

## Communications Strategy & Plan

Implementation Checklist:	
Strategy Guardian:	CEO
Strategy Author:	CSM
Date Approved Policy Working Group:	N/A
Date of Final Approval by LHA Management Committee:	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Date effective from:	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2025
Due for review:	May 2028
Policy linkages:	Customer Service Tenant Engagement & Participation Strategy (draft) LHA's Community Plan Complaints/Compliments Equality & Diversity Privacy Corporate Performance Management

## Contents

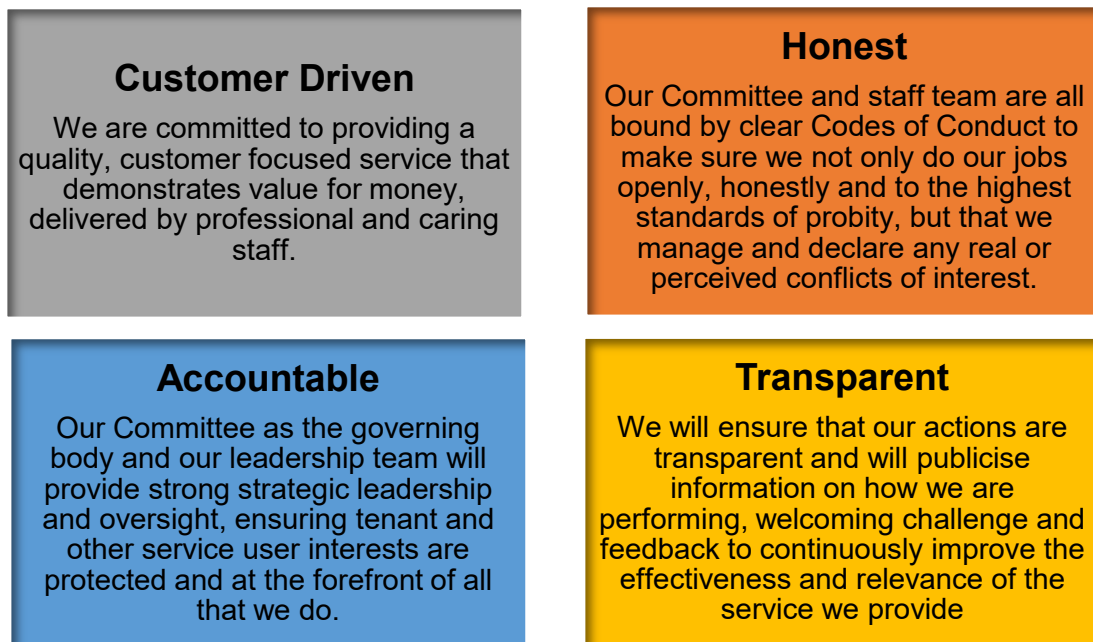
1. Overview .....	3
2. LHA's Values and Culture .....	3
3. Scope .....	4
4. Principles .....	4
5. Objectives & Implementation .....	4
5.1 Target Audiences .....	5
5.2 Key Messages .....	5
5.3 Communication Methods and Cost Effectiveness .....	6
5.4 Challenges .....	7
6. Monitoring, Reporting, and Review .....	7
7. Equalities Impact Assessment .....	8
8. Version Control .....	8
Appendix 1 – Communications Plan .....	9

## 1. Overview

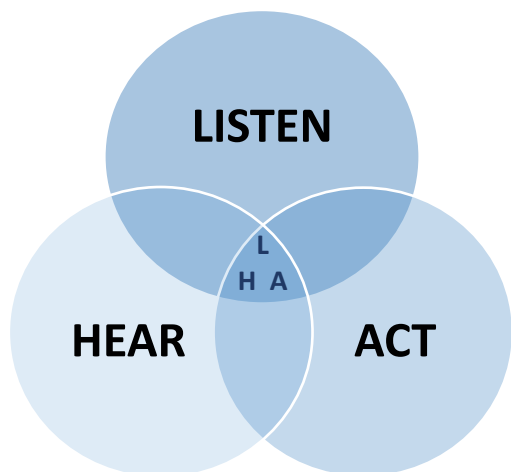
This strategy will outline how Linthouse Housing Association will communicate with its external and internal customers and other stakeholders. It will profile the target audiences, highlight the key messages to be shared, and outline the range of communication methods that will be utilised for sharing and collecting information.

