

Get ahead, get involved

This booklet explains how you can get involved with L&Q. It spells out what is on offer, along with how much time it takes and where you can do it. Using case studies, it also shows how getting involved can help you make a difference to the place you live. Plus, it can even give you extra experience you can use to get on at work.

If you would like to know more about any of the opportunities in this booklet, or would like to discuss which one would be right for you, contact us now. Just call **L&Q Direct** on **0800 015 6536** or email **residentinvolvement@lqgroup.org.uk**



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L&Q is an exempt charity

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Get ahead
get involved

Resident
involvement at L&Q

Get ahead

get involved

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Introduction

Getting involved can help you make a difference to the place you live – and it can even give you extra experience you can use to get on at work.

There are four main ways you can get involved:

- Decision making
- Inspections
- Forums
- Resident views

You can find out more about each of them in this booklet.

None of them take very much time and you can choose to get involved in a way that suits you – including from your front room or street or at one of our offices.

If you attend a meeting, we will pay for your travel expenses, plus any childcare or carer's expenses, so that you can take part. We offer free training to help you get started or sharpen your skills further.

For some forms of resident involvement, there are eligibility criteria. So, for example, we would expect you not to be in serious arrears to part in a committee, group or forum.

Follow our key to find a way you can get involved that suits you best:



Time – how much time it takes



Date – when it takes place



Location – where it is held

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01

Decision making

Take part in a group that has a say on how L&Q is run, how it spends some of its money or gives the OK to new policies and procedures.

01 Decision making

Neighbourhood Committees

Being a Neighbourhood Committee member involves coming to meetings to discuss how you can reduce poverty, increase safety and employment in your local area. Neighbourhood Committees also review L&Q's service performance. You will need to read papers before each meeting, so that you can decide how the committee should spend money on local community projects and improve the area. Contact L&Q Direct to find out where your committee meets.



Four hours, four times a year



Weekday evenings



Local

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference to the area where you live – by helping us to improve L&Q's services; and
- Have your say on how we spend £60,000 on neighbourhood improvements and which community projects we will fund.

Develop your:

- Communication skills – as you discuss issues in meetings and raise questions and concerns;
- Analytical skills – as you look at how L&Q has performed in your neighbourhood and work out how we can improve services;
- Team working – as you work with L&Q staff and other committee members;
- Committee experience – understand how committees function, the role of chair etc;
- Scrutiny and analytical skills – as you challenge L&Q's performance and hold us to account; and
- Knowledge of housing, community investment and how L&Q works.

Housing Management Group

Being on the Housing Management Group involves coming to meetings to discuss policies that will improve how we manage tenancies and neighbourhoods and tackle anti-social behaviour.

You will need to read papers before the meeting so that you can join in the discussion.

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference to how we work – by shaping L&Q’s approach to key policies and procedures.

Develop your:

- Analytical skills – as you look at our policies and suggest improvements;
- Communication skills – as you communicate with members of staff and other residents; and
- Knowledge of housing and how we work.



Four hours, four times a year



Weekday, evenings



Central London

01 Decision making

Maintenance Policy Group

Being on the Maintenance Policy Group involves coming to meetings to discuss the performance of our maintenance and repairs service. You will also be involved in commenting on new maintenance policies and procedures.

You will need to read papers before the meeting so that you can join in the discussions.

What you can get out of it:

- Make a difference to how we work – as you look at our policies and suggest improvements.

Develop your:

- Analytical skills – as you look at our performance and policies and suggest improvements;
- Communication skills – as you communicate with members of staff and other residents; and
- Knowledge of housing maintenance and how we work.



Four hours, four times a year



Weekday evenings



Central London



CASE STUDY

Fayann Simpson

Fayann Simpson can look round where she lives and see the difference she has been able to make, thanks to her role on her Neighbourhood Committee.

“I’ve been involved with L&Q in various ways for over ten years now,” Fayann says.

“My initial reason for getting involved was probably curiosity,” she says. “I didn’t really know what L&Q had to offer and the things it was doing. But I believe in involving residents in decisions and I knew I wanted to play a part in that.”

Over the years, she has increased her involvement with L&Q and now chairs her local Neighbourhood Committee.

“A particular success of the Neighbourhood Committee is the number of local projects that we’ve approved,” she says.

Together they have been responsible for giving the go ahead to investment projects for young people, older residents and projects that bring communities together.

“I think projects like these have really had a positive impact. It warms your heart to know you have been part of making your neighbourhood better.”





It warms your heart to know you have been part of making your neighbourhood better





02 Inspections

Take an active role in monitoring our services and neighbourhoods.

02 Inspections

Neighbourhood Champion

Being a Neighbourhood Champion involves working with L&Q to make your area live a better place to live. To do this you can take part in inspections with L&Q staff, regularly report any repairs or issues of concern and suggest improvements.

What you can get out of it

- £400 each year to make improvements to your area, such as planting, composting bins or other estate improvements; and
- Make your area a safer, cleaner and more attractive place to live.

