

Temporary Accommodation Action Groups (TAAGs)

A guide to setting up,
running and facilitating TAAGs



Justlife

What is a TAAG?

Temporary Accommodation Action Groups (TAAGs) are cross-sector collaborative groups, including landlords, residents, local authorities and other public and voluntary sector stakeholders. TAAGs provide a vehicle to drive locally relevant change for temporary accommodation (TA).

TAAGs uncover specific challenges about TA in their local area and collectively develop, test and implement solutions to address those challenges. Each TAAG will look slightly different and have different priorities, depending on locally agreed targets.

TAAGs are built on the understanding that there are many experts in Temporary Accommodation who play a part in the overall system. Each member of a TAAG shares a common goal of improving the TA experience for those living there. On their own, each stakeholder has a partial view and limited powers to bring about relevant, impactful and positive change. Working in collaboration, TAAG members each bring a 'piece of the puzzle'; with access to the full picture and the combined levers that coming together on the TAAG brings, they will have more power to bring about change.



TAAGs uncover specific challenges about TA in their local area and collectively develop, test and implement solutions to address those challenges.

What other TAAGs have achieved

TAAGs have led to a range of positive outcomes which can benefit all stakeholders involved. Examples of these include reductions in the number of evictions from TA, development of a standards charter for TA which has been embedded in future TA contracts by one local authority, as well as involvement in updating local allocations schemes and housing strategies. Other TAAGs have co-created standardised licence agreements, developed resident packs, helped introduce free WiFi in council-run properties following research carried out by the TAAG, and assisted in delivering training to accommodation providers on working with people experiencing multiple and compound needs such as **Safeguarding Adults** and **Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE)**.

In addition to these changes, many 'softer' and less tangible outcomes have occurred simply by just having everyone in the room together, developing an understanding of different perspectives of fellow stakeholders and building professional relationships. These play a vital role in creating opportunities for further impact. We have seen many examples where greater understanding and connection between people has enabled situations to be resolved before drastic action was needed.

“ These are challenging times for so many people in temporary accommodation, and for all of us trying to help them. Having the TAAG as a place where we can all meet to share information, discuss good working practices, and support each other is invaluable. ”

Sophie Honeysett, Interim Housing Options Manager, Hastings Borough Council

Who can attend?

TAAGs are usually attended by:

- People with current or lived experience of temporary accommodation
- Elected members of the council and senior council officers
- Statutory support agencies and services
- Voluntary sector support services
- Temporary Accommodation providers (landlords)