## 2. LHA's Values and Culture

LHA's Management Committee and staff identified the core values that should be at the heart of all that LHA do in providing its services and building its strategies. These values are reflected in the acronym **C.H.A.T.**



LHA's culture of **Listen, Hear, Act** is embedded in how the work of all in the Association is carried out:



- ❖ **Listen** – to customers, internal and external, and stakeholders including regulators, funders and partners
- ❖ **Hear** – understand and be clear about what is being asked or requested
- ❖ **Act** – take action and deliver solutions

### 3. Scope

LHA is a Registered Social Landlord regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Scottish Social Housing Charter was launched in 2012 and sets out the standards and outcomes that LHA tenants and residents can expect from the Association.

The Charter consists of seven Regulatory Standards that SHR monitor landlord performance against each year. Two of these standards are concerned with how the Association communicates with its various audiences. The standards relating to this Strategy are:

**Regulatory Standard 2** - The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities

**Regulatory Standard 5** - The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity

### 4. Principles

The key principles of this strategy are to ensure that all communications carried out by Linthouse Housing Association are:

- Informative and provide the information customers and stakeholders want, how and when they want it
- Accessible, of a high standard, easy to understand using plain English, and jargon-free
- Positive and constructive, facilitating two-way communication where required

### 5. Objectives & Implementation

LHA is committed to delivering clear, accessible, and high-quality communications that inform, involve, and respond to the needs and requirements of internal and external customers and stakeholders. To achieve this, LHA will:

- ✓ **Communicate Effectively:** Share information using a variety of accessible formats and channels to ensure inclusivity and clarity.
- ✓ **Promote and Inform:** Clearly promote and share updates on LHA's current services, performance outcomes and future plans.
- ✓ **Engage Constructively:** Build positive, two-way relationships with all customers and stakeholders through open and respectful communication.
- ✓ **Consult and Involve:** Actively seek customer input on services and involve them in meaningful decision-making processes.
- ✓ **Support Two-Way Communication:** Utilise a range of methods that encourage dialogue and feedback, ensuring customers feel heard and valued.

## 5.1 Target Audiences

LHA communicates with a broad range of stakeholders, each with different needs, interests, and expectations. This Communication Strategy ensures that messages are tailored appropriately to engage each audience effectively and meaningfully.

LHA's audiences include both internal and external stakeholders as outlined in Table 1:

Table 1

INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
<b>Customers:</b> Current and prospective tenants, shared and factored owners	<b>Regulators, Funders &amp; Compliance bodies:</b> Scottish Housing Regulator, OSCR, banks and funding bodies, compliance partners eg. internal and external auditors
<b>Employees:</b> Current and prospective employees, modern apprentices, and volunteers	<b>Local and National Government, and other Public Sector Agencies:</b> Local elected members, MSPs/MPs, GCC/Council departments, local schools, Scottish Government, Department for Work & Pensions, and Health & Social Care Partnerships
<b>Governance:</b> LHA's Management Committee, Sub-committees and working groups	<b>Community and Voluntary Organisations:</b> Other local housing associations and community groups, local support services, and advocacy groups
<b>Scrutiny:</b> LHA's Residents' Panel	<b>Housing sector support agencies:</b> SFHA, SHN, GWSF
<b>Shareholders:</b> LHA's wider membership	<b>Contractors/Consultants:</b> Companies and other businesses LHA work with to deliver services
	<b>Wider Public and Media:</b> the local community, local businesses, and the general public

## 5.2 Key Messages

LHA's communication and engagement efforts will consistently reinforce the following key messages:

### Performance and Accountability

Keep customers informed about how the Association is performing, including updates on service delivery, progress against the key business objectives of the Business Plan, and what future plans and strategies are in progress.