Develop your:

- Communication skills – as you discuss issues of concern in a constructive way;
- Teamwork skills – as you work with L&Q staff;
- Analytical and problem-solving skills – as you spot problems and come up with solutions to local issues;
- Knowledge of how our Neighbourhood Services operates – as you find out about the role of Neighbourhood Services Officers and how we work with contractors to improve our areas; and
- Time management – as you attend monthly inspections, meeting with an L&Q staff member.



An hour, every month or two



Anytime



Local

Resident Inspector

Being a Resident Inspector involves looking at an aspect of L&Q's service and giving us your views on the findings. This helps us to improve our services. Inspections in the past have, for example, focused on how L&Q handles reports of anti-social behaviour and how well we've communicated the impact of benefit changes to affected residents.



Three days every year



Daytime on weekdays



Sidcup office

What you can get out of it

- Help to make a difference to the services that you and other residents receive from L&Q.

Develop your:

- Analytical skills – as you will need to spot problems and come up with solutions;
- Knowledge of housing – we will train you on the subject matter, so you will gain a good knowledge of how we work;
- Interviewing and questioning skills – as you ask residents and staff about their experiences;
- Report writing – as you write a report summarising what you have found;
- Presentation skills – as you present the findings to your local Neighbourhood Committee;
- Teamwork – as you work as part of a team to carry out a review;
- Ability to remain objective – as you report on what you have found; and
- Time management – as you will need to finish your report within a set timeframe.

02 Inspections

Mystery Shopper

Mystery shopping involves phoning L&Q, following a scenario and answering questions on how well we dealt with your query.

You will need approximately one day in total (half a day for training and half a day to mystery shop).

Training takes place on weekdays, either during the day or in the evening, depending on demand. You will need to mystery shop between 9am and 5pm.

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference to L&Q's services; and
- We will give you £20 worth of shopping vouchers for each mystery shop, to cover the cost of the phone calls.

Develop your:

- Attention to detail – as you read instructions and follow a scenario closely;
- Communication skills – as you talk to staff on the phone and complete a written survey of your findings; and
- Time management – as you need to complete each mystery shop within a set timeframe.



Two half days



Weekdays, day and evenings



Local

YOUR ENQUIRIES

IT WILL BE EASY TO CONTACT US, INCLUDING BY PHONE & VIDEO

SURVEYORS ANTICIPATES

CULTURAL TONES

ASSUMING YOU ARE LOGIC (with a star)

UNNECESSARILY

LONG TAIL CONVERSION

CONVERSION NOT ESTABLISHED AT FIRST DRAFT

WE WILL PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER, OR EXPLAIN THE PROGRESS
RESOLVING YOUR ENQUIRY, AND KEEP YOU INFORMED OF PROGRESS

THAT'S OK

CHANGE OR NOTICE

NOT QUALITY

DONT WANT TO CHANGE

ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

WE WILL CARE THAT YOUR ENQUIRY HAS BEEN RESOLVED AND THAT
ARE SATISFIED

DISRUPTION SERVICE SPAN (from unproductive)

IN DEPENDENT

TOOK A LONG TIME TO ANSWER (from first)

CASE STUDY

Miles Lanham

Miles Lanham went from unhappy resident to Neighbourhood Champion – and enjoyed the role so much, he used his experience to change career.

“I used to be the resident from hell,” Miles says. “I was always complaining.” Then he decided to focus his efforts in a more positive way – and put himself forward to become a Neighbourhood Champion.

When he realised how much he was enjoying the role, he decided to use the experience he had gained to start a whole new career. He now works for another housing association in London.

“I owe L&Q a big debt,” Miles says. “Not only have L&Q housed me but they have also helped me move from a job in retail to a new career that I really enjoy.”

As a Neighbourhood Champion, he was also able to put an end to some homophobic abuse he was receiving and cut other anti-social behaviour, such as dope smoking and noisy neighbours.

“Being a Neighbourhood Champion really doesn’t take a lot of my time and it becomes second nature after a while,” he says. “It’s just a matter of keeping your eyes open, chatting to neighbours and sending a few emails or making a few calls.”





Not only have L&Q housed me but they have also helped me move from a job in retail to a new career that I really enjoy.





03

Forums

Take part in a forum, where you will meet other residents and swap views.

03 Forums

Communications Forum

The Communications Forum is made up of residents who meet to help improve L&Q's communications. Typically, they discuss things such as Homelife magazine, the L&Q website and Facebook.

What you can get out of it

- Learn more about how L&Q communicates with residents;
- Improve the information we provide to our residents; and
- Receive £20 in shopping vouchers each time you attend.

Develop your:

- Marketing and communications experience;
- Analytical skills – you will need to tell us what you like about the way we communicate and what we could improve.



Two hours,
twice a year



Weekday
evenings



Central
London

LGBT Forum

This is a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) residents who meet to discuss housing issues affecting LGBT residents. The group recommends improvements to L&Q policies and services.

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference – help to make L&Q an even better landlord for LGBT residents.

Develop your:

- Communication skills – as you discuss issues of concern with other residents and L&Q staff; and
- Analytical skills – as you will need to spot issues and come up with solutions.



