

Tenant Levy Steering Group Report 2010/13



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Introduction



Susan Borghys

Every year the Tenant Levy supports residents to access a variety of opportunities they otherwise may not be able to. Registered Tenant and Resident Association's, Senior Citizens Clubs, Tenant Management Organisations and other registered organisations access the Levy to benefit the wider community. The Tenant Levy Steering Group aims to approve each grant application.

The Tenant Levy is a consistent grant and I'd encourage resident groups to carefully plan how best to use the Levy money received; ensuring the criteria outlined in this report is met. This report details how the Levy money was spent in 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13; how different groups used the Levy money; the financial position; and how the Steering Group makes its decisions.

I would like to thank the members of the Tenant Levy Steering Group for their efforts in making sure the best decisions are made regarding the Levy funding. Despite being busy with other commitments, they have attended all Steering Group meetings and not left until a decision was made. I have no doubt that I would not be able to fulfil my role without the commitment of each member.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to a longstanding member of the Tenant Levy Steering Group, Tony Osbourne, who sadly passed away in 2012. Tony was a very active member of the group who taught me a lot in the time we worked together. It is a great loss to our group as well as the other groups he was involved in. I'd also like to thank Shirley Bogan, another longstanding member who stepped down from the Steering Group for personal reasons. Shirley was a very active member and served the Steering Group diligently for many years.

Susan Borghys

Chair, Tenant Levy Steering Group

How the Levy works

The basic principle is that each Hackney Homes tenant contributes 10p a week to the fund, making an annual total of £5.20 per household. This fund is set aside and is then allocated through grant applications by the Tenant Levy Steering Group (TLSG), which consists of elected tenant representatives.

There are two types of grants:

1) Start-up grants:

Newly set up Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs) are eligible to apply for funding at any time of the year for a fixed amount of £150.

2) Grants to registered Tenant Associations (TAs) and TRAs

Grants cannot be awarded to individuals.

To be eligible for these grants, the organisation must:

- Be registered with Hackney Homes;
- Be a council tenant and resident group;
- Have as its main objective, 'the promotion of tenants rights and the maintenance and improvement of their housing conditions, amenities and environment';
- Provide proof of expenditure (receipts) for funding received from the Tenant Levy fund.

Who can apply?

Grants are mainly awarded to registered Tenant and Resident Associations (TAs/TRAs). However, the grants may also be given to other tenant organisations such as estate based pensioners clubs. Details of the registration process are available from the Resident Participation Team, at Hackney Homes.

Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) can apply for Tenant Levy funding if they have a separate Social Sub Committee with its own bank or building society account. The sub-committee can apply for funding for social activities.

Note: Street Property Forum and Estate Based Youth Committees' are now eligible to apply for the Tenant Levy.

What will the Levy pay for?

Tenant Levy grants can be used for the funding of a wide variety of items. All applications must be for **advance funding** of goods and services. Below is a list of the types of things the Levy will fund, but this is not intended to be exhaustive. The Steering Group will consider items that are not on the list. The main types of payment are for:

- **Equipment:** such as photocopiers, computers or kitchen equipment for community halls and flats;
- **Administration:** such as postage, stationery, printing, telephone calls, newsletter production (tenant organisations can submit an estimate of their running costs);
- **Social activities:** such as day trips to the seaside and christmas events, estate based barbecues/parties – designed to promote the tenant organisation within its own community;
- **Insurance:** for public liability, hirers' liability and contents. This is in addition to the main Tenant Levy grant;*
- **Start up costs:** for groups who want to set up a new association;
- **One off security works:** such as door gates and window bars for community halls and flats

Items should not be purchased prior to any applications being approved.

The Levy will not fund annual maintenance contracts for items such as computers, photocopiers, central alarm monitoring/maintenance contracts or cleaning contracts or salaries as it is out of the scope of the Tenant Levy grant.

*Insurance – An additional payment

Tenant & Resident Associations (TAs/TRAs) can apply for public liability, hirer's liability and contents insurance (for TRA equipment only) in advance of payment as long as certificates or renewal notices are provided. This is outside of the grant ceiling and is made as an additional payment to the main Tenant Levy grant. Insurance can be applied for at any time of the year.