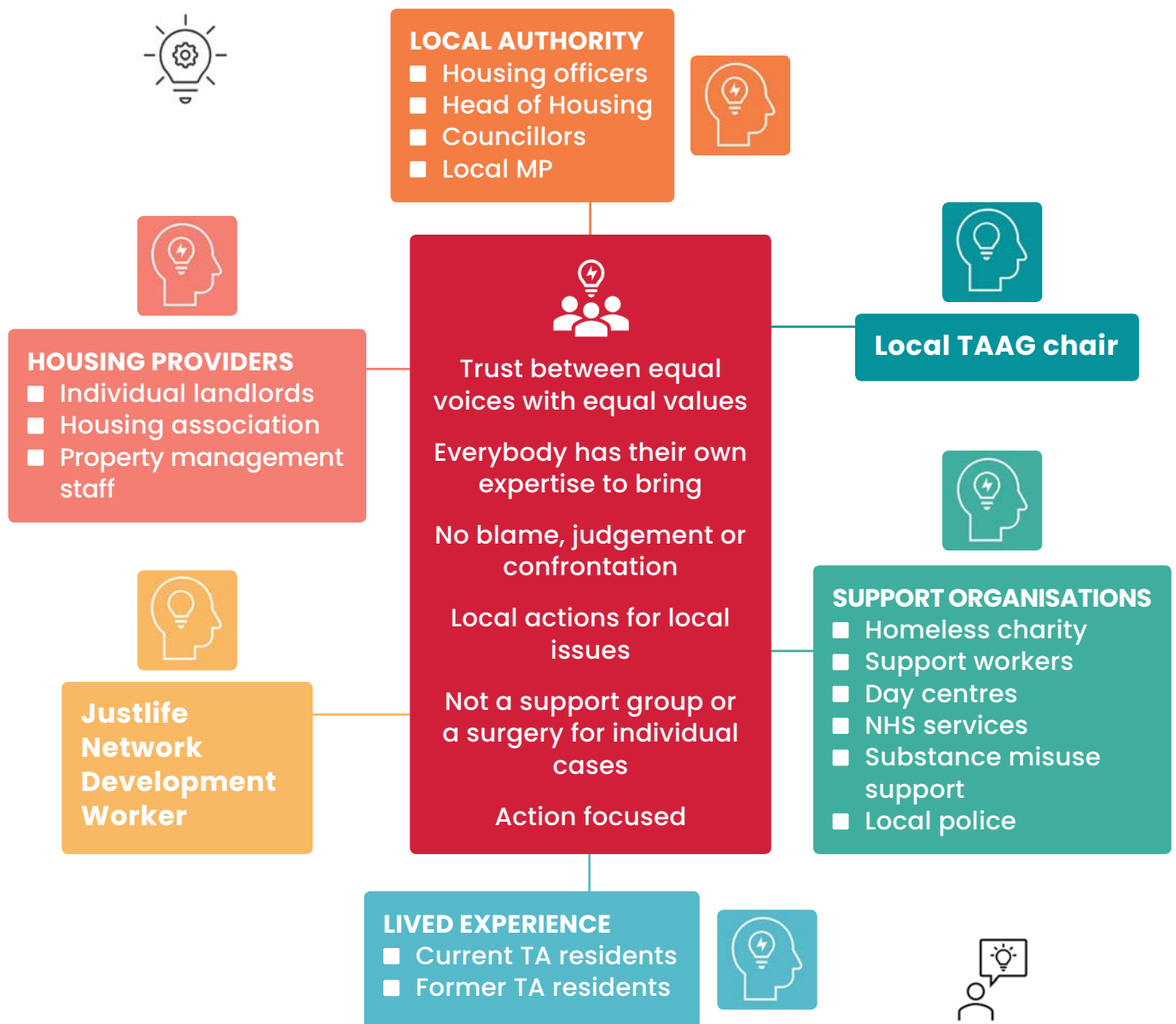
In short, anyone who has an interest, or is a direct stakeholder, in the TA system of a local area. This can for example be a City Council, a Borough Council or a County Council. The more representatives of different interests, the better, but it may not be necessary to have exhausted the list before meetings can start to take place. This will be a local judgement call.

Each TAAG needs a chair to run and manage the meetings, someone to take minutes, and will have access to support from **Justlife** via a **Network Development Worker**.

“*Fund and encourage the creation of Temporary Accommodation Action Groups (TAAGs) in which residents have an active and inclusive role in every locality, so that people living in temporary accommodation don't feel so isolated, and can express their views on what needs to change and receive meaningful engagement with these views from providers and statutory agencies.*”

Recommendation from Shelter's 2023 report "Still Living in Limbo: Why the use of temporary accommodation must end".

What a TAAG meeting looks like:



Important to know

A key focus of the group is to build trust and relationships with each other. With this understanding established, all members are able to come to the table with an honest and open debate, recognising what the problems are, and how each member has different tools to help find solutions.

Some stakeholders may consider themselves to have conflicting aims or working practices, or worry they are there to take the blame. This is why it is important to come together in a no blame environment, establishing

a positive ethos and working agreement from the beginning. When this is in place, we find that TAAG members greatly value the collaboration across sectors and find it incredibly useful and supportive.

Successful TAAGs have committed cross-sector representation. Alongside the common ambitions of the group, these spaces can be really beneficial for each individual and all voices are encouraged to attend. TAAGs are to be focused on action rather than debating alone; it is an **action** group, not a talking shop.

Establishing a TAAG

Although **Justlife** will play a part in every TAAG, they can be set up, established and run by anyone. The key ingredient is a willingness to collaborate with different TA sector stakeholders. This can start, for example, with Local Authority and key voluntary sector support organisations, or with TA providers and LA commissioners, and grow from there to include other stakeholders. The memberships of TAAGs continue to evolve as you discover more pieces of the local TA jigsaw, and interest in the TAAG and working collaboratively grows.

This document is a guide to setting up, running and facilitating a TAAG based on best practice developed and observed by **Justlife** over the last eight years.

Resources

A word on resources before we go into detail about how to set up a TAAG.