### Customer Voice and Feedback

Create opportunities for open dialogue by actively applying LHA's core values: listening to customers, hearing and understanding what customers want, and acting appropriately on any feedback or requests made.

### **Customer Engagement and Involvement**

Engage with customers and stakeholders in a constructive, respectful, and solution-focused way. Consult with customers regularly and involve them in decision-making to ensure services meet their needs and expectations.

### **Inclusive Communication**

Use a variety of accessible communication formats to reach and connect with customers and other stakeholders in a range of ways. Provide translations, large print, or alternative formats where required.

### **Promotion and Visibility**

Actively promote the Association's work and ensure transparency and openness to build trust and enhance LHA's reputation and brand.

## **5.3 Communication Methods and Cost Effectiveness**

To ensure LHA's communication is effective, inclusive, and responsive, a range of methods will be employed and tailored to the diverse needs and wants of customers and other stakeholders. The Association will prioritise clarity, accessibility, and consistency across all channels, enabling customers to both receive information and share their views and feedback. Effective communication will be achieved by using a combination of the following:

*Table 2*

<b>Written</b> Letters, text messages, newsletters, surveys, complaints handling	<b>Verbal/in-person</b> Phone calls, face-to-face/hybrid meetings, community events, estate walkabouts, surveys
<b>Online</b> Website, email, online portals, social media, digital surveys	<b>Published</b> Annual reports, regulatory standards compliance, leaflets or fliers, and signage

Focusing on digital solutions where it makes sense will help LHA communicate more efficiently, cut costs, and keep information secure and private. This can be achieved by:

#### **1. Prioritising Digital Communication**

Shift internal and external communications to electronic formats to reduce printing costs and improve GDPR compliance and cybersecurity. Physical copies will remain available for those without digital access.

#### **2. Utilising Digital Platforms**

Enhance the LHA website and create a tenant portal for easy access to services and information. Develop a staff intranet to centralise resources and reduce email overload.

#### **3. Improving Engagement and Transparency**

Use digital channels for regular updates and engagement. Replace paper forms with online surveys for efficient feedback collection.

A comprehensive **Communications Plan** detailing how LHA will tailor its messaging for both internal and external audiences can be found in Appendix 1.

## 5.4 Challenges

While LHA is committed to enhancing communication and engagement, several challenges must be acknowledged and considered to ensure sustainable and inclusive delivery of this Strategy:

### 1. Resourcing and Capacity

- I. Limited resources to implement and maintain new initiatives, particularly those requiring additional staffing, expertise, or technology.
- II. Need for ongoing staff development and upskilling to support evolving communication methods and tools.
- III. Current access to PR/media support is limited; a low-level retainer or enhanced internal capacity may be needed.

### 2. Digital Inclusion and Accessibility

- Risk of digital exclusion for some customers who may lack access to devices, the internet, or the skills to engage with digital channels.
- Ensuring all communications are accessible to people with diverse needs, including language, literacy, visual impairment, and other barriers.
- Balancing investment in digital tools with the continued provision of traditional communication methods to maintain inclusivity.

### 3. Managing Perceptions and Feedback

- I. Potential for negative press or public feedback impacting reputation on some social media platforms, particularly around sensitive issues or service delivery.
- II. Importance of responding constructively to criticism or complaints and following up on feedback with clear, transparent communication.

## 6. Monitoring, Reporting, and Review

LHA will implement monitoring processes that are proportionate, realistic, and achievable, ensuring that resources are effectively utilised. Monitoring will focus on key communication initiatives, tracking their progress and ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.

Appropriate Key Performance Indicators will be identified and updated quarterly, while website analytics will be used to measure digital engagement and assess the effectiveness of communication channels.

This strategy will be reviewed on a three-yearly basis to ensure it remains relevant, up to date, and fit for purpose.

