

HELP SHEET: THE ROLE OF THE RESIDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE

On estates where residents choose not to form a residents' association, residents may elect a residents' representative for a 3-year term, to speak on behalf of other residents. This is an interesting and rewarding role working with estate and housing managers to help them understand the issues that are important to residents on their estate. On some estates, two residents may want to consider sharing the role.

Residents' representatives should:

- Live on the estate they are representing.
- Find out residents' views about the services they want and expect on their own estate and work with local housing managers to make sure that collective choices are included in the estate's local agreement.
- Work with local estate and housing managers to find solutions to those issues that residents are concerned about.
- Attend as many estate meetings as possible to represent the views of those unable to attend or quieter residents.
- Make sure that what they say is approved by those they represent and put that view across to local Hanover management or other organisations.
- Try to represent everyone living on his or her estate. It is important to gain the views of residents who may not take part in community life.
- Make sure that communication is two-way and feedback discussions and decisions made at meetings to all residents on their estate.
- Place the views of those they represent above their own. If the common view conflicts with their own, the representative should stand aside and allow another person to represent the common view.
- Where residents' views are divided, representatives should inform estate and housing managers of all the different views.
- Representatives do not have to attend off-site meetings. However, they may choose to and can encourage other residents to attend.
- Representatives should regularly re-assess if other residents wish to form a residents' association and then take an active part in its development.

Guidance is available from Hanover's Engagement team

- Stand down from the role if they no longer have the support of other residents.
- Work in accordance with Hanover's values – which are summarised as being honest, connected, positive, courageous & respectful.

What is not part of the role of a representative?

- Deputising for the estate manager. The representative role is to represent other residents, not run the estate.
- Dealing with an individual's problems. Staff are not allowed to discuss personal or confidential issues about one resident with another resident.
- Dealing with complaints for other residents – they should put the resident in touch with their estate manager, housing manager or Hanover's complaints team. However, the representative may provide support to residents throughout the process.
- Solely emphasising their own personal view unless it is in agreement with the common view from all residents.

Other activities in which the representative can get involved

- Updating the local agreement with their estate /housing manager before it is sent to other residents for approval.
- Attending health & safety and other estate inspections with the estate manager.
- Observing the interview for a new estate manager.
- Reviewing service charge/accounts information with their estate/housing manager before it is presented to other residents.
- Standing for election to Residents' Council.

Local housing management or the Engagement team may monitor whether representatives are acting effectively and have the support of other residents. If this is not the case or they are not acting in accordance with Hanover's code of conduct and values, Hanover may offer support and training to help improve effectiveness or require the resident to stand down from the role. For more information on the role or election of the residents' representative or on setting up a residents' association please talk to your estate manager or contact the Engagement team on 01784 446117 or engagement@hanover.org.uk.

Related documents: Residents' Representative Handbook; Residents' Code of Conduct; Residents' Association Handbook