



FPRA

Federation of Private Residents' Associations

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United you stand!

Recognised Residents Associations can help leaseholders to help themselves and improve the management of their properties.

The Federation of Private Residents Associations and Leasehold Advisory Service have today joined forces to promote the benefits of setting up a recognised tenants' association (RTA) as a first step for residential leaseholders to take when there are issues with management and service charges in a block of leasehold flats.

The Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE), the government-funded free legal advice service says a well-run RTA enables a block to speak with one voice, approaching the landlord whereas individually the relationship cannot always be so cohesive.

"Problems with cleaning, routine maintenance and door entry systems can all, over time, agitate those living in leasehold properties," says FPRA Chairman Bob Smytherman

"It is often the case that, when a Residents Association speaks together as an RTA, leaseholders can nip many of these problems in the bud."

"An RTA offers a single point of contact with those who own and manage their premises."

If leaseholders also want to embark on major collective projects like changing management, challenging service charges outright or even buying the freehold, then forming a residents association is the easiest way of ensuring that everyone is involved and committed before the whole process is begun."

"It is also important to seek formal recognition of an RTA, because the law then gives the residents association the powers and rights under leasehold law that it needs to be really effective."

Often landlords simply grant recognition without any argument: after all why deal with 20 individuals when you can deal with one? However, if they refuse to do so, then private leaseholders can apply to a Rent Assessment Panel (RAP) for recognition. RAPs are part of the Residential Property Tribunal Service, which also has responsibility for the Leasehold Valuation Tribunals that can adjudicate on a range of leasehold disputes.

RTAs can be set up by blocks of any size and have the right to be:

- consulted about the appointment of managing agents,
- notified of works proposed by the landlords and to receive copies of estimates,
- submit the names of contractors that it would like to be included in a tender list,
- obtain information about service charge accounts,
- appoint a surveyor who will have rights of access to the property and to the documents retained by those who manage the property.

"Current legislation does of course give individual leaseholders many rights, but RTAs do have additional rights", says Bob

Leaseholders can demand information about their own service charges and landlords have to consult and try to obtain estimates from leaseholders' recommended contractors when works to their building will cost any one leaseholder more than £250.

One of the most detailed handbooks for setting up a residents' association is available for sale from the Federation of Private Residents' Associations who are a non-profit association of associations for private sector blocks of flats in England and Wales at a very reasonable cost."

The FPRA represents the interests of thousands of leaseholders living in around 500 blocks and Chairman Bob Smytherman, is actively promoting the importance of forming a Residents' Association as the first step in dealing with management problems in leasehold properties.

FPRA Chairman Bob Smytherman added:

"Running your own leasehold building can often be time consuming for a few individuals and the formation of a recognised residents association can share the burden out more fairly."

Further free advice is available from LEASE's team of 16 qualified lawyers on 020 774 580 and at www.lease-advice.org.

LEASE also publishes a range of detailed guides, all freely available to download at www.lease-advice.org.

Hard copies are available from LEASE on 020 7374 5380.

The Federation of Private Residents Associations can be contacted on 0871 200 3324 or visit the web site at www.fpra.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:-

The Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE) is an Executive Non Departmental Public Body (ENDPB) funded by Government to provide free legal advice to leaseholders, landlords, professional advisers, managers and others on the law affecting residential leasehold and commonhold. It also provides a mediation service.

LEASE is funded by

- Communities and Local Government
- Ministry of Justice
- Welsh Assembly Government

LEASE provides advice by telephone, by letter or email, or in person at the office; and it can arrange seminars and group meetings where large numbers of leaseholders want to discuss a joint issue. LEASE publishes a wide range of free advice notes that are available on request or to download.

Leasehold advisers are available for telephone advice from 9.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday on 020 7374 5380.

www.lease-advice.org

Federation Chairman Bob Smytherman is also Chairman of his own Residents Association responsible for the day to day management of the Goring Chase Estate in Worthing, West Sussex which is a Not for Profit Company Limited by Shares with each of the 46 flats being shareholders within the company.

The FPRA established in 1971 is a non-political, not-for-profit advice, support and lobbying organisation for our members who include private residential leaseholders, tenants' and residents' associations and residential management companies as well as those companies where the leaseholders together own the freehold of their own residential block.

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