

The Cairn logo consists of a dark teal, downward-pointing arrow shape. Inside this shape, the word "cairn" is written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

cairn

A Guide to Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs)

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1. What is a Registered Tenant Organisation?

Registered Tenant Organisations (RTOs) are community groups made up of local volunteers to promote and defend the interests of tenants and residents in their area.

Groups do not have to be registered, although there are certain advantages for groups that decide they want to become registered, including:

To raise issues and concerns that affect the community represented by the group

To become a representative voice and a means for tenants to communicate with Cairn to influence decision making that affects them and their neighbours' homes and community

The right to be consulted over proposed changes to housing services

The provision of start-up and annual grants from Cairn

To develop self-help schemes and projects such as lunch clubs or fundraising for communal facilities and social events

The opportunity to establish networks with other RTOs

2. Why start a Registered Tenant Organisation?

There are lots of reasons to join a tenant's organisation. Here are a few:

- To organise around issues that affect the majority of people in the community, such as repairs, antisocial behavior, regeneration, etc
- To apply pressure on Cairn to achieve change
- To have a representative voice in the community
- To campaign on certain issues such as better housing conditions

3. How to start

Most RTOs start with just a handful of people who are keen to do something for the area. You can find people by talking to neighbours who may share your concerns and be willing to help or by putting up notices to see if any other people are also interested in setting up a group.

If you have found support for your idea then get together with the people who are interested. Use this time to discuss what it is that you want to tackle and how you are going to go about it. Remember to allocate tasks and share responsibility between the group.

Arrange a public meeting to test wider support for your ideas. This is important as you run the risk of assuming that your first small planning meeting represents everyone's views. You could misjudge how many people feel the same way as your small group.

The public meeting will also formally start the tenants group and elect a steering group, which will help move the group towards becoming registered. Agree a date for a further meeting to discuss priorities and decide how to get things moving.

4. Registering your tenant group

To become registered with Cairn a tenant's group must have:

- A name
- A written constitution
- A clear description of the geographic area covered

The group must hold a publicly advertised inaugural general meeting (IGM) to appoint office holders (chairperson, secretary and treasurer) and to agree the constitution.

Cairn's Communications and Engagement Team can provide a template for a constitution which has been used successfully by other groups. A copy of the agreed constitution should be submitted to Cairn and be made available for public inspection. It should contain the following information:

- The name of the group
- The group's area of operation
- Rules of membership
- Office bearer positions held (usually a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary)
- An explanation of procedures at meetings and how decisions will be taken
- A commitment to holding regular, advertised and accessible meetings

- A statement of how funds will be managed and audited
- The procedure for making changes to the constitution
- A statement setting out arrangements for the dissolution of the group

5. Support for tenant groups

Cairn will provide practical help with setting up a tenant group.

Our Communications and Engagement Team are available to meet with a tenant group to discuss with them the process for establishing an RTO. This will include help for such things as:

- Drafting a constitution
- Assistance with the production of promotional material
- Training
- Travel and/or expenses
- Minute taking
- Venues for meetings

In addition to the support offered by Cairn we will also direct tenant groups towards voluntary organisations operating in their area for independent help and advice.

6. Grants for Registered Tenant Organisations

We will provide a start-up grant to cover out of pocket expenses such as travel costs, postage and stationery.

Start-up grants will be awarded according to the area and number of tenants the group represents.

Groups of less than 50 tenants	£100
Groups of 50-150 tenants	£200
Groups of 150-300 tenants	£300
Groups of 300-500 tenants	£400
Groups of over 500 tenants	£500

To receive funding, all Registered Tenant Organisations must have a bank account set up in their group's name.

Registered Tenant Groups must keep financial records recording all income and expenditure as well as statements from the bank. Groups should have their financial records audited each year, alternatively Cairn's Finance Team can provide a letter confirming the accounts are in order.

Groups can apply for repeat annual funding. The level of grant will not, ordinarily, exceed those set out for the start up grants detailed above.

Cairn have a Community Fund to help pay for projects that benefit Cairn tenants and residents. Applications for additional funding are welcomed and more information on our Community Fund is available from our website or the Communications and Engagement Team.

7. Training

We aim to offer access to training to tenants and tenant groups to help them meet their potential. We can also offer limited places to conferences or other events.

We will set aside funds for training within our annual Customer Involvement budget. In order to ensure the best use of these resources we will encourage the RTO to develop an annual action plan. A member of staff will be available to work with the group to develop their action plan, which will highlight the group's intended activities for the following year and an assessment of their training needs.

Training for the core skills required to successfully develop a Registered Tenant Organisation may include:

- Committee skills
- Basic accounts
- Producing a newsletter
- Constitutions
- Getting people involved
- Applying for funding
- Working with computers and software packages
- Getting people involved

8. Annual reviews

We recognise that groups develop at different rates and will take this into account when providing support and resources to RTOs. A staff member will be available to meet with RTOs for an annual review. The annual review will monitor the levels of support given to the group by us, taking account of the future sustainability of the group and its benefit to tenants.

The annual review is an opportunity for us and the RTO to work together to develop an action plan of future activities, including an application for repeat grant funding and a training needs assessment.

We are committed to empowering communities to improve the environment they live in and will provide advice and staff support where the outcome of their activities benefits our tenants.

We maintain a register of all the RTOs registered with us. The register is available for inspection by any member of the public at any of our area offices and is also available to download from our website.

9. Contact details

You can speak to any Cairn member of staff for help and assistance with forming a Registered Tenant Organisation. We also have our dedicated Communications and Engagement Team who lead on our Customer Involvement Strategy. Neil Golightly and Amy Sutherland are located in our Head Office.

Head Office

Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH

North Office

Caroline MacAskill House, 30 Waterloo Place, Inverness IV1 1NB

South Office

Murdostoun House, 5 Linnet Way, Strathclyde Business Park, Bellshill ML4 3RA

0800 990 3405

www.cairnha.com

enquiries@cairnha.com



Please be advised that not all of our offices are fully accessible to visitors with a disability. If you experience any difficulty visiting an office, please contact us as we may be able to make alternative arrangements.

Agencies that provide independent advice and support

Tenant Participation Advisory Service Scotland (TPAS Scotland)
74-78 Saltmarket, Glasgow, G1 5LD
Tel: 0141 552 3633
www.tpasscotland.org.uk

Tenant Information Service (TIS)
Suite 124-128 Baltic Chambers, 50 Wellington Street, Glasgow, G2 6HJ
Tel: 0141 248 1242
www.tis.org.uk

This document is available on CD, in Braille, large print and community languages from Cairn, Bellevue House, 22 Hopetoun Street, Edinburgh EH7 4GH. Email enquiries@cairnha.com or call 0800 990 3405.

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