

Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) Policy



Introduction

This policy details Great Places Housing Group's approach to ensuring compliance with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) legislation.

The aim of this policy is to promote transparency and openness through access to information via a publication scheme which will enable tenants and tenants' representatives to access information proactively, and to support tenants to make information requests. This will help our customers to better understand our services and how they impact them in their homes and communities. Being well-informed supports customers to take advantage of opportunities to influence our services.

What is STAIRs?

The STAIRs or [Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements](#) is a transparency framework for social housing providers. STAIRs is intended to close an "information rights gap between council tenants and housing association tenants". STAIRs applies to registered providers of social housing who must provide their customers with access to information related to the management of social housing that they hold.

Compliance with the STAIRs legislation is a required outcome of the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard. This is one of the consumer standards which are part of a suite of [Regulatory standards for landlords](#), against which the Regulator of Social Housing assesses the performance of registered providers of social housing.

The STAIRs legislation defines two distinct sections for us to comply with:

- Chapter 1 – Publication scheme
- Chapter 2 – Requests for information

Chapter 1: Publication Scheme

From October 2026, Great Places Housing Group must have a compliant publication scheme in place. Publication schemes initially existed through the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which placed obligations on public authorities to proactively publish certain information to ensure transparency with the public; mainly structural information, financial information and management/board information.

To meet the required outcomes of the publication scheme, we must proactively publish data aligned to the following seven classes of information:

- Governance and decision making

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- Spending
- Housing stock management
- Performance
- Housing services
- Lists and registers
- Social housing management

Information covered by Great Places Housing Group's publication scheme can be accessed [here](#). If information is required to be provided in an accessible alternative format we also commit to providing a single copy of this information free of charge.

Chapter 2: Information Requests

From April 2027, social housing tenants of Great Places Housing Group, or their designated representative, will be able to submit information requests to us. Valid requests must be made in writing by an identifiable applicant, and do not have to mention STAIRs for the requirements under STAIRs to apply.

We will make all reasonable efforts to support tenants to make a valid request and inform tenants of how to request information. This can most easily be done [here](#).

Responding to Information Requests

Who can make requests?

We will respond to information requests made by our tenants, or their designated representative (the scheme is not open to either former or prospective tenants). We will only respond to requests where we can confirm the identity of the requesting tenant and their representative, where appointed. There are no restrictions on tenants as to whom they may choose as their representative.

How can tenants make requests?

We will accept requests that are made in writing (such as by email or letter), as long as we can identify who you are. An information request does not have to specifically mention STAIRs for it to be considered under the scheme, as long as the request is made in writing and we are able to identify you.

We recognise that some tenants may require additional support to make an information request and will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support all tenants to be able to exercise their rights under STAIRs. You can contact our [Customer Hub](#) to arrange support.

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How long will it take us to respond?

We will acknowledge receipt of your request within 5 working days of receipt and respond to your request within 30 calendar days from receipt, or where the request requires clarification, 30 days from receipt of the clarification.

We will take reasonable steps to assist tenants and their representatives where any request requires clarification. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend the timeline for a response and if this is necessary, we will inform you at the earliest opportunity and provide you with a reason for the delay and when you may be likely to receive a response.

Obtaining information from third parties

If the requested information is held by a third party responsible for the management of social housing on our behalf, we will use all reasonable endeavours to obtain the information. We will record our contacts where it is necessary to reach out to third parties for the information.

Information out of scope

Great Places Housing Group is not required to create new information to comply with either the publication scheme or information requests. When deciding whether information should be published, we will consider if the information comes within the classes of information set out in Chapter 1: Publication Scheme (above). It may be necessary to redact documents prior to publication.

We have detailed below some suggested categories of information which may be out of scope of STAIRs – please note this is not an exhaustive list:

- Personal information about individuals
- Commercially sensitive or confidential business information
- Information that could create a health and safety risk
- Confidential information, including legally privileged information
- Information that is planned for publication at a later date
- Information that is already available elsewhere
- Information that could limit open and honest advice, discussion, or decision-making
- Information linked to law enforcement investigations, legal proceedings, or formal enquiries

When considering an information request under Chapter 2, we will determine whether any information may need to be withheld or redacted in response to your request. Any withholding or redaction of information must be reasonable, accounting for factors

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favouring disclosure against the likelihood of any harm arising from disclosure. Where information was provided by or relates to a third party, we must consider the views of that third party regarding the likelihood of any harm. It is not reasonable for us to refuse an information request on the basis that disclosing the information would result in reputational risk to ourselves.

We may also refuse to respond to an information request where the meaning of the request is not clear and you have not responded to our reasonable efforts to seek clarification, the work involved in responding to the request would exceed 18 hours of colleague time, the request is excessive because it is repeated, or the request is offensive or communicated in an abusive manner, or is clearly intended to cause disruption to our organisation.

If you consider that information you receive in response to a STAIRs request has been redacted or withheld without a reasonable basis for doing so, we refer you to our review process below.

Reviews and complaints

If you consider that we have not published information or responded to your information request appropriately, or are dissatisfied with the handling of your request please contact our [Customer Feedback](#) team to request a review. A request for a review should generally be made within 3 months of receipt of the original decision.

We will conduct a review of how we have handled your STAIRs request and aim to respond to your complaint within 30 calendar days of receipt. If it is necessary to extend the timeline for a response due to exceptional circumstances, we will let you know at the earliest opportunity.

The purpose of any review will be to assess:

- how we have responded to your request for information (for example, where we may not have provided information in an accessible format);
- where we have not published relevant information that we may hold and which you believe you may be entitled to;
- where we have not complied with timelines for responding to your request and there is no good reason for us to have applied an extension;
- where we have either withheld or redacted relevant information from disclosure and you disagree with our decision and reasons for this.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response to your review request, you are able to escalate your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman under the terms of the [Housing](#)

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[Ombudsman Scheme](#). A complaint to the Ombudsman should be made within 3 months of the outcome of your review. Only matters relating to STAIRs can be addressed as part of a STAIRs review process and then by complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

Data protection

We comply with all relevant data protection laws, including the United Kingdom's General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Data Use and Access Act 2025. This means that where any information requested amounts to personal data, or could amount to identifiable personal data when combined with other information, this information may be withheld from disclosure in compliance with data protection laws and is not disclosable under STAIRs. This information may instead be disclosed under data protection legislation where we consider that the application is a valid subject access request for personal data.

For further information as to how we handle your personal data, please see our [Privacy Policy](#).

Monitoring and compliance

Our Data Protection team are responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and will support colleagues across Great Places Housing Group to fulfil their role in meeting the outcomes of STAIRs. All relevant colleagues are required to familiarise themselves with the wording and obligations defined under this policy.

Policy approval date:	August / 2026
Equality impact assessment date:	Month / Year
Reducing carbon impact assessment date:	08/ 2026
Safeguarding/Modern Slavery impact:	N/A
Policy review date:	08/ 2028
Lead team:	Business Assurance
Level of authorisation required:	Directors
Please record all authorisation meetings, with dates and details	Directors Meeting, 20/08/26