



STAIRs Policy

COR-POL-35

Version 1.0

Date approved: 29 July 2026

Approved by: Audit & Risk Committee

1. Policy Aim

- 1.1 This policy aims to ensure that customers are able to easily find or request information about how Southway runs its social housing management services. The policy sets out how Southway will promote access to information through a formal publication scheme which will allow customers to access information proactively, and to support them to make information requests.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out how Southway will comply with the government's Policy Statement entitled the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements, or "STAIRs", ensuring transparency, openness and giving customers the means to be able to hold Southway, as their landlord, to account.

3. Regulatory Requirements

- 3.1 New government rules called STAIRs say that social landlords must publish certain information and respond to information requests relating to how they deliver their social housing activities.
- 3.2 STAIRs is designed to enable customers to be able to access information which supports them to know more about how their services are delivered, either through information disclosed as part of a formal publication scheme or by responding to specific requests for information from customers:
- **From 1 October 2026:** We will start routinely publishing set types of information – this is information you can find without asking us.
 - **From 1 April 2027:** You will be able to request information from us – you can ask us for any information that is not already published. Any information will be made available free of charge. Where information is required in a non-electronic format, please contact our Governance Team to discuss your requirements. Duplicate copies of printed

documents will be supplied for a nominal charge. Southway is committed to ensuring that information is made available in a way that is accessible as possible for our customers.

4. Out of scope/ Withheld information

- 4.1 Southway is not required to create new information to comply with either the publication scheme or information requests. When considering whether the information should be published, Southway will consider if the information comes within the classes of information set out in [Table 1](#) of the Policy Statement.
- 4.2 Sometimes we may need to withhold information where the law prevents disclosure or where it is reasonable to do so under the scheme. We will generally withhold any personal information. If you want to see your personal data that we hold, you can make a subject access request via the form on our website.

5. Unhappy with our response

- 5.1 If you think we have not published something we hold and we should have, you can ask us for a review. You can also ask us for a review if you made an information request, but you are unhappy with our handling of or response to it. You can ask for a review within 3 months – we will explain how to ask for a review when we send you our response.
- 5.2 The review will assess:
- I. how we have responded to your request for information (for example, where we may not have provided information in an accessible format);
 - II. where we have not published relevant information that we may hold and which you believe you may be entitled to;
 - III. where we have not complied with timelines for responding to your request and there is no good reason for us to have applied an extension;

IV. where we have either withheld or redacted relevant information from disclosure and you disagree with our decision and reasons for this.

5.3 We will carry out a review of how we have handled your request (internal review) and aim to respond to your complaint within 30 calendar days of receipt. It may be necessary in exceptional circumstances to extend the timeline for a response – if this is necessary, we will let you know at the earliest opportunity. Any extension issued will be explained, reasonable and kept to a minimum.

5.4 If you are not happy with our response to your review request, you are able to escalate your complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman under the terms of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. The Ombudsman's complaints scheme is available on their website. Any complaint to the Ombudsman should be made within 3 months of the outcome of your review.

6. Data Protection and Security

6.1 Data protection laws are directly applicable to housing providers. This means that where any information requested amounts to personal data or may not be identifiable personal data in isolation but could amount to identifiable personal data when combined with other information, this information may be withheld from disclosure in compliance with data protection laws. Any requested information which amounts to personally identifiable data will not be disclosable under STAIRs but may be disclosed under data protection laws as a subject access request, where information is sought by the customer about themselves. Where we consider that your request amounts to request for personal data we will process your request in line with our subject access requests process (see our Data Protection Policy for more detail).

