



STAIRs policy – draft

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Introduction

1. This policy explains how we publish information about the management of our social housing, how tenants and their representatives can ask us to review published information, and, from 1 April 2027, how they can request information directly.
2. STAIRs applies to tenants of Railway Housing Association (RHA) although in keeping with RHA's other policies, we have used the term 'residents' throughout this policy.
3. STAIRs requests are handled separately from complaints, subject access requests and other requests for personal information.

What is STAIRs?

4. As part of the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, private registered providers of social housing, including housing associations such as RHA, are required to comply with the Government's Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements, or 'STAIRs' for short. This means providing residents with access to information about how they manage their social housing.
5. The aim is to ensure that residents can access the information they need about their housing and hold their landlords to account for the quality of housing and services they provide. This includes information that is held by other bodies who deliver management services on our behalf.
6. RHA is committed to transparency and openness and complies with the STAIRs through the arrangements outlined in this policy.
7. STAIRs has two parts, referred to as 'Chapters' in the government's STAIRs Policy Statement. We have outlined these Chapters below. The full Government's STAIRs Policy Statement is available here: [Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements: policy statement - GOV.UK](#)
8. STAIRs does not apply to Local Authorities as Local Authority tenants can use the Freedom of Information Act to access relevant information.

Chapter 1: The Mandatory Publication Scheme

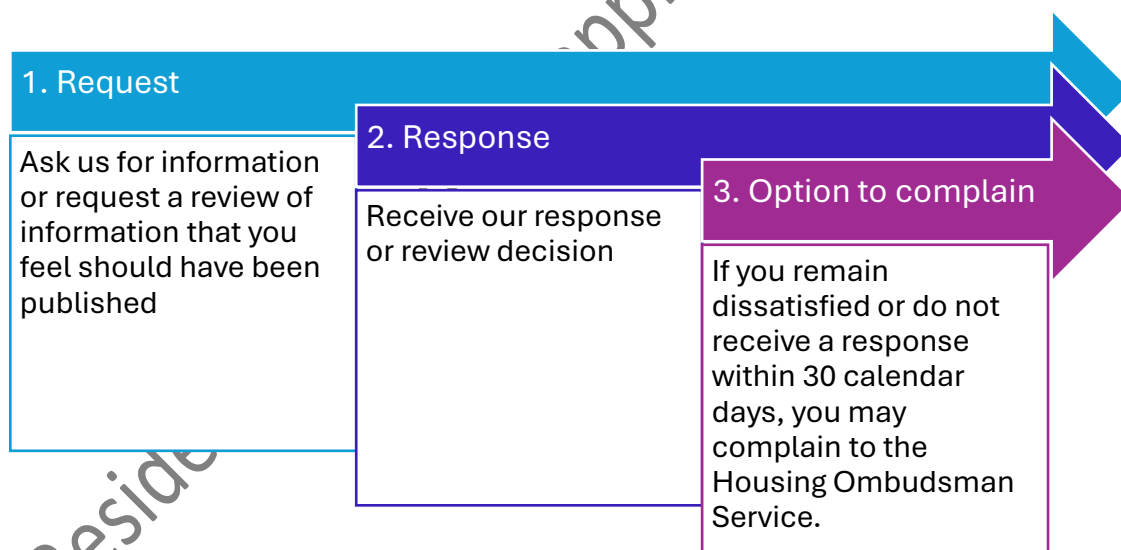
9. The Mandatory Publication Scheme is effective from 01 October 2026
10. In preparation for STAIRs we have updated our website - [Railway Housing Association](#) - and published additional information. We will continue to develop the website and involve residents in reviewing the information published and identifying their priorities.
11. In line with the STAIRs Policy Statement, our website includes information that relates to:
 - How RHA is run
 - How we spend money
 - The homes we own
 - Our performance
 - The services we provide
12. We will also make reasonable efforts to publish information in non-digital formats, for example, in newsletters, where appropriate.

Chapter 2: Information Requests

13. From 1 April 2027, residents and their advocates will have the right to ask us to provide information (directly to them) about the way we manage housing. This includes details of policies, plans and actions and related information.
14. Before making a request, you may wish to check our website to see whether the information is already available. If you cannot use our website or need the information in another format, contact us and we will help you access it.