The Levy can also fund:

- ✓ Audio/Visual equipment
- ✓ Bingo machines and accessories
- ✓ Carpeting and flooring of community flats and halls
- ✓ Catering equipment
- ✓ Chairs
- ✓ Children's play equipment
- ✓ Christmas/New Year parties/activities/hampers/vouchers (lists may be required)
- ✓ Committee travel - reasonable travel costs incurred by Committee members travelling to and from Panel meetings, Board meetings and meetings with Hackney Homes officers in relation to TRA business.
- ✓ Computer packages (including personal computer, software and printer) (up to a maximum of £600). Laptop restrictions apply
- ✓ Cookers/microwaves
- ✓ DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks for Committee Members
- ✓ Desks
- ✓ Festivals/events/outings which enhance participation
- ✓ Filing cabinets
- ✓ First Aid kits
- ✓ Flip charts
- ✓ Fridges
- ✓ Garden tools, furniture and plants for use in maintaining existing communal gardens
- ✓ Internet access charges (Restrictions apply)
- ✓ Music equipment
- ✓ Meeting space hire (for groups with no community hall)
- ✓ Noise limiting devices
- ✓ Notice boards (Internal) for community halls and flats
- ✓ Photocopiers
- ✓ Postage
- ✓ Printing/publicity
- ✓ Public address equipment
- ✓ Refreshments for meetings (tea, coffee and biscuits only)
- ✓ Security equipment (for the purchase and installation of the equipment only)
- ✓ Smoke alarms (installation only, not the key-holding maintenance contract)
- ✓ Sports equipment
- ✓ Stationery
- ✓ Tables
- ✓ Tea urns
- ✓ Telephone calls (limits apply)
- ✓ Xmas/festive vouchers (limits apply)

Grant conditions

There are a number of conditions attached to the grant:

1. Organisations applying for computers should have at least one committee member with IT skills. If not, then a committee member should attend the appropriate IT training courses before the computer can be funded.
2. Any equipment must be adequately insured, to cover against damage or theft.
3. Where an organisation has no premises, only portable equipment should be funded. It must be appropriately insured and a declaration of equipment location must be signed by the committee member who keeps the equipment in his or her property.
4. If an organisation stops functioning or is in breach of its registration, the equipment must be returned to Hackney Homes who will reallocate it. This also applies to monies that have been allocated to the organisation.
5. For items or projects costing more than the allocated grant ceiling, organisations are encouraged to seek match funding.
6. Replacement of old equipment as a result of fair wear and tear will be considered on its individual merit.
7. If you intend to carry on external works (for instance, fitting benches in a communal area) please contact your housing manager. It is necessary to ensure that there will be no breach of health and safety regulations and that the equipment and works will be maintained. **(Failure to obtain approval will delay considerations of your application).**

Grant Application timescales

There are two rounds of grants each financial year. Grant applications are sent out by Hackney Homes to registered organisations in March and August each year. Therefore, please keep an eye out for this and if you have not received the documents by the end of the second week in that month, please contact the Resident Participation Team on **020 8356 7845** who can forward you a copy.

Each organisation is responsible for ensuring that it makes the necessary provisions to ensure the receipt of application forms.

Please note, any application received after the closing date will not be accepted.

Levy amounts

The maximum amount payable depends on the number of properties covered:

Number of Properties	Grant Ceiling
Estates from 0 – 100 properties	£600
Estates from 101 – 250 properties	£750
Estates from 251 – 500 properties	£900
Estates from 501 – 750 properties	£1050
Estates from 751 – 1000 properties	£1100
Estates from 1001 – 1250 properties	£1250
Estates with over 1251 properties	£1300
Estate based pensioners clubs	£900 – p/a
Estate based youth committees	£500 – p/a
Hackney Street Properties Forum	£1200

Items that cannot be funded

The Levy cannot be used to pay for the following items:

- Repairs to a hall where these are the responsibility of Hackney Homes.
- The launch of a TMO (where this is funded by the government)
- Workers' salaries (with the exception of entertainers for one off events)
- Funding for other organisations
- Rent and utility bills for communal premises
- Childcare/crèche costs for meetings
- Alcoholic drinks
- Training courses or trainers
- Gratuity/tip

Training for tenants and residents

The Levy funds can **no longer be used for training courses**. Training courses are now provided by the Resident Participation Team for tenants and residents of Hackney Homes. For information on training for Management Committee Members of registered TAs/TRAs, - this includes The Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Neighbourhood Panel Reps and named committee members - please contact the Resident Participation Team on **020 8356 7845** or email **getinvolved@hackneyhomes.org.uk**

DBS Checks for TRA Members

DBS is an abbreviation for Disclosure Barring Service. This was formerly known as CRB Checks.

Although DBS checks are not compulsory by law, **it is a criminal offence to knowingly offer paid or unpaid work with children/vulnerable adults to someone who is disqualified from working with children/vulnerable adults or to allow them to continue doing such work.** The TA/TRA in this case would be criminally liable if they take on a paid worker or unpaid volunteer to carry out any work or activity with children/vulnerable adults and an incident occurs. The Steering Group and Hackney Homes stress the importance for TAs/TRAs to take the necessary precautions to ensure that the activities they organise are conducted safely, and that they consider the welfare of all participants.

How much do DBS checks cost and will the Tenant Levy pay for them?

The actual DBS check for volunteers and unpaid workers is free, but individuals cannot apply for a DBS check themselves. The organisation that employs them needs to do this, through an approved company or umbrella body. These approved companies/umbrella bodies often charge a varying administration fee to do this. The Levy fund can pay for DBS checks for TA/TRA committee members and named relevant volunteers who regularly carry out or run estate-based activities involving children/vulnerable adults, as long as the cost of the DBS is nominal or not more than £15. Otherwise we can pay up to £15 towards the cost of the DBS.

Umbrella bodies that can do DBS checks

Vera Nursing & Employment Agency

Contact: Sandra Constantine or Shirin Bascombe
240 Upper Street, London N1 1RU
Tel: **020 7359 5454**

Fee: £10 for volunteers or unpaid workers.

Note: Please call them first to check that someone will be there to process your application. Please try and avoid the busy lunchtime period.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Contact: Carol Lacombe
6th Floor Anchorage House, 2 Clove Crescent, London E14 2BE
Tel: **020 7364 4615**

Email: **carol.lacombe@towerhamlets.gov.uk**

Fee: £14.40 for volunteers or unpaid workers.

Note: Service not available on Wednesdays. Please phone first.

Further DBS Checks umbrella bodies can be found at:
www.gov.uk/find-dbs-umbrella-body

How are the grants decided?

Grant application forms are sent out to registered organisations and estate based pensioners clubs and youth committees twice a year; in March and August. Each group must fill in and submit an application form detailing what they want to apply for.

The Steering Group considers the applications and judges whether it is appropriate for the Levy to fund the items requested, using the list of fundable items as a guide. The Steering Group must also consider how much money is available, as it is not possible for the Levy budget to go into deficit.

Any association that has previously received grant funding must be able to provide evidence that the money has been spent on what was originally requested. This is another important factor that the Steering Group takes into account when making its decision. Receipts must be provided in all cases wherever possible. Further evidence may also be requested such as attendance lists.

Associations applying for very large amounts have to provide a full breakdown of costs and the Steering Group will thoroughly scrutinise the bid.

Please note that all groups are required to send in their receipts by January to allow for reconciliation at the end of the financial year.

Payment deadlines

All groups have 28 days from the Tenants Levy Steering Group decision meeting to resolve any application queries. If a group has recently held their AGM since the Tenants Levy Steering Group decision meeting they must be fully registered in 28 days to be eligible for payment.

What if a grant is refused?