TAAGs need at least one individual to commit to building the relationships, promoting engagement, organising meetings and maintaining direction and momentum. This role could be fulfilled by one person, or several people working together, for example through a Steering Group (see section on “Additional Groups”). From our experience this would ideally be the equivalent of one working day a week for the first 12 months, potentially reducing to half a day after the first year. Once TAAG meetings are established, each meeting will need a Chair and a minute taker, as well as someone to put together the agenda.

Justlife can provide some guidance and link you into our wider network and events for free. **Justlife** would also be happy to provide a member of our team to be the person who develops, organises and strategically facilitates the TAAG for the equivalent of one day per week. Having a dedicated person to do this role has proved very successful in other areas. **The cost of this service is approximately £10,125 for the first year.**



Discover

Justlife Stages of a TAAG



Stage One Discover

Us today!

Laying the foundations

Identify stakeholders

Explore the network

Before you start to meet, there is some scoping work to be done. This is an explorative phase; things can still change as you discuss and agree with each other.

The initial task is to establish the geographical area for the TAAG (borough, district or county). Bear in mind that to achieve the strongest buy-in from stakeholders, it should be ambitious enough to be impactful, but focused enough for members to feel integral.

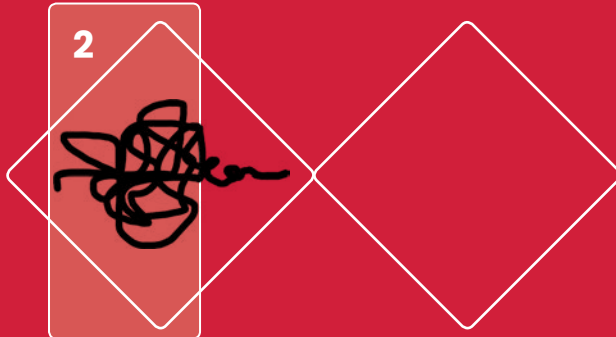
You also need to establish who is involved in temporary accommodation in your area, and identify groups who could be involved. Mapping the area's stakeholders with key contacts is a good early task. This can help to highlight strengths as well as areas to target to ensure balanced attendance.

There may be existing multi-agency meetings around homelessness in your area. The specific purpose of the TAAG, and how it is different to other meetings, should be made clear to ensure that work is not duplicated but feeds into and builds on other work.

It can take time and multiple conversations to reach out to all the different stakeholders. Some may be more wary than others. Identify the best person to contact each of the potential TAAG members, and be prepared to explain why it is a good idea, for them as well as people living in TA. **Justlife** can help with this; it may be beneficial to have a neutral third party at this point.

Define

Justlife Stages of a TAAG



Stage Two

Define

First 1-3 meetings

Create and agree 'Code of Conduct' and 'Terms of reference'

Where are we now?

What are the issues long/short term?

Lots of ideas and issues flying around – need to be mapped

At this stage you begin to meet, either online or in person. The needs and capacity can change over time, so this is something to keep in mind as the TAAG evolves. Most TAAGs meet quarterly for two to three hours, but this may be different for you. Having a date and location allows interested parties to commit to a plan. All meetings should consider general accessibility concerns, and support for lived experience members. We recommend paying members with lived experience for their time.

The task of the initial meetings are to define how the group will work and what the current TA environment looks like in your area. Members arrive from very different worlds so definitions and understandings of acronyms may differ. Asking the group to set a definition of temporary accommodation can be a good place to start.

Establishing a 'Code of Conduct' and a 'Terms of Reference' (see example in Appendix 1) is integral to ensuring that the group maintains the collaborative ethos of working together as equals, creating a blame free environment and accepting responsibilities within the group. This ensures everyone is on the same page from the very beginning. These can be referred to going forward and should be reviewed and updated annually.

It is also worth considering what success would look like for your TAAG. Consider asking members what they want to achieve from the group and record some group goals to reflect on at a later stage. This can help shape the direction of the meetings.

Once the group has agreed how it will work together safely and collaboratively, they can then begin to map the current issues around temporary accommodation in your area (example meeting agendas can be found in Appendix 2). This could involve workshops highlighting issues or whole group discussions. There will be many issues across all areas of TA. Post-it notes are a great resource for collating and organising a plethora of views if you are meeting in person.

When this work is done, you have the foundation for an action plan. Either the chair, a steering group or the whole group can work together to cluster the issues into themes or groups, identify specific actions within them and establish if they are issues that can be addressed in the short, medium or long term.

Additional Groups

Some TAAGs have developed sub-groups to help them become more effective. Below are some examples.

