Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) Policy

1. Scope

1.1 This policy applies to all Yorkshire Housing colleagues and all contractors, consultants and third parties delivering social housing management services on our behalf.

1.2 This policy covers:

- Our STAIRs publication scheme.
- Requests for information from customers and their representatives.
- Reviews and complaints relating to access to information

2. Policy Statement

2.1 At Yorkshire Housing, we're committed to being open, honest and accountable.

2.2 We believe customers should be able to understand how we make decisions, spend money, manage homes and deliver services. We will proactively share information wherever possible and will support customers to access information that helps them understand and scrutinise our performance.

2.3 Our starting position will always be to share information unless there is a lawful and reasonable basis for withholding or redacting it.

3. Policy Aims

3.1 This policy sets out how Yorkshire Housing will comply with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs). It aims to provide a clear framework to ensure transparency and support customer access to information.

4. Definitions

4.1 STAIRs - Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements.

4.2 Publication Scheme - Information Yorkshire Housing routinely publishes and makes available without the need for a specific request.

4.3 Relevant Information - Information relating to the management of Yorkshire Housing's social housing activities.

4.4 Subject Access Request (SAR) - A request made under Data Protection legislation for personal information relating to an individual.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The **YHL Board** provides oversight of Yorkshire Housing's approach to transparency and accountability, and monitors compliance with regulatory requirements.

5.2 The **Director of Governance, Risk & Assurance** holds overall accountability for this policy and ensures appropriate controls, monitoring and reporting arrangements are in place.

5.3 The **Data, Risk and Assurance Team** maintains and reviews the STAIRs framework, coordinates publication scheme requirements, and supports the handling of complex requests and reviews, provides advice on confidentiality, data protection, redactions and disclosure decisions, and supports application of the reasonableness test.

5.4 **All YH Colleagues** ensure relevant information is identified, retained and provided when required to support timely responses to information requests, and escalate requests and enquiries appropriately.

6. Legal and Regulatory Context

6.1 This policy aligns with the following legislation, regulation, and industry standards:

- Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs)
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard
- Housing Ombudsman Scheme
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

7. Policy Details

What the rules are

7.1 New government rules called STAIRs say that social landlords must publish certain information and respond to information requests relating to our delivery of social housing activities.

7.2 From 1 October 2026: We will start routinely publishing set types of information – this is information you can find without asking us.

7.3 From 1 April 2027: Any information included within STAIRs not already published can be requested from us, and this information will generally be made available free of charge.

Publication of information

7.4 We will maintain and publish information about how we run our social housing management services. This is to make sure customers can easily see how decisions are made and what services we deliver.

7.5 The information we publish includes different categories, such as how we are governed, how we spend money, and how we manage homes. We will keep this information up to date and publish at least two years' worth unless stated otherwise.

7.6 Information will be published on our website and will be regularly reviewed.

7.7 We can provide the information in a different format, such as large print or audio, or in a different language upon request.

What we cannot share

7.8 We will not create new information. Sometimes we must withhold information if it is reasonable for us to do so. We will generally withhold any personal information. Requests for personal data must be made with a subject access request (SAR).

Information Requests

7.9 We will respond to information requests that are made either by a registered customer with us, or by their designated representative.

7.10 We will only respond to requests where we can confirm the identity of the requesting customer and their representative (where appointed).

7.11 We will accept requests that are made in writing, including either by email, text message and social media, as long as we can identify the requestor.

7.12 We recognise that certain customers may require additional support to make a request, and we will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to support this.

7.13 We will respond to requests within 30 calendar days from receipt of request, or where the request requires clarification, 30 days from receipt of the clarification.

7.14 In exceptional circumstances we may need to extend the time needed to respond. If this happens, we will inform the requestor at the earliest opportunity

7.15 It may be the case that the requested information is held by a third party on our behalf. If this is the case, we will use all reasonable endeavours to obtain the information, taking account of our duty to comply with the requirements balanced against the need for a reasonable and proportionate approach and the availability of resources.

Refusing to action to information requests

7.16 We will always do our best to provide the information requested but there are some reasons where we may refuse, including but not limited to:

- When disclosure of the information may cause harm (where we have reasonably balanced the factors favouring disclosure against the likelihood of any harm arising from that disclosure).
- The information requested is excluded on the basis that it is not relevant information (i.e. does not come within the scope of an information request under STAIRs).
- The work involved in responding to the request would exceed 18 hours of colleague time.
- The request is excessive, or that it is repeated (including where we receive repeated requests from multiple customers acting in coordination or seeking the same information).
- The request is offensive or communicated in an abusive manner or is clearly intended to otherwise cause disruption to our organisation.

We may also redact information where it is appropriate and reasonable to do so.

Requests for a review

7.17 A customer or a representative who as authority to act on their behalf can request a review:

- If it is thought we have not published something we hold and we should have.
- If unhappy with our handling of or response to an information request.

7.18 Reviews should be requested within 3 months. We may still consider review requests received outside this period where there are good reasons to do so.

7.19 We will aim to complete the review within 30 calendar days of receiving the request. In exceptional circumstances, we may need to extend the time needed to respond. If this happens, we will tell the requestor as soon as possible. Any extension will be reasonable and kept to a minimum.

7.20 If unhappy following our review, the complaint can be escalated directly to the Housing Ombudsman under the terms of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Any complaint to the Ombudsman should generally be made within 3 months of the outcome of the review.

8. Diversity and Inclusion Implications

8.1 Yorkshire Housing recognises that customers have different communication needs, experiences and preferences. We are committed to:

- Providing accessible information.
- Making reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Supporting customers who require assistance to access information.
- Ensuring information is clear, inclusive and easy to understand.

- Removing barriers that may prevent customers from exercising their rights under this policy

9. Reporting and Monitoring

Approval:	24th September 2026		
Approved by:	Directors		
Three Directors approval:	Lead Director 1 – Claire Bridges, Director of Governance, Risk & Assurance		
	Director 2 – Sarah Simpson, Director of Customer Channels		
	Director 3 – Sarah Hutchinson, Director of People & Culture		
Reviewed by:	three directors		
Next review due:	24th September 2029		
Review period:	Three yearly		
Responsible Director:	Director Governance, Risk & Assurance		
Policy Lead:	Data, Risk & Assurance Manger		
PEIA completed:	Yes ☐	No ☒	Date: n/a
DPIA completed:	Yes ☐	No ☒	Date: n/a
Associated policies or other documents:	List related documents:		
Publication:	Central ☒		Website ☒
Version:	V1.0		

Version	Date of review	Details / summary of changes
1.0	September 2026	New policy