



STAIRs Policy

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Policy	STAIRs POLICY			Central Services
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1. Purpose

- 1.1. This policy explains how Hull Churches Housing Association Limited (the Association/HCHA) will provide tenants with access to information about the management of its social housing under the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs). It supports transparency, accountability and meaningful tenant involvement while protecting personal, confidential and legally restricted information.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to information held by HCHA, or held on its behalf by a contractor or other body, concerning the accommodation, facilities and services it provides in connection with social housing. It applies to current social housing tenants who are entitled to use STAIRs, including shared owners. A tenant may use an authorised representative, subject to suitable evidence of authority. STAIRs does not replace rights under data protection law and does not apply to requests for a tenant's own personal data, which will be handled under HCHA's data protection procedures.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 3.1. HCHA will comply with the government's STAIRs policy statement, the applicable direction and regulatory requirements, data protection legislation, confidentiality duties and any other statutory restriction on disclosure. Where requirements conflict, HCHA will follow the law and explain the effect on the request.

4. Policy Principles & Objectives

- 4.1. The principles and objectives of this policy are
 - HCHA will make information easy to identify, find and understand.
 - Requests will be handled impartially, promptly and with appropriate assistance for tenants.
 - Information will be disclosed unless there is a lawful and reasonable basis to withhold or redact it.
 - Decisions will be explained clearly, with details of review and complaint rights.
 - HCHA will not require staff to create new records solely to answer a request.

5. Publication Scheme

- 5.1. From 1 October 2026, HCHA will proactively publish, or routinely make available, information it holds within the STAIRs classes. This will include appropriate information about governance and decision-making, expenditure and procurement, housing stock, performance, and landlord services. HCHA will identify the information available, tell tenants how to access it, provide alternatives for tenants who cannot use digital channels, and review and update published material regularly. Documents may be redacted where reasonable and permitted.

6. Making an Information Request

- 6.1. From 1 April 2027, an eligible tenant may request recorded information about the management of HCHA's social housing by email, letter, telephone, in person or through any published request route. The tenant should describe the information sought and provide contact details. No special wording is required. Staff will offer reasonable help to clarify broad or unclear requests and will record verbal requests accurately. HCHA may confirm eligibility and a representative's authority where necessary.

7. Responding to Requests

- 7.1. HCHA will acknowledge and log each request, locate relevant recorded information, consult internal teams or service providers where needed, and respond within 30 calendar days. If clarification is needed, HCHA will explain what is required and how this affects the timetable. Information will normally be supplied in an accessible electronic format, but reasonable alternative formats will be offered.

8. Withholding and Redaction

- 8.1. Information may be withheld or redacted only where the STAIRs policy statement permits and it is reasonable to do so. This may include protecting personal data, safety and security, legal privilege, commercial confidentiality, effective decision-making, or information whose disclosure is prohibited by law. HCHA will consider partial disclosure before refusing a request in full. A refusal notice will identify the information withheld, explain the reason as far as possible, and state how to request a review.

9. Reviews and Complaints

- 9.1. A tenant who is dissatisfied with published information, a response, a refusal, redaction or delay may request an internal review. The review will be undertaken by an officer not involved in the original decision where practicable, consider the request afresh, and issue a reasoned outcome within the timetable required by STAIRs. The outcome will explain the tenant's right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied or do not receive a response. STAIRs reviews and complaints will be recorded separately where required and handled under the applicable STAIRs process.

10. Responsibilities, Records and Assurance

- 10.1. The Board retains oversight of compliance and receives proportionate assurance. A nominated officer coordinates requests, reviews, guidance and reporting. All staff and relevant contractors must preserve records, identify requests promptly and cooperate with searches. HCHA will maintain a request log showing dates, subjects, outcomes, response times, redactions, reviews and complaints; use this information to identify recurring disclosure needs; train relevant staff; and periodically test the accessibility, completeness and timeliness of

its arrangements. This policy will be reviewed at least annually during implementation and thereafter at least every three years, or sooner following legal, regulatory or service changes.