The Resident Participation Team is your first point of contact should your grant application be refused by the TLSG. The Team will contact the TLSG on your behalf to request the Group reconsider their decision, or clarify this decision in detail. The Group will decide whether an application can be resubmitted for approval.

Should the TLSG refuse the resubmission of an application, you can appeal this decision. The Team will be able to assist you in the process.

In the eventuality that you have appealed and been refused you will have one further opportunity to appeal. This final appeal will be reviewed by a special appeals sub-group, consisting of the TLSG Chair and Vice-chair, an impartial HH officer (i.e. not directly affiliated with your association's housing area) and a HH board member. The decision of this sub-group is final.

Change of use of Levy funds

If a group wishes to use money received from the Tenant Levy for something other than that originally applied for, then they must first request the change of use in writing to the Steering Group. They will consider your application and authorise the change of use, in accordance with Tenant Levy guidelines. Groups must not spend money on items without the prior consent of the Steering Group.

How are grants paid?

Once the Steering Group approves a grant, the Resident Participation Team will arrange for payment to be made directly into the TA/TRA bank account, via a BACS payment system.

By using BACS, the money is transferred directly into your TA/TRA account and takes 2-3 days to clear. It is also a safer way of transferring funds. Cheque payments can take longer. Treasurers will be advised when the BACS payment has been made.

Although we endeavour to process payments as soon as possible, you should allow up to 28 days for payments to be made.

In addition to the payment, a confirmation letter is sent out by the Resident Participation Team explaining what the grant has been issued for and the amount paid.

Payments for insurance can be made directly to the insurance company/broker by Hackney Homes, upon request by the TA/TRA.

TAs/TRAs can also make payments directly to the insurance company/broker which Hackney Homes will later reimburse.

Grant Monitoring

The District Auditor has recommended that random checks are made to ensure that grants are being used as they should be. The Steering Group carry out the checks on 1 in 20 of the organisations which receive the funding (10% over a two-year period). Usually the monitoring takes place at the end of the financial year (March) and TAs/TRAs will be informed in due course. In addition, an inventory of what groups have applied for is kept to ensure that these checks are accurate, and to prevent duplication of grants in future years.



Your Steering Group

The Tenant Levy Steering Group consists of two representatives from each neighbourhood panel; two representatives from the Street Properties Forum and two non voting members from the Youth Active Resident Group making a total of 14 members, including the Chair and Vice Chair. The elections take place in February/ March each year, to take up office the following April. Before the years 2012/2013, there were two representatives from each neighbourhood in addition to two deputies. These deputies had rights to vote on the representatives' behalf if they were unavailable.

Representatives are encouraged to attend all Steering Group meetings to keep them in touch with upcoming issues and to contribute to discussions.

The role of the representative is to represent the interests of the TAs/TRAs in their neighbourhood and in particular, to attend vital meetings to assess grant applications twice a year. Occasionally, the representatives are also asked to sit on sub-committees or special meetings of the Steering Group. The Steering Group meets on a bi-monthly basis.

Elected Members of the Steering Group for the 10/11 financial year:

Neighbourhood	Representative	Deputy
Stamford Hill Sub Committee	Irene Lewington	Doug Mitchell
Clapton Sub Committee	Nicholas Corbit Vince Murrain	Susan Borghys
Stoke Newington	Abiodun Odubawo Vince Murrain	None
Homerton	Ivan Jones Tony Osbourne	Peter Jajua Brian Club
Central	Denise Bingham Alison Evelyn	Peter Kinsey Laurence Windle
Shoreditch	Tony Goodchild Carol Smith	Doreen Bullock Annette Fletcher

Elected Members of the Steering Group for the 11/12 financial year:

Neighbourhood	Representative	Deputy
Stamford Hill Sub Committee	Andrea Rawlings	Irene Lewington
Clapton Sub Committee	Nicholas Corbit	Susan Borghys
Stoke Newington	Abiodun Odubawo Pat Brown	None
Homerton	Ivan Jones Tony Osbourne	Peter Jajua Brian Club
Central	Denise Bingham Alison Evelyn	Peter Kinsey Laurence Windle
Shoreditch	Carol Smith Annette Fletcher	Doreen Bullock