Your rights under the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements

15. Under STAIRs, residents and their nominated representatives have the right to:
 - Request a STAIRs review: This is a request to RHA to review the information that we have provided publicly (for example on our website) on the grounds that something that is required under STAIRs Chapter 1 (the Mandatory Publication Scheme) has not been made available.
 - Make an information request (applies from 1 April 2027): This is a request to RHA to provide information relevant to the management of RHA's social housing (as outlined in Chapter 2 of the STAIRs policy statement) to an individual RHA resident.
16. The STAIRs process has three steps:



We explain these steps in more detail below.

Making a request

17. Any RHA tenant (referred to in this policy as 'resident') can make a request for information. We will also accept requests from nominated representatives but will check with the resident before responding to a representative.
18. Requests must be in writing, and we must be able to identify the person that has made the request (and the resident if the request is made by someone else).

19. If you would like to request a STAIRs review or make an information request (from 1 April 2027), please contact:

By post:

Railway Housing Association
Maple House
11 Tillage Green
Westpark Village
Darlington
DL2 2GL

By email:

info@railwayha.co.uk

20. Please include your name and address, the information you are seeking, and whether you are asking for a review of publicly available information or (from 1 April 2027), asking us to directly send you information.
21. Residents who cannot make a written request without support may ask us for assistance, including help to record a verbal request in writing and confirm it with them.
22. For a review request, please explain what you believe should have been published and why you are dissatisfied with the information currently available or with our earlier response.
23. If you are acting on behalf of an RHA resident, please provide their name and address. We will check that we have their consent before responding.

How we will handle STAIRs requests

24. STAIRs review requests and information requests are not treated as complaints; we have a separate process for dealing with them.
25. When we receive a STAIRs request (either for a review of public information or a direct information request) we will:
- Acknowledge that we have received the request.
 - Check that we understand the request / concerns raised.
 - Advise if we think the request would be better handled as a Subject Access Request under data protection law. (This may be the case if the request relates mainly to a person's own personal information).
 - Identify whether it is a review request under Chapter 1 or, an information request under Chapter 2. We will then assess it against the requirements that apply to that type of request.
 - Arrange to obtain information from third parties if necessary.
 - If required, we will provide the information in a non-digital format that suits the needs of the person making the request.
 - If relevant, we will explain any redacting (hiding) of sensitive information
 - Respond within 30 calendar days. If we need more time, we will tell you why and give you a clear date for our full response.

- The 30-calendar-day response period starts when we receive a valid request. If we need clarification or evidence to confirm the identity of the resident or their representative, the response period will start when we receive the information required. We will seek clarification or verification without undue delay and keep a record of the relevant dates.

26. We may refuse an information request, or decline to proceed until the issue is resolved, where:

- The request falls outside STAIRs (for example does not relate to RHA's management of social housing)
- We cannot confirm the identity of the person making the request (or, that a representative has consent from the tenant concerned).
- The request remains unclear after reasonable efforts to clarify it; the information is not held
- Responding would require more than 18 hours of staff time
- The request is repeated.
- The request is offensive or communicated abusively
- Or it is reasonable to withhold the information after applying the assessment described below.

27. When deciding whether information should be withheld or redacted, we will consider all relevant circumstances, including the purpose of STAIRs, the benefit of disclosure, the likelihood and seriousness of any harm, and any relevant views from third parties. We will keep a clear record of the evidence considered, the balance reached and the reasons for our decision.

28. If we refuse all, or part of a request, we will explain the reasons for our decision and tell the resident how to request an internal review and how to complain to the Housing Ombudsman.

Complaints related to STAIRs

29. You have the right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service if we do not respond to your STAIRs review request within 30 calendar days or if you remain dissatisfied with our review response.

30. You should submit the complaint within three months of the date of our review response, as the Housing Ombudsman may not accept it after that point.

31. From 1 April 2027, you will also have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service if you think we have not responded appropriately to a request for information.