Steering group

A smaller group of core members, including the chair, who volunteer to form a steering group. This helps steer the direction of the TAAG and alleviate pressure on the chair. This can be made up from any regular TAAG members who can commit to the extra meetings (typically a shorter meeting leading up to and after each TAAG meet). Some steering groups agree to rotate the chairing and minute taking between them.

Lived experience steering group

A steering group led by voices of lived experience. The TAAG may not be a desirable or safe environment for everyone, so lived experience steering groups have been created to safely access and work within some TAAGs. These groups need to be facilitated by an experienced organisation that works within the TAAG. They can work as a steering group, and as a means to feed into the TAAG and its agendas. Likewise the TAAG can consult the lived experience steering group on design outcomes. **Justlife** advocates payment for TAAG members with lived experience of TA. We are happy to share our **Lived Experience Payment Policy**.

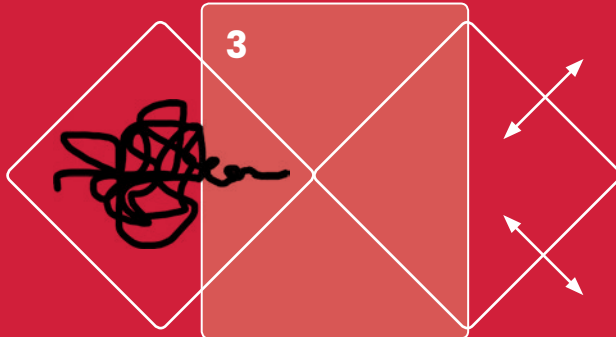
Working groups

Once TA issues have been raised and grouped into themes, it can appear like an overwhelming amount of work to do. To best utilise the range of skills and experience of the group members, some TAAGs have created working groups or subgroups. This could be around a theme or a specific action. These groups meet alongside the main TAAG to design and implement specific outcomes.



Design and Develop

Justlife Stages of a TAAG



Stage Three Design and Develop

Lived experience and steering groups input

List of issues becomes a plan of actions

Working groups formed on action plan around – need to be mapped

Once the issues and themes have been identified, the group can get to work designing and developing solutions. With the themes identified, members may decide to split into working groups to focus on goals which match their skills, interests and experience. Alternatively, the group may want to continue working on a more focused list of priorities as one group.

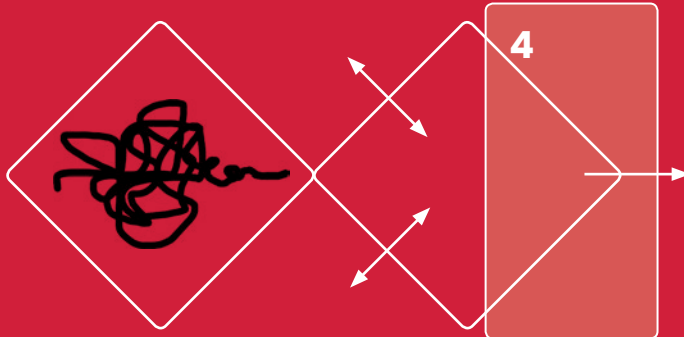
The overall list of issues, tasks and outcomes needs to be managed either by the chair or a steering group. It is crucial to keep a track of progress to ensure that the group's momentum carries it forward from raising issues to delivering actions (a RAG report is ideal for this). Lived experienced groups may feed into and report back from the main TAAG.

At this point, the TAAG may not need to meet as frequently, if working groups come together outside of the group to work on specific actions. It's important to remember that membership is voluntary; it is a good idea to avoid unnecessary meetings which could become unmanageable for some and cause a drop in interest. The group or its working groups may wish to set a timeline to complete their work, or choose to review it after each TAAG.

It's important to remember at this stage that a TAAG cannot solve all the issues it may highlight. There will be obstacles in these actions and this should be recorded to feedback in the next stage.

Deliver

Justlife Stages of a TAAG



Stage Four Deliver

- Deliver completed tasks
- Measure impact
- Review and next steps
- Return to stage 2?

Hopefully by this stage, some outcomes will have been achieved and some finished work can be delivered. This will mean different things to different TAAGs but it is important to set a date to draw things to a conclusion in order to review, measure and reflect.

This is an opportunity to go through the list of issues and tasks highlighted earlier in the group, and to celebrate achievements as well as acknowledge gaps and challenges. Measuring impact can be challenging, so alongside the task checklist, consider asking for individual feedback on success and impact for the group members.

