



KINGDOM
Group

Communications Policy

If you need this publication in larger print, audio form, Braille, or in another language, please contact our office and we will try to help you.



Approved: October 2014
Next Review: October 2019

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

This policy applies to Kingdom Housing Association Limited and all its Subsidiary companies within the Kingdom Group of Companies.

We aim to conduct our affairs in an open and transparent manner and make information publicly available unless there are justifiable reasons for withholding it.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure all internal and external communications are effective
- Ensure effective two way communication
- Provide guidance to staff on methods and style of communication to make this accessible to all our customers
- Maximise the use of social media as an effective communication tool
- Promote and enhance our reputation
- Promote and encourage tenant participation
- Explain our approach to being open and transparent while recognising the importance of ensuring confidentiality where appropriate
- Acknowledge accountability to our stakeholders

In line with our commitment to equality and diversity, this policy can be made available in a variety of formats, including large print, translated into another language or other media. Reasonable adjustments will also be made to assist individuals who have a disability.

We are committed to the principles of good corporate governance and sustainability and will endeavour to develop fair and consistent policies, procedures and practices.

2. Confidentiality

Staff, consultants, contractors and members of our governing body will be made aware of the need to treat information gained through their relationship with Kingdom as confidential and should not disclose any information which may be of a sensitive nature to any unauthorised person.

Staff and the governing body members will be advised of the need for confidentiality as part of the induction process.

Contractors will be required to complete a disclosure of interest declaration before being accepted on to our list of approved contractors.

Contractors who are accepted on to our list of approved contractors will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.



3. Media Contact

No unauthorised members of staff will speak to the media (press, radio or television) or post information through any social media such as Facebook or Twitter.

Enquiries from the media should be directed to the Departmental Director or, in his/her absence, the Chief Executive.

Departmental Managers may be asked to deal with enquiries with the approval of the Chairperson, the Chief Executive or a Departmental Director.

4. Stakeholders and Other Customers

Our stakeholders are identified through the communications procedure and plan.

For the purposes of this policy, stakeholders are people or organisations with a direct involvement or interest in our operation and performance, including staff, residents, consultants, contractors and members of the governing body.

5. Accountability

We will be open and transparent with all our stakeholders.

We will provide information on our performance in all areas of our work and, where this information is not sensitive; make it available for scrutiny and comment.

This policy and associated procedures and plan, should be linked to the objective of promoting and enhancing our reputation. We will therefore:

- Remain professional in our communications.
- Encourage stakeholder feedback and act upon it where we can.
- Ensure our website and social media sites are updated frequently.
- Regularly review our communications plan so that it is current.
- Be reactive to changes in communications practices.
- Ensure staff and governing body members receive appropriate information and training to enable them to fulfil their role within the organisation.

6. Channels of Communication

Internal and external communications will be detailed in the Communications Procedure and Plan and will be reviewed regularly.



It is important that we communicate effectively with employees and other stakeholders,

This may be:

- Verbally by face to face meetings, telephone, focus groups, estate walkabouts.
- In writing by letter, newsletters and briefing notes.
- Electronically through email and our website.
- By social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

7. Resident Participation

We realise the importance of ensuring effective communication with our residents and of involving them in decision making. This policy will be compliant and complimentary to our Tenant Participation policy and action plans.

To evidence our commitment, we will provide accurate, relevant and accessible information to ensure residents and other customers are well equipped to participate.

We will use a range of methods to communicate with residents and other customers and seek their views, tailoring our methods of communication to accommodate any particular needs.

8. Reporting and Monitoring

The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. Charter indicators 2 and 3 are the indicators particularly relevant to communication and participation.

A Communications Plan will be maintained to record and monitor the relevant activities implemented through this policy.

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) assesses and reports on how social landlords are performing their housing services; Registered Social Landlords' (RSLs') financial well-being; and RSLs' standards of governance. The SHR will intervene to secure improvements where necessary. The SHR was established under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 with one statutory objective: "to safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, people who are or may become homeless and people who use housing services provided by registered social landlords and local authorities".

The Scottish Housing Regulator requires to be notified of any significant or exceptional issue, event or change within our organisation (a notifiable event) and how we intend to deal with it. The events relevant to this policy would come under the Regulator's heading of Performance and Service Delivery issues or Financial and Funding issues. The Scottish Housing Regulator's Guidance, Notifiable Events 2012, gives examples of notifiable events.



A link to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Guidance is below:

<http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/publications/notifiable-events>

9. Role of the Communications Group

The Communications Group is an internal Kingdom multi-disciplinary group, with representatives from all departments within Kingdom.

The Group will develop, monitor and implement this policy and associated plans and procedures.

The Chief Executive will chair the Communications Group and oversee this policy and associated plans and procedures.

10. Role of Departmental Directors

Each Departmental Director (or designated officer) will be responsible for ensuring this policy and the related procedures are applied in their department.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed 5 years from the date of implementation, which will be the date the policy is approved by the governing body or earlier if deemed appropriate.



KINGDOM HOUSING GROUP

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Policy drawn up with reference to:

Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland
Data Protection Act 1998

Reference made to the following sources and other guidance:

Argyll Community Housing Association Communication Strategy 2013
Data Protection Policy
TPAS Report
Tenant Participation Policy
Management Guidance on Media Content
St Vincent's Communication Policy

Last Policy approved by Committee on 3 March 2009

Prepared by Service Co-ordinators: 15 May 2014

Reviewed by the Senior Management Team: 22 July 2014

Reviewed By Kingdom Solicitor:

Tenant Consultation:

Sub Committee Review of Policy: 7 October 2014

Presented for approval to Committee of Management: 20 October 2014

Policy Approved: Yes

Approved by Kingdom Initiatives Limited Board of Directors:

Next review date: No later than October 2019