32. The Housing Ombudsman Service deals with complaints about STAIRs through a process that is separate from its usual complaints procedure. For more information on how to complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service, please see: [Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements \(STAIRs\) support guide](#)

Review of STAIRs policy and practice

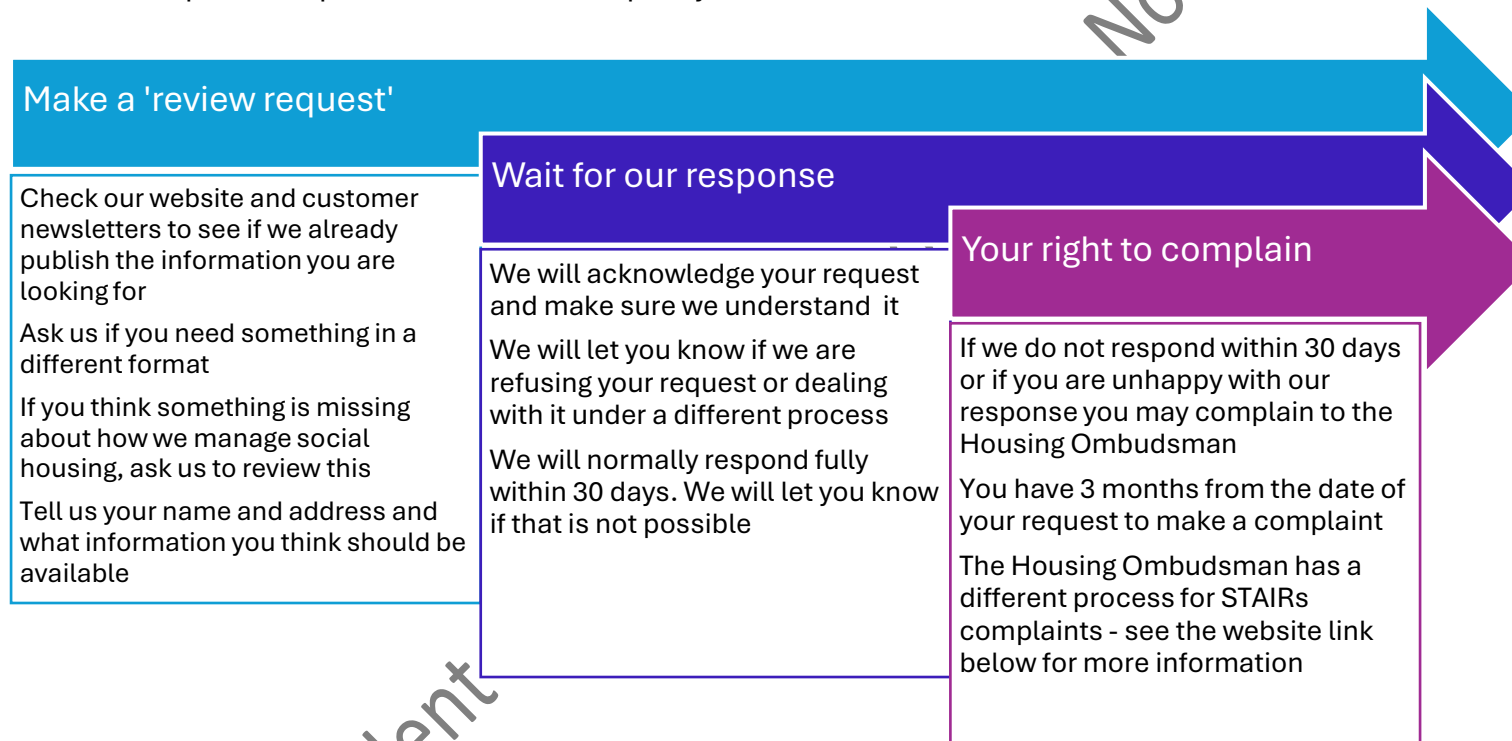
- 33. Our Chief Operating Officer is responsible for this policy.
- 34. We will record STAIRs requests, response times, extensions, outcomes, reasons for withholding or redaction, accessibility needs and any complaints to the Housing Ombudsman Service.
- 35. We will use this information to identify recurring publication gaps, improve our published information and provide assurance to RHA's Resident Committee & Board.
- 36. This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, government policy or Housing Ombudsman guidance changes.

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Appendix 1: STAIRs 'easy-read' guide (for use 1 October 2026 to 1 April 2027)

Under the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (or STAIRs for short), tenants of housing associations have the right to request a review from their landlord if they believe that they have not published certain information about how they manage their social housing. This applies to our tenants and their representatives.

