reason, you can open a bank account in the association's name, requiring multiple signatories for financial transactions.
- **Communication with members:** Create an online platform to communicate with members, share updates, and promote events. A sensible option for the group at this stage is to continue using Whatsapp.

7. Ongoing Operations:

- **Hold regular meetings:** Conduct meetings to discuss ongoing issues, make decisions, and plan activities.
- **Maintain records:** Keep accurate records of meetings, finances, and membership.

By following these steps, you can establish a formal residents association that effectively represents the interests of your community and works towards improving your living environment.