

Ways to get involved

in ASRA's work

Tenant & Resident Groups

ASRA is committed to involving and consulting with residents' groups where they exist, and to supporting the development of new residents' groups.

What standards do residents groups have to meet before they are recognised by ASRA?

The tenant group will usually be based on a specific residential area, e.g. an estate. The tenant group should be able to show it has the support of the people it aims to represent, striving to encourage as many people as possible, of all types and backgrounds to get involved. Organised around terms of reference and a committee that is not only acceptable to its members but also to ASRA. Run by a committee elected each year and able to show that it:

- ▶ keeps its members regularly informed
- ▶ listens to and acts on what they have to say
- ▶ continues to do the job it set out to do.
- ▶ able to show it is responsible in the way it is run
- ▶ actively representing the views of its members whenever and wherever it can.



Residents' groups wishing to participate in ASRA's decision making processes will need to show they are democratic, accountable and meeting the following criteria on an annual basis:

- ▶ Membership from at least 70% of ASRA's properties at the scheme/estate.
- ▶ A committee of at least 5 members
- ▶ A spokesperson
- ▶ Meetings – at least one annual meeting and minimum of 2 other meetings take place.
- ▶ Notes kept of all meetings and made available on request
- ▶ The housing officer invited to the annual meeting
- ▶ Members sign up to a Code of Conduct
- ▶ Agreed Terms of Reference
- ▶ Equal Opportunities - All residents' groups will be expected to show how they have tried to gather information on local residents' needs and views, and demonstrate that action has been taken to encourage all residents to get involved. The composition of the committee should aim to reflect the make-up of the local community.

Becoming an Advocate

ASRA is keen to build contacts with residents on estates and in areas where there are no recognised residents' groups. We want to do this through Advocates – residents who are prepared to act as a local contact.

What is the role of an Advocate?

It is important that the role of Advocates and what this means in practice are clear. Broadly, the role is:

- ▶ To attend estate inspections (if representing an estate, and when possible)
- ▶ To liaise with your housing officer on communal issues on behalf of your community
- ▶ To be kept informed on ASRAs approach to working in your area, including details of any contracts for works to communal areas
- ▶ To advise other residents in your area or estate of the correct ways to report problems

An Advocate's role is not:

- ▶ To raise individual issues of your own, other than through the normal channels available to all residents
- ▶ To act as an unpaid housing officer... you should not become the first port of call for your neighbours in the event of a problem as we do have systems to deal with these.

If you would like more information on how to get involved, contact your housing officer or email us at: getinvolved@asra.org.uk

What is expected from an Advocate?

As you will be acting as a representative for your community, there are some basic things we expect before we will recognise you as an Advocate. These are:

- ▶ You must agree with us a clear geographical area which you will represent
- ▶ You must not be under investigation for a serious breach of tenancy (e.g. harassment, nuisance etc.)
- ▶ You must not be subject to legal action in connection with your tenancy or lease, including for rent arrears (legal action is defined as the application for a Court hearing)
- ▶ You must have a commitment to equal opportunities and not act in a discriminatory way
- ▶ You must attend training sessions for Advocates
- ▶ You will be expected to accompany your housing officers on inspections of your estate where this is possible for you.