This is a brief explanation of the process - please see our STAIRs policy for more information.



For more information check these web-pages about the Social Tenants Access to Information Requirements:

- The Government's Policy Statement: [Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements: policy statement - GOV.UK](#)
- Housing Ombudsman website: [Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements \(STAIRs\) support guide](#)

Appendix 2: STAIRs Directory - a guide to where to find information

Information categories	Railway Housing Association documents available
Governance and decision making Information about who is in charge of decision making at Railway Housing Association and how residents are involved in shaping services	Our 'About' webpage holds information about who we are: About Railway Housing Association You can hover over 'About' or go to the 'About' webpage to see more information including about our board and committees and our executive team. Our latest reports are published on our 'Publications' page here: Railway Housing Association publications Our values and objectives are set out in the document: On the Right Track 2026-27 (previous versions are also available on the Publications page) Railway Housing Association is not part of a group structure. There is no 'parent' company and no subsidiary companies. We publish the following information about decision-making at Railway Housing Association: • Our governance structure (the relationship between the Board and its Committees): Governance structure chart • Our Board of Trustees and the Committees they attend: Board of Trustees at Railway Housing Association • Our Executive team and their roles and responsibilities: Meet the Executive Team - Railway Housing Association • And for the detail about governance and how decisions are made, you can read our Rule of Association • We are not currently running any resident consultations but information about how we work with residents is available on our Listening to You webpage and in our Resident Impact Report 2024/25.
Spending Information about our income and expenditure	You can find our financial accounts for 2025/26 on our Publications webpage We have published a summary of how we spend our income within our Annual Report. The 2024/25 version is available now and a new 2025-26 version will be published soon. Our Value for Money Strategy 2025-2028 explains how we aim to make the best use of our resources.

Information categories	Railway Housing Association documents available
Housing stock management Information about how we look after the homes we own and manage and our plans for environmental sustainability	Railway Housing Association has an Asset Management Strategy 2025-2029 that details our plans for investing in homes to ensure that they meet residents' needs and provide a safe environment. The Asset Management Strategy also sets out our goals for energy efficiency and sustainability. Your Resident Handbook includes basic information about repairs and maintenance and our Annual Report gives a summary of the work we have undertaken in the previous year. You can read about how satisfied our residents are in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures report. This includes the latest information about satisfaction with repairs and building safety. For an overview of the homes we own and manage, please see the Property list.
Performance Information about Regulatory grading, Housing Ombudsman reports and performance including resident satisfaction.	The Railway Housing Association website home page confirms the latest Regulatory gradings: Railway Housing Association: providing homes for over 100 years Latest news from Railway Housing Association is published on the website and on our social media pages. This is also confirmed in the Annual Accounts which are published and was announced via social media at the time the RSH released the regulatory judgement. Our latest quarterly performance figures are available as a Performance Scorecard. We have published our Tenant Satisfaction Measures report on the website and provided this information through our Annual Report to customers. We have published our annual self-assessment of compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. This is part of the Complaint Handling Performance and Service Improvement report 2025/26. This report includes an introduction from the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Resident Committee and details of complaints, compensation, points of learning and improvement action.

Information categories	Railway Housing Association documents available
Housing services Information about the services and guidance we provide for residents	Railway Housing Association has a specific webpage that outlines: Housing services provided by Railway Housing Association. This includes: • Domestic abuse • Benefit advice • Useful links Our Customer leaflets webpage has further information on a range of subjects including: • ASB • Benefits • Complaints • Service Standards • Disabled adaptations • Damp & mould • Data & privacy • Domestic abuse • Harassment & hate crime • Heating • Fire safety • Water supply • Leasehold schemes • Lettings • Pets • Rights to compensation for improvements • Sheltered accommodation • Rent • Service charges
Lists and registers Information held by law	We are reviewing options around potentially publishing communal safety certificates. These are currently available on request. Board and Committee member declarations of interest are included within their profile information - see link. There are no other declared interests for any member.
Social housing management	A range of policies, publications and leaflets are available on the Railway Housing Association website. You may find the following webpages useful: • Customer leaflets - Railway Housing Association • Policies of Railway Housing Association • Residents handbook • Leaseholder Handbook • Housing services provided by Railway Housing Association