

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Updated 2026

	Communication Policy
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Version No	Title	Author	Draft Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Live Date	Review Date
N/A	Communication Strategy	S Davies	May 2023	Board	May 2023	May 2023	May 2026
N/A	Social Media Policy	P Latham	Oct 2023	Board	Oct 2023	Oct 2023	Oct 2026
1	Communication Policy	P Latham	Oct 2024	Board (based on previous approvals)	N/A	Oct 2024	May 2026
2	Communications Policy	M Wood	Sept 2026	Board	Sep 2026	Sep 2026	Sep 2029

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Eldonian Community Based Housing Association (ECBHA) will communicate with residents, staff, Board members, partners and other stakeholders. It supports the Communications Strategy 2026–2029 and is intended to be proportionate to ECBHA as a small community-based registered provider.

Our aim is to communicate in a way that is clear, timely, accurate, accessible, respectful and transparent, so residents understand our services, can contact us easily, influence decisions and hold us to account.

2. Policy principles

Residents will be at the heart of our communications and information will be relevant, clear and easy to understand.

We will communicate openly about our services, performance and decisions, including where things have gone wrong and what we are doing to improve.

We will listen to residents and provide meaningful opportunities for feedback, involvement and scrutiny, and explain how resident views have been considered.

Important safety, repairs, service disruption and tenancy information will be communicated promptly to affected residents.

Communications will support ECBHA's values, reputation and community-based identity and will be consistent across our main channels.

We will use resources proportionately and focus on communication methods that are effective for our residents.

3. Regulatory and information requirements

ECBHA will meet the communication and information requirements that apply to registered providers, including the Regulator of Social Housing's consumer standards, the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, data protection requirements and relevant health and safety duties.

In particular, communications will support the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard by ensuring residents receive accessible information about landlord services, service standards, safety and quality, rents and service charges, responsibilities, complaints, performance and how resident views have influenced services.

ECBHA will also comply with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs). From 1 October 2026, required information will be proactively published in accordance with the publication scheme. From 1 April 2027, ECBHA will operate arrangements for eligible information requests from tenants and their designated representatives. Detailed STAIRs procedures and publication arrangements will sit outside this policy and will be kept under review.

4. Accessible and inclusive communication

ECBHA recognises that residents have different communication needs and preferences. We will make reasonable efforts to understand these needs and provide information in an appropriate format or through an appropriate channel.

Use plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon.

Offer reasonable adjustments and alternative formats where required.

Take account of disability, literacy, language barriers and additional support needs.

Provide non-digital routes for residents who cannot or do not wish to use online services.

Ensure imagery and content are inclusive and respectful of the communities we serve.

5. Communication channels

ECBHA will use a practical mix of channels, including letters, telephone, email, text messages where appropriate, the website, resident newsletters, meetings, surveys, the resident portal, noticeboards and social media. The channel used will reflect the importance, urgency and needs of the intended audience.

Formal or important communications will not rely solely on social media. Residents will be clearly signposted to the correct route for repairs, complaints, emergencies, tenancy matters and other service requests.

6. Social media and digital communications

ECBHA may use a limited number of social media platforms to share useful information, promote engagement and support the organisation's profile. Content must be accurate, professional, respectful and consistent with ECBHA's values.

Only authorised colleagues may publish on ECBHA social media accounts or create new organisational accounts.

Personal, confidential or sensitive information about residents, staff or others must not be posted.

Resident photographs or identifiable content must only be used with appropriate consent.

Abusive, discriminatory, threatening, unlawful or otherwise inappropriate content may be removed, blocked or reported in line with ECBHA procedures.

Staff using personal social media must not present personal views as those of ECBHA or disclose confidential information.

Passwords and administrator access must be controlled securely, with an up-to-date record of organisational accounts and authorised users.

7. Data protection, confidentiality and accuracy

All communications must comply with ECBHA's data protection, confidentiality and information security requirements. Personal information will only be shared where there is a lawful and appropriate reason to do so. Staff must take reasonable steps to ensure published or issued information is accurate and current and correct material errors promptly.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Board: approves this policy and the Communications Strategy and receives appropriate assurance on delivery.

Chief Executive: has overall responsibility for corporate communications and approval of significant external or reputational communications.

Chief Operating Officer and managers: ensure operational and resident communications are timely, accurate and consistent with this policy.

All staff: are responsible for clear, respectful and appropriate communication in their role and for escalating significant communication risks or errors.

9. Monitoring and assurance

ECBHA will keep the effectiveness of its communications under proportionate review. This may include resident feedback, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints and learning, engagement and scrutiny activity, website/publication checks, accessibility needs and compliance with STAIRs.

Significant communication issues, regulatory concerns or learning will be reported through the appropriate management and Board reporting arrangements.

10. Equality, diversity and inclusion

ECBHA is committed to fair and respectful communication and to meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010. No person will be disadvantaged in accessing information or services because of a protected characteristic. Reasonable adjustments will be made where required.

11. Review

This policy will normally be reviewed every three years, or earlier, where there is a significant change in legislation, regulation, organisational arrangements or learning from an incident. The Communications Strategy and supporting procedures may be updated more frequently where required.