Two hours,
twice a year



Weekday
evenings



Central
London

03 Forums

Leaseholder Forum

This is a group of leaseholders and other homeowners who review L&Q's performance and recommend improvements to our service to homeowners.

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference to the services that homeowners receive.

Develop your:

- Communication and teamwork skills – as you discuss issues of concern with other residents and L&Q staff; and
- Analytical skills – as you spot problems and come up with solutions.



Two hours, twice a year



Weekday evenings



Central London

Focus groups

These are one-off groups put together by L&Q to look at a particular issue. We contact residents directly if we would like them to take part.

What you can get out of it

- Meet L&Q staff and other residents to resolve or discuss an issue.

Develop your:

- Communication skills – as you discuss issues of concern with other residents and L&Q staff; and
- Analytical skills – as you may need to find solutions together.



One or two hours



Weekdays



Anywhere

Community Board

Community Boards are set up in areas where L&Q is carrying out regeneration work. They monitor the work that we are doing and suggest improvements. Some groups carry on after regeneration has finished, acting like Resident Associations.

Contact L&Q Direct to find your nearest Board.

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference to the area where you live and to the L&Q services that you receive; and
- Meet other residents.

Develop your:

- Communication and teamwork skills; and
- Analytical skills – as you spot problems and come up with solutions.



Two hours,
twice a year



Weekday
evenings



Local

03 Forums

Resident Associations

Resident Associations are groups of local people who work together to address issues in their community. Each association is different. Some exist to put on coffee mornings or events in their community, while others meet to discuss local issues.

If you would like to set up a Resident Association in your area, L&Q will help to fund it if it meets our criteria.

Contact L&Q Direct to find your nearest association.

What you can get out of it

- Make a difference in your local community; and
- Meet other residents.

Develop your:

- Communication skills – as you discuss issues in meetings and raise questions and concerns;
- Committee experience – understand how committees function, the role of chair etc; and
- Teamwork skills – as you work with other resident association members.



Two hours, four times a year



Weekday evenings



Local



CASE STUDY

Kristina Dimitrova

Kristina Dimitrova thought L&Q's Communications Forum would help her make a difference. It did – but it also gave her extra skills she's using at work.

Civil servant Kristina Dimitrova wanted to give something back so she joined L&Q's resident Communications Forum a couple of years ago.

"It's been rewarding to see how the things we've suggested or approved have made a difference," she says. "I know, for instance, that readership of Homelife has doubled since we okayed the new look of the magazine and its greater focus on real-life stories."

What she hadn't expected was that being involved in L&Q's work would bring her other benefits. "I knew this would help improve L&Q's services to residents, but I didn't realise it would give me so many extra skills I could use at work," she says.

In fact, that has proved one of the best things about her involvement. "Looking at how to improve L&Q policy has helped how I think and how I draft policy at work. It's amazing really, given that policy work is a big part of my day job anyway," she says.

"If I decided to change job or career now, I know I have extra skills that I wouldn't have got as part of my day-to-day work."





If I decided to change job now, I know I have extra skills that I wouldn't have got as part of my day-to-day work.





04

Resident views

Give your views without having to take part in meetings.

04 Resident views

Facebook

Facebook is an opportunity for our residents to interact with each other, give us feedback or suggestions, and receive information from us.

What you can get out of it

- Give your views, helping us to improve our neighbourhoods and services.

Develop your:

- Social media and internet skills.
-

Anytime

Anytime

Anywhere

L&Q website

You can leave feedback, compliments or complaints via L&Q's website.

What you can get out of it

- Give your views – and help us to improve our neighbourhoods and services.

Develop your:

- Internet skills.

Anytime

Anytime

Anywhere

Resident Panel

Being on our Resident Panel involves answering an online or postal questionnaire on our policies or new service initiatives on a regular basis.

What you can get out of it

- Have your say on our policies and new service initiatives before they go 'live'; and
- Keep up to date with issues affecting L&Q and housing today.

Develop your:

- Attention to detail – as you read and understand questions;
- Communication skills – as you answer questionnaires; and
- Time management – as you need to complete the survey within a couple of weeks.



5 mins every
couple of months



Anytime



Anywhere

CASE STUDY

Claire Blunden

Facebook has helped Claire Blunden to fit in getting some neighbourhood nuisance sorted around her busy working life.

Claire has been a keen user of Facebook for years, using the social media site to chat with friends and family and swap photos. However, using it to feed back to L&Q was something new – but she hasn't looked back.

One advantage is that she can get in touch when she has the time. "I use my tablet when I'm out or at work, so I can log on quickly and get in touch," she says. "Even if it's late in the evening, I know someone will look at it the following day."

Claire sends messages directly to L&Q if she needs a repair, but she posts on L&Q's Facebook wall when she's trying to improve things in her area.

The thing that has surprised her most is how personal using Facebook can be. "It sounds strange to say, but I feel more of a connection with L&Q when I contact them on Facebook. I know there's just one guy who responds to all the queries and there's a sense of continuity whenever I contact him."



I thought it might be quite impersonal but I've found it to be the opposite.



