

Policy Name:	SOCIAL TENANT ACCESS TO INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS (STAIRs) POLICY	
Version	001	
Review Date	October 2027	

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Affordable Housing and Communities Ltd (AHCL) will comply with the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs), introduced under the Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TI&A) Consumer Standard issued by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

STAIRs gives residents of registered providers new rights to access information about how their homes and services are managed. AHCL is committed to being open and transparent, and to making information about how we operate as a landlord readily accessible to our residents.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all AHCL staff and to Firstport, our managing agent, insofar as Firstport holds information on AHCL's behalf that relates to the management of AHCL's social housing. STAIRs applies to current residents of AHCL, including shared owners who own less than 100% of their property. It does not apply to former or prospective residents, members of the general public, or shared owners who have staircased to 100% ownership.

3. Regulatory Framework

STAIRs is implemented in two phases:

Phase	Effective date	Requirement
Chapter 1 — Publication Scheme	1 October 2026	AHCL must proactively publish information it holds about how it manages its social housing across seven classes of information.
Chapter 2 — Information Requests	1 April 2027	Residents may make written requests for information about the management of their social housing. AHCL must respond within 30 calendar days.

The Housing Ombudsman is the appointed complaints body for STAIRs. STAIRs review requests and complaints are handled separately from AHCL's standard complaints process and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code does not apply to them.

4. Publication Scheme — Chapter 1

From 1 October 2026, AHCL proactively publishes information it holds across the following seven classes, where that information relates to the management of its social housing. AHCL is not required to create new information to comply with this requirement.

Class of information		What AHCL publishes	Where to find it
Governance and decision-making		Board member names and roles; Annual Compliance Report (including NHF Code comply-or-explain statement); how the board operates	www.ahc.org.uk
Finance and spending		Annual financial statements; Value for Money Statement;	www.ahc.org.uk
Housing stock management		Corporate strategy and objectives; stock profile; details of planned investment and maintenance available on request.	Available on request from AHCL.landlord@ahh.org.uk
Performance		Annual Report to Residents (including TSM results); complaints performance; Housing Ombudsman decisions and self-assessment	www.ahc.org.uk
Housing services and tenant liaison		Description of landlord services; how to contact AHCL; resident forum information; AHCL Charter to Residents	Available on request from AHCL.landlord@ahh.org.uk

Lists and registers		Confirmation of statutory compliance (gas safety, fire risk assessments, electrical safety, asbestos, legionella) at portfolio level — not individual property level	Available on request from AHCL.landlord@ahh.org.uk
Social housing management policies		Complaints Policy; Compensation Policy; Unacceptable Resident Behaviour Policy; Privacy Notice; building safety and other key policies	www.ahc.org.uk

Published information is kept up to date and reviewed at least annually. Where information relates to the previous two financial years, AHCL will retain and publish that information in line with the STAIRs requirements.

5. When Information May be Withheld or Redacted

AHCL will take an open and transparent approach to publication and will start from the presumption that information should be published. However, information may be withheld or redacted where it is reasonable to do so, including where:

- disclosure would breach data protection law (UK GDPR or the Data Protection Act 2018) — for example, where information contains personal data about identifiable individuals
- disclosure would harm AHCL's commercial interests, for example by revealing commercially sensitive financial or development information
- disclosure would prejudice an ongoing legal or regulatory investigation
- disclosure would cause harm to an individual's health, safety or wellbeing
- the information relates to matters decided by a local authority rather than AHCL
- the information is not related to AHCL's social housing management function

Where information is withheld or redacted, AHCL will document its reasons. Where a document is partially redacted, the reason for the redaction will be noted within the document. Reputational risk alone is not a valid reason for withholding information.

STAIRS AND PERSONAL DATA

Where a resident's request relates to their own personal data, this will be handled as a Data Subject Access Request (DSAR) under UK GDPR rather than as a STAIRs request. Grace Robinson (Company Secretary and DPO) is responsible for DSARs. Residents will be informed if their request is being handled as a DSAR rather than under STAIRs.

6. Information Requests — Chapter 2 (from 1 April 2027)

From 1 April 2027, residents may make written requests to AHCL for information about the management of their social housing that is not already published under the publication scheme. Requests may be made by email or letter. Residents do not need to mention STAIRs for their request to be treated as a STAIRs information request.

AHCL will:

- acknowledge the request promptly and without undue delay, normally within 3 working days
- respond within 30 calendar days of receipt of the request (or of any clarification required)
- provide the information free of charge in an accessible format
- inform the resident if the 30-day period needs to be extended in exceptional circumstances, and provide a revised timescale
- use all reasonable endeavours to obtain information held by Firstport on AHCL's behalf
- inform the resident if any information is being withheld or redacted, and the reasons why

AHCL may decline to respond to a request where: the resident's identity cannot be confirmed; the request is unclear and the resident has not responded to a request for clarification; the request is repeated (identical to a recent previous request); the request is offensive or abusive; or responding would require more than 18 hours of staff time.

A log of all information requests received and responses issued will be maintained by the Operations Support Officer.

7. Review Process

A resident who believes that AHCL holds information that should be published under the publication scheme but has not been made available, or who is dissatisfied with how AHCL has handled an information request, may request an internal review.

A review request should normally be made within 3 months of AHCL's original response. To request a review, residents should contact:

STAIRS REVIEW REQUESTS

Email: AHC.landlord@ahh.org.uk | Subject line: STAIRs Review Request Post:

AHCL will:

- acknowledge the review request promptly
- conduct the review within 30 calendar days
- ensure the review is carried out by a different person to whoever handled the original request
- where the review involves a significant decision about withholding information, ensure it is handled by a senior member of staff
- set out full reasons for the review decision in writing
- inform the resident of their right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied

IMPORTANT — STAIRS REVIEWS ARE NOT COMPLAINTS

A STAIRs review request is separate from AHCL's standard complaints process. It is not handled under the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. If a resident raises a matter that is both a STAIRs review request and a complaint about service, AHCL will ensure both are dealt with under the appropriate process and that the resident is clearly informed of this.

8. Housing Ombudsman Escalation

If a resident remains dissatisfied following AHCL's internal review, they may complain to the Housing Ombudsman under the terms of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. A STAIRs complaint to the Ombudsman should normally be made within 3 months of AHCL's review response.

Housing Ombudsman Service: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

9. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Company Secretary / DPO (Grace Robinson)	Overall responsibility for this policy and the STAIRs publication scheme. Named STAIRs lead.
Operations Support Officer (Stefano Campigli)	Ensures residents are aware of the publication scheme and how to access information. Ensures STAIRs requests received via the landlord inbox are passed promptly logged and dealt with.
Chief Executive	Ensures the organisation has adequate processes to meet STAIRs requirements. Reviews STAIRs activity as part of annual compliance reporting to the board.
Firstport	Required to provide AHCL with information held on AHCL's behalf promptly on request, to enable AHCL to meet STAIRs timescales. AHCL will notify Firstport of the STAIRs requirements and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place ahead of Chapter 2 coming into force.
All AHCL staff	Must recognise a potential STAIRs request and pass it to the Company Secretary without delay.

10. Related Policies and Documents

- Data Protection Policy (UK GDPR)
- Privacy Notice
- Data Retention Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Communication and Accessible Information Policy
- Regulatory Compliance Policy

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following any significant change to the STAIRs regulatory framework, Housing Ombudsman guidance, or RSH

Consumer Standards. The Company Secretary is responsible for coordinating the review and bringing any material changes to the board’s attention.

Version History

Version	Date	Author	Sections Updated	Principal Changes
001	October 2026	AHCL	All	New document — first issue