From this point, the group may decide to continue working on the action plan, return to stage two and create another cycle of issues and tasks, or it may decide that the TAAG has achieved what it set out to do and finish its work. This stage is important in ensuring that the group remains an action group and not just an opportunity for stakeholders to voice issues with TA.

This is also an opportunity to consider membership. Returning to stage two could start a new recruitment phase or a change of chair.



Justlife's National Work

With TAAGs established across the country, there is an opportunity to connect, share and learn together at a national level. Whilst the TAAGs are designed to focus on local issues, they are also vehicles for national collaboration to solve problems that cannot be addressed locally and need government action. We are therefore supporting a wider national movement committed to sharing and evidencing what does and doesn't work to improve lives in TA, and lobbying the national government on the need for greater policy and monetary focus in this area. Justlife gathers learning from TAAGs across England to establish trends and issues around TA and uses this to inform campaigning work and calls to action aimed at national policymakers.

We link the work of the TAAGs into our national work in two ways:

Lobbying

Justlife is co-secretariat of the **All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Households in Temporary Accommodation** alongside Shared Health Foundation. The APPG is Chaired by Siobhain McDonagh MP (Labour) and Vice-Chaired by Bob Blackman MP (Conservative).

Through this national influencing arm we work to bring systemic problems to the right people. We understand that there are many wider issues which local TAAGs may feel unable to affect or influence; the APPG allows Justlife to feed learning, outcomes and issues from local TAAGs into parliamentary discussions, and directly to those with the power to instigate national change.

Connections

The Temporary Accommodation Network is made up of TAAGs, individuals and organisations working towards improving people's experience of TA across England. The network facilitates joined-up thinking, building relationships, and the sharing of resources and ideas between TAAGs and other stakeholders. The network provides spaces to encourage these connections through an annual conference and a **bi-monthly newsletter, Lifting the Lid**.

If you are interested in talking to us about setting up a TAAG, or linking in with any of our other work around TA, please email info@justlife.org.uk



Appendix 1 – Example Terms of Reference

'.....' Temporary Accommodation Action Group Terms of Reference

Purpose

The '.....' Temporary Accommodation Action Group has been established to improve partnership working between statutory, commissioned and voluntary services providing support to people living in temporary accommodation within '.....'. The TAAG will bring together stakeholders to collaborate in a non-judgmental, facilitated space, in order to improve the lives of those living in Temporary Accommodation (TA). This is with the purpose of developing a coordinated approach ensuring that the people housed access the best outcomes possible and that their time in TA is shorter, safer and healthier.

Aims and Objectives

(To be developed by the group)

Membership

Membership of the '.....' TAAG is aimed at but not limited to:

- Those current living or have previously lived in TA*
- TA providers
- Local Authority – including local councillors
- Support agencies/ Service providers/ Statutory services
- National and Pan-London agencies who can support aims of groups are also invited to become members
- In short any stakeholders in TA

Forum membership should ensure:

- That representatives attending these meetings will have the ability to provide information on behalf of their organisation and/ or are able to agree to actions or make decisions on behalf of their organisation;
- Members agree to attend each meeting. If members are unable to attend, they will nominate a substitute from their organisation or commit to reading all documents and providing comments in good time before the next meeting;
- It is expected that members will contribute pro-actively and positively and always respond to requests made to the group;
- Whilst individual case experiences may come up, there is no expectation on members to discuss their own experiences;
- The '.....' TAAG is not a public meeting. The group therefore reserves the right to exclude any person or organisation that it considers will not make a positive contribution to achieving its purpose and objectives.

Other key stakeholders can be invited to attend specific meetings to share information on particular topics if required or to receive specific updates.

The current Chair of the '....' TAAG is....

- Meet approximately every eight to ten weeks though additional or fewer meetings may be agreed depending upon the needs identified by the group;
- Meetings will take place in person and online (if necessary); venue for in-person meetings to be held within '.....' either at '.....' or another appropriate venue
- Agenda requests and minutes will be shared in advance of the meeting. All members can nominate items for the agenda by contacting the Chair or any other named admin support (e.g. minute taker)
- Minutes will be taken at each meeting by a member of the group with actions listed and named members allocated specific tasks;
- Minutes can be reviewed and any amendments noted as the first agenda item of each meeting;

Monitoring and Reporting

There are no requirements for monitoring or reporting upon the decisions and actions of the meeting however all documentation shall be retained for future use should this be required.