## 7. Equalities Impact Assessment

<b>Title Of Strategy</b>	<b>Communications Strategy &amp; Plan</b>
What is the purpose of this policy?	This policy outlines how and what LHA will communicate with its various audiences
Protected characteristic groups affected by this policy:	Age, disability, race
Who is the target audience of this policy?	LHA employees, Management Committee & other volunteers
List any existing documentation used to complete this assessment:	Regulatory Standards of Governance & Financial Management; other existing policies; draft Tenant Engagement Strategy
Has any consultation taken place with protected characteristics groups identified?	No
What is the likely impact?	N/A
Have you, or will you, put the policy into practice? Who is responsible for the delivery of the policy?	This is a new policy. All staff, Committee and volunteers will be responsible for the delivery of the policy
How does this policy fit into our wider or related policy initiatives?	This policy fits with current key business objectives of the Business Plan, 2022-2027
Do you have a set budget for this work?	No exclusive set budget; other budgets will impact eg. ICT budget, advertising & promotion

## 8. Version Control

Version Number	Name	Author	Notes
1.0	GC32	AG	1 <sup>st</sup> draft – Apr 2025



## Appendix 1 – Communications Plan

INTERNAL		
Target audiences	Key messages	Current methods of communication & frequency
<p>The customers the Association serves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current and prospective tenants</li> <li>- Current and prospective shared/factored owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LHA provides quality housing and factoring services</li> <li>• LHA provides a diverse range of other services to meet the needs and priorities of customers and the wider community</li> <li>• All customers are valued, and contributions are welcome</li> <li>• LHA is responsive, innovative, collaborative and forward-thinking</li> <li>• LHA is managed professionally and has a highly skilled and dedicated workforce</li> <li>• Complaints and dissatisfaction will be dealt with constructively</li> <li>• Linthouse is a great community to live in</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bi-annual Newsletter</li> <li>• Annual Landlord Reporting/ARC</li> <li>• Quarterly Tenant Satisfaction surveys</li> <li>• Annual rent consultation</li> <li>• Annual calendar of events</li> <li>• Monthly Estate Walkabouts</li> <li>• Bi-annual community clean-ups</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2F meeting/online meeting</li> <li>• Housing applications/sign-up packs</li> <li>• LHA Website</li> <li>• Letters/texts/emails</li> <li>• Phone calls</li> <li>• Leaflets/fliers/posters</li> <li>• Complaints handling /resolution and feedback</li> <li>• Subject Access Requests (SARs)</li> <li>• PR/media coverage</li> <li>• Social media; X</li> </ul>
<p>Those who work with LHA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current and prospective employees/apprentices</li> <li>- Current and prospective volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LHA is a good employer and a great place to work/volunteer</li> <li>• LHA values its staff and volunteers</li> <li>• LHA offers a range of incentives to staff and volunteers</li> <li>• LHA encourages and supports staff training and professional development</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly Executive, Leadership &amp; Staff team meetings</li> <li>• Monthly staff training</li> <li>• Annual Appraisals &amp; 1:1s</li> <li>• Staff social and fundraising committees</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment packs</li> <li>• Induction</li> <li>• HR &amp; other staffing policies</li> <li>• Bright ideas</li> <li>• Staff surveys/consultations</li> </ul>

INTERNAL (Cont.)		
Target audiences	Key messages	Current methods of communication & frequency
<p>The Governing Body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LHA's Management Committee, Sub-committees and working groups</li> <li>- Prospective Committee members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LHA has a highly skilled and dedicated voluntary Management Committee</li> <li>• The time, commitment, and contribution of LHA's Management Committee volunteers are valued</li> <li>• LHA supports training and development for Committee members</li> <li>• Volunteering on the Management Committee improves services and enhances the community</li> <li>• Volunteering on the Management Committee is rewarding and can broaden skills and experience</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly Committee meetings</li> <li>• Reports for Committee</li> <li>• Committee minutes</li> <li>• AdminControl</li> <li>• Annual planning day</li> <li>• Annual Landlord Report</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Newsletter articles</li> <li>• Local networking events</li> </ul>
<p>Those who scrutinise what LHA does:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LHA's Residents' Panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent scrutiny facilitates constructive feedback on what could be done to improve LHA services</li> <li>• Acting as a 'critical friend' to the Association helps to improve efficiency for tenants &amp; residents</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-weekly meetings; guest presentations</li> <li>• Scrutiny exercises &amp; reports</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff/partner presentations</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Policies</li> <li>• Newsletter articles</li> <li>• Local networking events</li> <li>• Social media; X</li> </ul>
<p>LHA's Shareholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Association's membership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association is a great local organisation to be involved with</li> <li>• LHA values the contribution of shareholding members</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual General Meeting (AGM)/ Special General Meeting (SGM)</li> <li>• Statutory financial information</li> <li>• Annual Landlord Report</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletter articles</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• LHA Rules</li> <li>• Social media; X</li> </ul>