Elected Members of the Steering Group for the 12/13 financial year:

Neighbourhood	Representative
Stamford Hill Sub Committee	Irene Lewington
Clapton Sub Committee	Susan Borghys
Stoke Newington	Abiodun Odubawo Pat Brown
Homerton	Ivan Jones Payne Mthimkhulu
Central	Denise Bingham Alison Evelyn
Shoreditch	Louisa Zaky Sandra Foot
Street Properties Forum	Sue Rolle

Vital Statistics

The Levy works very simply. Every Council tenant pays 10 pence a week into an 'accumulating fund'. This means that the money collected in one financial year is allocated the following year.

This allows the Steering Group to see how much money is available, and to plan expenditure sensibly.

Table 2 below shows, in 2010/2011, grants worth **£104,852.54** were paid as follows:

Table 1: Summary of income and expenditure 2010/2011	
Balance brought forward 1/04/10	£64,541.88
Amount collected in year	£98,851.00
Total income	£178,596.08
Total expenditure	£104,852.54
Balance carried forward to 1/04/11	£73,743.54

Table 2: Breakdown of items funded in 2010/2011	
Equipment	£11,483.28
Administration	£9,841.12
Social Grant	£65,501.27
Start Up Grant	£900.00
Insurance	£16,098.14
Youth Project	£78.73
Training	£950.00
TOTAL LEVY PAYMENTS	£104,852.54

Table 4 below shows, in 2011/2012, grants worth **£108,380.21** were paid as follows:

Table 3: Summary of income and expenditure 2011/2012	
Balance brought forward 1/04/11	£73,743.54
Amount collected in year	£114,513.25
Total income	£188,256.79
Total expenditure	£108,380.21
Balance carried forward to 1/04/12	£79,876.58

Table 4: Breakdown of items funded in 2011/2012	
Equipment	£11,483.77
Administration	£9,339.64
Social Grant	£70,144.52
Start Up Grant	£200.00
Insurance	£16,151.88
Training	£1,060.40
TOTAL LEVY PAYMENTS	£108,380.21

Table 6 below shows, in 2012/2013, grants worth **£79,423.54** were paid as follows:

Table 5: Summary of income and expenditure 2012/2013	
Balance brought forward 1/04/12	£79,876.58
Amount collected in year	£113,810.46
Total income	£193,687.04
Total expenditure	£79,423.54
Balance carried forward to 1/04/13	£114,263.50

Table 6: Breakdown of items funded in 2012/2013	
Equipment	£7,861.69
Administration	£6,616.55
Social Grant	£51,174.71
Security Grant	£540.00
Insurance	£13,230.59
TOTAL LEVY PAYMENTS	£79,423.54

Funding Highlights

During 2010-2013, as in previous years, registered TAs/TRAs were able to apply for funding from the Levy fund to run their organisations, purchase office equipment, decorate their community halls and flats, improve estate gardens, organise activities on the estates and run outings for residents:

“ *It's been a great day, an absolute success. The Diamond Jubilee celebrations have brought the whole community together. It shows that we can come together as one and celebrate without having any trouble.* ”

Susan, Goldsmith Estate



“ *I felt proud to see the Olympic Torch pass through my local area. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity. We got the chance to celebrate and get charged up for the Olympics that was only a week away.* ”

Sajid, Clapton Park Estate, talks about the Mabley Green Olympics fun day

“ *The Diamond Jubilee celebrations have been great. Lots of people have turned up including lots of children. This event has allowed many neighbours the opportunity of getting to know each other. I, myself, have met a lot of people I never met before.* ”

Brenda Puech, Chair, Blackstone TRA



“ *Thanks to the Levy grant, we can go on many fun trips throughout the year, such as trips to Brighton, Clacton and Blackpool. These trips keep the members of our Pensioners Club active and happy. It is a big part of the activities that go on in our club. Without the Levy, outings will be really expensive and we would not be able to go on them.* ”

Barbara, Maisy, Ray and Noreen, Nightingale Pensioners Club

Funded Organisations

Below is a list of the TAs/TRAs and other organisations who received funding from the Tenant Levy.