6.2 For further information as to how we handle your personal data, please see our privacy policy which is available on our website.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

- 7.1 Southway will monitor how this policy is working in practice to make sure we are meeting the STAIRs requirements and supporting customers to access information in a clear, consistent and timely way.
- 7.2 The Governance Team will maintain a record of STAIRs information requests, publication scheme review activity, decisions to withhold or redact information, internal reviews, extensions and complaints escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. This record will be used to check compliance with required timescales and to identify any recurring issues or learning.
- 7.3 Performance information will be reported to the appropriate senior management forum and, where relevant, to Audit and Risk Committee. Reporting may include the number and type of requests received, response times, extensions, refusals, redactions, review outcomes, complaints, publication scheme updates, and any actions taken to improve practice.
- 7.4 Southway will review and update the publication scheme on a regular basis to ensure that published information remains accurate, accessible and easy for customers to find. Feedback from customers, request trends, complaints and internal reviews will be used to improve the publication scheme and how information requests are handled.
- 7.5 This policy will be reviewed in line with the review date set out in the policy review history, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, government guidance, Housing Ombudsman requirements, or Southway's operating arrangements.

8. Relevant Southway policies

Data Protection Policy

Privacy Policy

Complaints Handling Policy

Information Security Policy

Equalities Scheme

ANNEX 1: Publication Scheme

We will 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.

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. Most information will be published on our website. We can give you the information in a different format, such as large print or audio, or in a different language upon request.

If you would like extra printed copies, we may charge for printing, binding, or postage at cost.

You can view information at our offices for free by booking an appointment. We welcome tenant feedback about this scheme. You can contact us by email, tenant portal, tenant meetings, or through your Housing Officer. From time to time, we may need to redact documents prior to publishing them. If you think something is missing from our publication scheme, or we have removed too much from a document we have published, you can request a review.

Table 1 of the Policy Statement

Class of information	Information typically included
Governance and decision making	Senior staff names and roles, organisational structure and governance arrangements Decision making processes and policies, prioritisation of complaints, information on tenant consultations (including methodology), tenant meeting minutes and agendas
Spending	Spending, grants, use of service charge revenue
Housing stock management	Plans, maintenance work, progress towards net zero, stock transfers
Performance	Inspections outcomes, ratings, performance reviews, evaluation reports, Tenant Satisfaction Measures, media releases, complaint metrics, information request data, information request responses, health and safety performance and assessments, maintenance work, number of evictions
Housing services	Description of services, advice, and guidance for tenants
Lists and registers	Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the management of social housing
Social housing management	Policies relating to the management of social housing

ANNEX 2: Responding to Information Requests

From 1st April 2027 you can ask us for information if you are a current tenant (we must be able to confirm your identity) or if you choose someone to act for you (we will need appropriate authority/ consent before dealing with a representative).

You can make a request in writing, including by email, web form or by telephone. You do not need to mention STAIRs for your request to count. If you need help to make a valid request, please speak with your Housing Officer.

We will acknowledge your request within 3 working days and respond within 30 calendar days. If we need more information from you to understand the request, the 30 days start once you tell us what we need.

In exceptional cases, we may need more time. If so, we will tell you why and when you can expect a response. If the information is held by another person or organisation providing your social housing on our behalf we will try to get it from them. We will keep a record of our attempts.

We may refuse a request if it is unclear, abusive, or repeated. If answering the request would take more than 18 hours of staff time, we may need to refuse it or ask you to narrow it. The information may be withheld where the law prevents disclosure or where it is reasonable to do so under the scheme.

We will always try to share information unless there is a good reason not to. It doesn't matter why you are asking us for information, or how you plan to use it – we won't take this into account. If we withhold or remove (redact) information, we will explain why. We may need to balance the benefits of sharing with any risk of harm, such as risk to safety, confidentiality, or business negotiations. We will consider whether releasing information could harm individuals or third parties, or whether it would break data protection rules. We will also take into account any views of relevant third parties if the information relates to them.

Main reasons information may be withheld:

- personal data
- confidentiality
- health and safety risk
- commercial sensitivity

- legal privilege
- information not held
- excessive burden
- repeated or abusive requests

STAIRs is only for social housing tenants. It does not cover market-rented homes or shared ownership properties that have been fully purchased by the resident.

POLICY REVIEW HISTORY	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
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