Data Sharing

Members of the TAAG will be expected to respect that this group is not the appropriate place for the discussion of, or sharing of, any personal or identifiable information about individuals. This includes those who are current or previous residents of TA provided by '.....' Council.

It is not intended that '....' TAAG itself will be collecting/storing or sharing personal or sensitive information.

All member organisations and agencies must have and adhere to an appropriate policy in line with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 with respect to their own collection and storage of data, as well as the sharing of that data with others.

Safeguarding Statement

Those working or volunteering in homelessness or connected services often work with adults and young people who are vulnerable to abuse. It is the responsibility of everyone to recognise the signs of potential abuse or neglect and to take action if they suspect that someone is being abused. Every organisation should have a local safeguarding policy so that staff or volunteers know how to respond to concerns about abuse. If not the guidance and route to report a safeguarding concern online via '.....' should be followed.

While safeguarding procedures may vary slightly between agencies and local authorities, they should recognise that it is the responsibility of everyone to adhere to best practice, participate in relevant training and report any concerns, incidents or allegations to a designated person in accordance with the reporting procedure set out in this policy. While **Justlife** cannot offer support outside the scope of this project using their frontline services, we can signpost you to other services if necessary.

Equality Statement

Any effort to encourage partnership at the local level has the opportunity to improve services for a variety of groups including women, those with disabilities, and ethnically diverse groups. This is because one-size fits all responses to homelessness might neglect the specific needs of these groups. The fragmentation between homelessness services and other specialist services e.g. domestic abuse support services, mental health services, can have serious and disproportionate negative consequences for vulnerable individuals who rely on these services. Bringing partners representing these services to a decision-making group will aid efforts to develop person-centred offers which reflect the level of need and particularities of individuals' experiences. However, this is contingent on representatives from these services and communities having a seat at the table.

The group is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all its activities and to promoting inclusive processes, practices and culture.

- We will strive to work to eliminate any unlawful or unfair discrimination including direct or indirect discrimination, discrimination by association, discrimination linked to a perceived characteristic, harassment and victimisation.
- We will remain proactive in taking steps to ensure inclusion and strive towards a culture that is diverse and recognises and develops the potential of all members and the homeless clients they engage.

Members of the '.....' TAAG will be expected to work in a way which promotes equality and diversity, which does not discriminate against any of our staff, service users or volunteers.

The '.....' TAAG will seek to ensure that members can voice their diverse needs, knowing that they will be heard. The '.....'TAAG will work to ensure that our practices are transparent and open to scrutiny.

* (Note: If you have lived experience of temporary accommodation, please bear in mind that the TAAG is for people that want to get involved with changing the system within an action group. Whilst the TAAG is not a space to specifically give advice to individual cases, we will be able to collaboratively signpost to other services if necessary.)

Appendix 2

Example agendas for meetings one and two. These are for inspiration only, you may have other priorities.

First TAAG meeting

Item	Who	Time
Welcome and introductions	Chair	1.00
What does TAAG success look like for you/your organisation?	This can be facilitated by the Chair or by a Justlife NDW. Identify different members' priorities. This can be done in smaller groups, on flip charts using post-it notes, or on a Miro board if the meeting is online.	1.10
Coffee break		1.50
How do we involve people with Lived Experience?	This can be facilitated by the Chair, a Justlife NDW, or by someone with experience of including people with lived experience in their work.	2.00
Next steps	Chair	2.40
AOB	Chair	2.55

Second TAAG meeting

Item	Who	Time
Welcome	Chair	1.00
Minutes from last meeting	Chair goes through minutes and any actions from the last meeting	1.05
Updates from members	All members get an opportunity to share any important or relevant updates from their work	1.15
Coffee break		1.50
Turning success into action	This can be facilitated by the Chair or by a Justlife NDW. This is where an action plan begins to take shape, based on the priorities identified in the last meeting. What are the steps needed to achieve our priorities? Who can take on some of the action points?	2.00
AOB	Chair	2.55



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About Justlife

Justlife is a national homelessness charity advocating for people who are living in temporary accommodation. Locally, in Brighton & Hove and Greater Manchester, we support people to improve their mental and physical health, and find a safe, stable home of their own. Nationally, we push for policy change to improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness across the country.