EXTERNAL		
Target audience	Key messages	Current methods of communication & frequency
<p>Regulators, Funders &amp; Compliance bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scottish Housing Regulator, OSCR, banks and funding bodies, compliance partners, eg. internal and external auditors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LHA has robust governance and financial management</li> <li>• LHA complies with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and Regulatory Standards</li> <li>• LHA is financially viable and covenant compliant</li> <li>• LHA complies with Charitable requirements</li> <li>• LHA systems and processes are sound and fit-for-purpose</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business Plan (updated annually)</li> <li>• Annual ARC Return</li> <li>• Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)</li> <li>• Annual Financial Returns</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Notifiable Events</li> </ul>
<p>Local &amp; National Government, and other Public Sector Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local elected members, MSPs/MPs, GCC/Council departments, local schools, Scottish Government, Department for Work &amp; Pensions, and Health &amp; Social Care Partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elected members and Council officers are clear on what LHA does</li> <li>• LHA is a professionally run housing association that responds to the needs of its customers and the wider community</li> <li>• LHA has robust governance and financial management</li> </ul>	<p><b>Timed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Landlord Report</li> </ul> <p><b>On demand / Ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Emails</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>
<p>Community and Voluntary Organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other local housing associations and community groups, local support services, and advocacy groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides quality housing and wider community services</li> <li>• LHA is a valuable community anchor organisation for the area</li> <li>• The Association works collaboratively for the good of its customers and the wider community</li> </ul>	<p><b>On demand / Ad-hoc:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Local networking events</li> </ul>

EXTERNAL (Cont.)		
Target audience	Key messages	Current methods of communication & frequency
Housing sector support agencies: - SFHA, SHN, GWSF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LHA is a strong, collaborative &amp; responsive RSL</li> <li>The Association contributes to local and national strategy</li> </ul>	<b>Timed:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Returns/ARC annual return</li> </ul> <b>On demand / Ad-hoc:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Training events/forums</li> <li>Networking events/conferences</li> <li>Consultations</li> </ul>
Contractors/Consultants: - Companies and other businesses LHA work with to deliver services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LHA is a provider of quality housing &amp; housing services</li> <li>Partners are valued</li> </ul>	<b>On demand / Ad-hoc:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Emails</li> </ul>
Wider Public and Media: - the local community, local businesses, and the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LHA is a provider of quality housing, factoring &amp; wider role services that provide positive outcomes for the local community</li> </ul>	<b>On demand / Ad-hoc:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website</li> <li>Media coverage</li> <li>Signage</li> <li>FOIs</li> </ul>

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS TO DEVELOP FURTHER				
Type	Audience	Action	Responsible	Target
• Upgraded website	All audiences	Upgrade website via Housing Online	ICTM/Corporate Team	Oct 25
• Tenant portal	Current and future tenants, shared and factored owners	Include a tenant/resident portal on the new website to enable tenant/resident access to accounts	ICTM	Oct 25
• Consider other social media platforms	Current and future tenants, shared and factored owners	Explore demand & suitable platforms	Staff working group	Dec 25
• Enhance PR/media coverage	All audiences	Consider a small retainer fee with a suitable agency for regular PR/media/social media content and coverage	ET/SLT	Dec 25
• Digital exclusion	Current and future tenants, shared and factored owners	Survey tenants/residents to identify the current position & any interest	ICTM/Housing Team/Factoring Officer	Dec 25
• Staff intranet or portal	Employees	Survey all staff on interest/feedback	ICTM	Jun 25