

Social Tenants Access to Information (STAIRs) Policy

Document ID/Version:	V1 New Policy			
Executive Lead (Owner):	Executive Director - Customer			
Policy Author:	Policy Manager			
Strategic alignment:	This policy aligns with the Government STAIRs Policy Statement, requiring Private Registered Providers to have a publication scheme (mandatory from 1 Oct 2026) and a system for responding to tenant information requests (mandatory from Apr 2027)			
Review frequency:	Every 3 years	☒	Other (state period)	
Previous review date:	N/A			
Date policy approved:	09 September 2026			
Policy approved by:	Resident Experience Committee			
Next policy review date:	September 2029			
IMPACT ASSESSMENTS				
Equality Impact Assessment				
Completed? ☐	No	☐	Yes	☒
	If not required, state reason:			
Resident Impact Assessment				
1) Is this one of the agreed policies requiring resident consultation? Please refer to:	Yes	☒	No	☐
2) If yes, please confirm resident consultation has taken place	☐	Briefly detail changes arising from resident feedback:		
APPROVAL - To show transparency and accountability, specify whether policies have been approved by the Board/Executive/Committee. Clear approval lines strengthen governance, ensuring assurance and accountability.				
Approval journey:	Executive Team	Committee		Board
		Yes	Committee name(s)	
	☒	☒	Resident Experience Committee	☐
Which Regulatory Standard does this Policy support?	Economic			
	Governance & Viability	Rent		Value for Money
	☒	☐		☐
	Consumer			
	Neighbourhood & Community	Safety & Quality	Tenancy	Transparency, Influence & Accountability
	☐	☐	☐	☒

Social Tenants Access to Information (STAIRs) Policy

Associated legislation	DLUHC – Social Tenants Access to Information Policy Statement (STAIRs) Secretary of State to the Regulator of Social Housing (the ‘Regulator’) obliging the Regulator to introduce requirements for PRPs to comply with the policy statement for STAIRs.		
Associated procedures	Publication Scheme Access to Information scheme		
Where is this policy to be published?	Website	Intranet	Both
	☐	☐	☒

Social Tenants Access to Information (STAIRs) Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out how we will comply with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) and ensure that tenants can access information relating to the management of their homes and services.

This policy supports our commitment to building trust with tenants, improving accountability and service delivery, empowering tenants to scrutinise decisions and performance and promoting openness across all our housing services.

2. Objectives, desired outcomes and strategic alignment

We will:

- Proactively publish information relating to the management of social housing through a Publication Scheme
- Respond to eligible information requests and reviews promptly and transparently
- Provide information wherever possible
- Only redact (withhold) information where there is a lawful and rational basis to do so
- Ensure information is available in accessible formats
- Learn from information requests to improve transparency and tenant engagement

3. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- Current social housing tenants who rent a property owned or managed by the organisation
- Shared owners whose homes fall within the scope of the STAIRs regime and where the requested information relates to the management of their housing or associated services
- Licensees and other qualifying occupiers who have a recognised housing relationship or arrangement with us and whose request relates to the management of their housing
- Designated representatives authorised by tenants

STAIRS does not apply to:

- Members of the general public who are not tenants
- Family members or others living at the property unless designated as the tenants representative
- Prospective tenants
- Former tenants (unless they remain an occupier covered by the definition in the scheme).
- Outright owners and leaseholders who owns 100% of their property (having staircased to full ownership).
- Individuals seeking information unrelated to the management of social housing

STAIRs does not form part of our internal complaints process and operates independently of the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

4. Policy Principles

Publication Scheme

We will maintain a Publication Scheme available through our website and other communication channels. We will review and update on a regular basis the information under the requirements of the publication scheme and this policy.

We will proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, the following information, including providing this information on request if tenants are unable to access it via our website or other communication channels:

Governance and Decision Making

- Our Governance structure, including Board and Committee responsibilities
- Executive leadership structure
- Tenant engagement arrangements and activities
- Tenant meeting summaries and minutes
- Key housing management policies

Spending

- Annual reports and accounts
- Information on service charges
- Major investment programmes
- Grants received and utilised
- Information demonstrating value for money

Housing Stock Management

- Asset management strategy

- Planned maintenance programmes
- Building safety information
- Net zero and sustainability plans
- Development and stock transfer information (where appropriate)

Performance

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
- Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code self-assessment
- Complaint performance data
- Repairs performance
- Health and safety performance.
- Inspection and regulatory findings.
- Information request performance statistics

Housing Services

- Service standards
- Repairs service information
- Anti-social behaviour services
- Complaints process
- Customer service commitments

Registers and Lists

- Information required by legislation to be publicly available.
- Statutory registers relevant to social housing management

Social Housing Management Policies

We will publish key policies relating to:

- Repairs and maintenance
- Complaints
- ASB
- Lettings and Allocations (where relevant).
- Data protection and privacy
- Compensation
- Rent and service charges
- Health and safety

Information Requests (from 1 April 2027)

Under the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs), an information request can be made either by the tenant themselves or by a designated person or representative acting on the tenant's behalf.

Family members or others living at the property will not be able to make requests (or make a complaint to the Ombudsman) unless designated as the tenant's representative.

A designated person is not restricted to a particular category of individual. This can include:

- A family member
- A friend
- A support worker
- An advocate or tenant representative
- A solicitor or other professional adviser
- Any other person the tenant has authorised to act for them in relation to the request

Information requests can be made in relation to the management of their social housing services. Any request for information must be made in writing and can be submitted by email, webform, by letter or through any written channel made available by us.

