

Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) Policy



MONITORING INFORMATION:

POLICY/PROCEDURE/STRATEGY:

STAIRs POLICY

DATE APPROVED:

JULY 2026

EXPIRY DATE:

JULY 2029

OWNER:

HEAD OF GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

APPROVAL ROUTE:

EMT

Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out how Teign Housing will comply with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs), including our publication scheme, how tenants can request information, and how we will manage reviews and escalation.

Introduction

This policy aims to ensure that tenants (and tenants' representatives) can access information from Teign Housing about the management of our social housing, both through proactive publication and by making written requests for information.

Policy

Regulatory framework

This policy is based on the government's Policy Statement on the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs), introduced through amendments to the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TI&A) Consumer Standard.

Basis of the STAIRs

STAIRs give tenants formal rights to access information about how their homes and housing services are managed. It operates in two parts:

- **Chapter 1** – Proactive publication of information (from 1 October 2026)
- **Chapter 2** – Rights for tenants to request information (from 1 April 2027)

STAIRs do not replace or override existing data protection law. UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 continue to apply in full.

Where this policy refers to a tenant that includes licensees, shared owner owning less than 100% of the property equity, and any other person in a landlord-tenant relationship with Teign Housing.

Chapter 1 – Publication Scheme

Teign Housing will proactively publish information via our website relating to (but not limited to) the following elements:

- Governance and decision making, such as organisational structures, policies, consultation arrangements, and relevant meeting papers.
- Spending and financial information, including grants and the use of service charge income.
- Housing stock management, including maintenance programmes, planned works, and progress towards net zero commitments.
- Performance information, such as Tenant Satisfaction Measures, complaints data, inspection outcomes, and regulatory ratings.
- Housing services, including service descriptions and practical guidance for tenants.
- Statutory lists and registers connected to social housing management.

Accessibility and tenant awareness

We will ensure information is easy to find and clearly signposted through our website, tenancy documentation, and regular communications. We can also provide documents in large print, in languages other than English or in audio format.

Maintenance and redaction

Information will be reviewed regularly. We are not required to create new information, but we will publish relevant information that we hold. Where information is within scope but contains material that should not be disclosed (for example, personal data or confidential/commercially sensitive information), we may redact it where it is appropriate and reasonable to do so. Where information is out of scope of STAIRs, we will not publish it under the publication scheme.

Chapter 2: Requests for information (from April 2027)

Tenants will have the legal right to request information about how we manage social housing services.

What information can be requested?

Requests must relate to our social housing functions and may cover information about (but not limited to):

- Rent and service charges
- Repairs and maintenance
- Estate and communal area management
- Complaints handling and performance
- Health and safety
- Staffing and training
- Environmental and energy efficiency performance

Who can make a request?

A request can only be made by a tenant or their nominated representative. Requests must be in writing and include clear identification of the applicant.

Response times and handling

We will acknowledge your request within 5 working days and respond within 30 calendar days of receiving a valid request. Extensions are permitted only in exceptional circumstances and would be notified to the requester in advance of the deadline.

Where information is already published, we will signpost tenants to the relevant webpage.

If information is held by a managing agent or third party, we will make reasonable efforts to obtain and disclose it.

STAIRs does not override data protection law and we will not disclose personal data under STAIRs. If we consider that a request (or part of a request) is for the tenant's personal data, we will process that part as a subject access request in line with our DSAR process and privacy information.

Personal data and subject access requests (DSARs)

Where we consider that information should be withheld or redacted, we will apply the STAIRs reasonableness approach. This includes having due regard to protections under information rights and data protection law, and balancing factors favouring disclosure against

the likelihood of harm arising from disclosure. We will not take into account the identity of the tenant, the reasons for the request, or any intended use of the information.

Grounds for refusal

Requests may be refused where:

- Disclosure would be likely to cause harm, excluding reputational harm.
- The requester's identity cannot be verified.
- The request is unclear, irrelevant, repeated, or coordinated.
- Compliance would exceed 18 hours of staff time.
- The request is offensive or communicated in an abusive manner.

How we will assess refusal decisions

As required by the framework, we will explain our reasons for refusal in writing to the tenant. We will also record the reason for refusal on a refusal log and against the tenancy file for future reference.

Review and complaints process

If you believe we have not published information that should be included in our publication scheme, or you are dissatisfied with our handling of (or response to) an information request, you can ask us for a STAIRs review. A request for a review should normally be made within 3 months of the original decision. We will aim to complete the review and respond within 30 calendar days of receiving your review request. In exceptional circumstances we may extend the review timeframe; if we do, we will tell you as early as possible and keep any extension to a minimum. If you remain dissatisfied after the review, you may escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman in line with the Ombudsman's STAIRs arrangements.

Data protection and security

Data protection legislation applies directly to Teign Housing. Where information requested is personal data (or could become personal data when combined with other information), we will handle it in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Where appropriate, we will redirect requests for personal data to our subject access request (DSAR) process. We will take appropriate steps to protect information security when publishing information and responding to requests, including ensuring that any redactions are applied securely.

Monitoring and Performance Standards

This policy and the operation of STAIRs will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains accurate and compliant. We will maintain appropriate records (including a log of information requests, response timescales, and outcomes) and will report on themes and performance through our Audit and Assurance committee.

Related Documents

- Data Protection & GDPR
- Digital, Data and Technology
- Communication Strategy
- Document Management and Retention
- Complaints Policy