Organisation	10/11	11/12	12/13
Acton TRA	✓	✓	✓
Alden and Broadway TRA			✓
Appleby Estate TRA		✓	
Aspland & Marcon TRA	✓	✓	
Beckers TRA	✓	✓	
Beecholme & Casimir Community Association	✓	✓	✓
Blackstone Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Boscobel House TRA	✓	✓	
Burma, Arakan & Clissold TRA	✓	✓	✓
Charles Square Community Social Club for Over 60's		✓	
Colville TRA	✓	✓	✓
Cranston Estate Pensioners Club		✓	
Cranston Estate Social Sub Committee	✓	✓	
Cressington Close TRA		✓	✓
Darville Road TRA		✓	
Darenth and Kyverdale TRA			✓
Fairbank Community Association	✓		
Fellows Court TRA	✓	✓	
Fields Estate TRA		✓	✓
Follingham Court TRA	✓		
Frampton Park TRA	✓	✓	✓
Gascoyne 2 TRA	✓	✓	
Gooch House TRA	✓	✓	✓
Grand Union and Dublin		✓	
Haberdasher Estate TRA	✓	✓	
Harman Estate	✓	✓	✓
Hawksley Court TRA	✓	✓	✓
Herbert Butler TRA	✓	✓	
Hobbs Place Estate	✓	✓	✓
Holly Street Luncheon and Social Club	✓		✓
Holmleigh Road Estate TRA		✓	
Howard Road Senior Citizens			✓
Jack Watts TRA	✓	✓	
Jack Dunning TRA			✓
Joseph Court TRA	✓	✓	✓
Keir Hardie Estate TRA	✓	✓	
Landfield Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Lea View House TRA	✓	✓	✓
Lincoln Court TRA	✓	✓	
Linzell Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Lister Court TRA	✓		

Organisation	10/11	11/12	12/13
Lockner Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Lordship North TRA	✓	✓	✓
Lordship South TMO SSC		✓	
Manor TRA	✓	✓	✓
Manor House TRA	✓		
Mapledene Estate TRA	✓	✓	
Mayfield and Forest TRA	✓	✓	✓
Morland, Blanchard & Gayhurst TRA	✓		
Mountford Estate TRA		✓	
Napier Senior Citizens Club		✓	✓
Nelson Mandela TRA		✓	
Nightingale Partnership Residents Association	✓	✓	✓
Nightingale Luncheon Club	✓		✓
North & South Arden TMO Social Sub Committee	✓		✓
North & South Defoe Residents Association			✓
Nye Bevan TRA	✓	✓	✓
Priestley Close TRA		✓	
Queensbridge & Middleton TRA	✓		
Radley Square & Southwold TRA	✓	✓	✓
Regan Way Pensioners Club	✓	✓	✓
Regents Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Regent Estate Pensioners 1+2 Pensioners Club	✓	✓	
Rhodes Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Shepherds Market TRA	✓	✓	
Sherrys Wharf TRA		✓	✓
Somerford & Shackwell TRA		✓	✓
St Johns Court TRA			✓
St Johns Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
St Mary's Estate TRA	✓	✓	✓
Stanway TRA	✓	✓	✓
Suffolk Estate TMO SSC		✓	
The Mount TRA	✓	✓	✓
Tower Gardens TRA	✓	✓	✓
Tower TMO Social Sub Committee	✓	✓	✓
Trelawney TRA	✓	✓	
Trowbridge Residents Association	✓		
Warburton & Darcy TRA	✓	✓	✓
Wayman Court Pensioners Club	✓	✓	
Wayman Court TRA	✓	✓	
Welshpool House TRA	✓		
Whiston & Goldsmith TRA	✓	✓	✓
Wilton Estate TRA	✓		
Wrens Park TRA	✓	✓	✓
Wyke Estate Over 60's Group	✓	✓	
Wyke Estate		✓	✓
York Row TRA	✓	✓	