Where a tenant requires support or where a tenant is unable to make a request in writing, we can provide assistance to help make a valid request. Assistance might be in the form of an interpreter, a signer, home visits or recording a verbal request on the tenant's behalf. A written request will be recorded and where possible agreed with the tenant before processing.

For an information request to be valid, the request must set out what information is being sought and the person requesting the information must also confirm their identity.

Tenants who appoint a representative must notify us of their details and to protect tenants' interest and ensure that information is disclosed in line with legal requirements, we may take steps to verify that a representative has the authority to act on behalf of the tenant before processing the request.

Responding to Requests

We will:

- Acknowledge requests for information within 5 working days of receipt into the STAIRs information request team.
- Provide a full response within 30 calendar days from the day of receipt of the information request.
- In circumstances where the information requested complex or is held with a third party or a contractor acting on our behalf or additional consideration needs to be given to determine whether the information can be disclosed, an extension will be applied. Where an extension is applied, the tenant will be informed of the reason for the delay and the expected response date.
- If an information request is unclear, we will ask for clarification and pause the response deadline until clarity is received.

Circumstances Where Information May Be Refused

An information request will be refused where one or more of the following grounds apply:

- **Scope:** the request does not relate to the management of social housing. Requests for personal data about the individual making the request will be dealt with as a Subject Access Request.
- **Requester details:** the person requesting the information cannot be identified.
- **Clarity:** the request is unclear and cannot be clearly clarified or be processed without further information.
- **Alternative access route:** the information is available through another statutory access regime.
- **Conduct:** the request is repeated, including repeated requests from multiple applicants acting in coordination, causes harassment, is abusive or offensive.
- **Resource impact:** responding would exceed 18 hours of staff time.
- **Legal or reasonableness grounds:** disclosure would be unreasonable or unlawful.

Circumstances where information may be redacted (withheld)

When considering whether information can be disclosed, we will only redact information where there is a clear justified reason to do so.

Each decision to redact information will be on a case-by-case basis that takes into account:

- The need to protect personal data and comply with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Commercially sensitive or confidential information where disclosure could prejudice legitimate commercial interests.
- Information covered by legal privilege or confidentiality obligations.
- Information where disclosure could create a risk to health, safety, safeguarding, security, or ongoing investigations.

Where information is redacted, we will explain the reasons for this. Redactions will be limited to the minimum information necessary ensuring the remaining content continues to be meaningful and useful. If extensive redaction would render a document of little or no value, we may consider withholding the document in full where this is reasonable and justified.

All redaction decisions will be documented and retained to demonstrate accountability, consistency, and compliance with STAIRs requirements

Reviews and Complaints to the Housing Ombudsman

Tenants that are dissatisfied with the handling of the request for information or consider that information is missing from the publication scheme or a decision to refuse the information request, can request a review under STAIRs. This internal review will not be dealt with under the internal complaints procedure but under a separate STAIRs internal review process.

The internal review will be completed within 30 calendar days. Where an extension is required to process the review, the tenant will be informed of the reason for the extension and the expected response date.

If the tenant or designated representative is dissatisfied with the response to the review, they will have the right to directly escalate this to the Housing Ombudsman under the terms of the Housing Ombudsman's Scheme. The review outcome will set out the tenant's or their designated representative's right to access the Housing Ombudsman Scheme.

5. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We are committed to ensuring that all tenants can exercise their rights under the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs). While information requests must be submitted in writing, we will take the necessary steps to support tenants who may face barriers to making a written request.

This policy will be implemented fairly, consistently and transparently, ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

In applying this policy, staff will take account of individual circumstances and, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, participation and outcomes.

Information and communications relating to the policy will be made available in accessible formats on request.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Board/Committee

- Provides strategic oversight
- Monitors transparency and compliance with this policy

Executive Board

- Ensures resources and controls are in place.

Policy, Governance and Communications Team

- Maintains the Publication Scheme.
- Oversees compliance reporting.
- Coordinates policy reviews.

Line Managers

- Support timely and accurate responses to information request.

- Ensure records are retained appropriately.
- Approve the redaction of information

Customer Quality and Assurance Team

- Manage the information requests and reviews
- Ensuring information that is redacted meets the threshold set out in this policy

All Colleagues

- Maintain accurate records.
- Support transparency and disclosure obligations.

7. Compliance/Key Performance Measures

We will ensure that:

- Records are accurate, up-to-date, and stored securely
- Systems allow timely retrieval of information
- Redactions and exemptions are applied consistently
- Data retention and redaction complies with our retention schedule and UK GDPR
- STAIRs does not require us to create new records, but good recordkeeping is essential for compliance

We will:

- Report annually to the Board on STAIRs compliance
- Monitor request volumes, response times, and outcomes
- Review this policy routinely and in response to regulatory changes
- Learn from requests and reviews to improve transparency and tenant engagement

All relevant staff will receive training on:

- STAIRs legal obligations
- Identifying disclosable information
- Managing redactions
- Responding to requests and reviews
- Review Ombudsman findings

8. Related Policies, Procedures and Key Documents

- Data Protection Policy
- Governance Framework

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard
- Tenant Engagement Strategy
- Information Security Policy
- Data Retention & Disposals Policy
- Regulatory Standards Framework

9. Version Control

Version control			
Date	Version	Approved By	Details of Amendments
August 2026	V1	Resident Experience Committee	New Integrated STAIRs Policy