

Communication Strategy

Introduction

This Communication Strategy sets out how Ore Valley Housing Association (OVHA) will share information, engage with stakeholders, and build trust across our community. It aligns organisational goals, ensures accessibility, and supports service delivery, tenant satisfaction, and community wellbeing.

The Communication Strategy, supported by the Tenant Participation Strategy, assists OVHA to become a highly effective organisation by ensuring that information is presented in a manner that is appropriate, clear and concise.

Our Business Plan sets out our strategic objectives for the Association, incorporating OVHA's values that shape our vision: 'For everyone to have the opportunity to lead healthy, fulfilling lives'.

This Communications Strategy assists OVHA in creating a community and customer-focused approach to how we connect with our audiences, share information, and signpost the things that matter to those who matter to us.

Purpose

The purpose of this Strategy is to establish a consistent framework for how Ore Valley Housing Association communicates with tenants, customers, staff, Board members, partners and other stakeholders. It aims to ensure communications are timely, accessible, inclusive and effective, supporting excellent customer service, regulatory compliance and organisational objectives.

Scope

This Strategy applies to all employees, Board members, volunteers, contractors and anyone communicating on behalf of Ore Valley Housing Association and the wider Ore Valley Group.

Aims

We recognise the importance of maintaining strong connections with our customers and the wider communities we serve, while also appreciating the need to tailor our communications to meet the diverse and specific needs of our customers.

Our values underpin the way we behave and work. In pursuing our vision, the following values are at the heart of everything we do:

- We will be a responsible and caring landlord and employer
- We will be open and accountable for everything we do
- We will be proactive and innovative in dealing with opportunities and problems
- We will be honest, approachable and reliable
- We will be respectful and give fair treatment to everyone
- We will listen to and learn from our customers and other networks

Communication Principles

Effective communication is essential as it helps build relationships, improve collaboration, prevent misunderstandings, and achieve shared goals.

Our communications will be:

- Timely
- Clear and concise
- Accurate and evidence-based
- Accessible and inclusive
- Respectful and empathetic
- Consistent
- Customer-focused
- Open and transparent
- Encourage two-way communication and actively seek feedback

Communication Objectives

- Improve tenant awareness of services.
- Increase digital engagement.
- Promote tenant participation.
- Ensure staff are informed and engaged.
- Protect the Association's reputation.
- Meet all regulatory communication requirements

Commitments and Standards

- Be accessible: Make communications easy to access for everyone, including individuals with disabilities and those who may not have access to or use digital services.
- Be accurate: Provide correct information and avoid damaging the Association's reputation.
- Be clear: Use simple and easy to understand language.
- Be consistent: Keep the same tone and style in all communications.
- Be professional: Maintain high standards in all communications, reflecting the organisation's values.
- Be responsive: Answer questions and address concerns in line with our customer service standards.

Protecting our Reputation

Everyone who represents OVHA has a responsibility to communicate professionally, respectfully and consistently. We will ensure our communications reflect our values and protect the reputation of the Association.

Who we Communicate With

We communicate with two groups:

• External Communications

This includes but is not limited to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) funders, community partners and local government, current and prospective factored owners, current and prospective residents and tenants, local communities, media and professionals within the housing sector.

• Internal Communications

Effective internal communication is essential to deliver high-quality services, supporting employee engagement and ensuring everyone understands the Association's priorities, values and objectives.

OVHA is committed to fostering an open, inclusive and respectful culture where information is shared in a timely manner and staff feel informed, involved and able to contribute to organisational success.

Managers are responsible for ensuring important organisational messages are communicated consistently to their teams and that staff have opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification.

We will achieve this by:

- Providing regular updates on organisational priorities, performance and service developments.
- Ensuring important information is communicated consistently and at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
- Encouraging two-way communication where staff can ask questions, share ideas and provide feedback.
- Supporting managers to communicate effectively with their teams.
- Promoting collaboration across departments and companies within the Ore Valley Group.
- Recognising and celebrating staff achievements and good practice.
- Consulting staff on significant organisational changes wherever appropriate.
- Ensuring communication methods are accessible and suitable for all employees.

We will communicate internally using a range of methods including:

- Team meetings
- One-to-one meetings and supervision
- Staff briefings
- Staff newsletters
- Email
- Intranet
- Microsoft Teams
- Training sessions
- Corporate events
- Staff surveys
- Employee forums and working groups

OVHA values the views of employees and will provide opportunities for staff to influence how the organisation develops through:

- Staff surveys
- Team meetings
- Focus groups
- Suggestion schemes
- Consultation exercises
- Regular discussions with managers

Feedback received will be considered and, where appropriate, acted upon, with outcomes communicated to staff.

Tenant Participation

Our Tenant Participation Strategy is built on the belief that tenants should have meaningful opportunities to influence the decisions that affect their homes, communities and the services they receive. Through effective communication, we will ensure tenants are **included, informed, involved and empowered**, enabling strong partnerships between tenants and staff. By inspiring involvement, listening to feedback, promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, and demonstrating accountability, we aim to strengthen relationships and ensure Ore Valley Housing Association continues to make a positive difference in our communities.

Accessibility

Communications will, wherever reasonably practicable, be available in alternative languages, large print, Braille, audio and Easy Read formats on request.

How we Communicate

We use a variety of communication methods to ensure a style and format that promotes accessibility for all and aims to identify and agree with the preferred method of communication with our individual audiences in advance depending on the communication type.

Communication

There are many ways in which we can communicate with our tenants either individually or in groups; online, in writing or face-to-face and through publications such as newsletters. The following is a list of our key communication methods:

My Home - All our housing services are accessible via www.orevalleyha.org.uk and My Home. Tenants can manage their tenancies, read our policies or information leaflets, obtain money & home energy advice and make complaints online.

OVHA website - This and My Home are designed to be highly accessible, easily navigated by tenants using screen readers or tabbed browsing and are Readspeak enabled. Every page of our website includes the option to translate the page into many languages.

The Live Help service is the equivalent of a telephone call for people who cannot, or prefer not to, use the telephone. The service is open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm and provides tenants and other customers with instant access to an online adviser who can provide them with a range of information and advice.

E-newsletters, email, intranet, online booking tools, online chat, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, 'X') surveys, text messaging, video conferencing, website, tenant portal.

Wherever possible, all communications will be written in Plain English and avoid unnecessary technical or legal terminology.

Printed/Posted/Email

Rent consultation, annual report, annual performance report, tenant performance reports and ebulletins, Scottish Housing Network (SHN) quarterly and annual performance reports, tenant welcome packs, tenants' handbook, tenant newsletters and Association members' bulletins.

In-Person

Board and subcommittee meetings, AGM (annually), tenant and community events, estate inspections and estate walkabouts.

Strengthening Digital Communication

We are committed to delivering clear, accessible, and inclusive communications across all channels. This includes complying with accessibility standards, maintaining a regular website review programme, promoting digital inclusion, and ensuring the responsible use of social media. Where Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used to support the drafting of communications, all content will be reviewed, fact-checked and approved by an appropriate member of staff prior to publication. AI will not replace professional judgement or decision making.

Brand Identity

All corporate communications will follow the Association's branding guidance to ensure consistency in logos, colours, fonts, tone of voice and corporate identity.

Submission Dates

Scottish Housing Regulator	
ARC	31 st May
Annual Stock Return	31 st May
Annual Assurance Statements	31 st October
Annual Accounts	30 th September
FYFP	31 st May
Loan Portfolio	30 th June
SHN	
Quarterly Performance	Last day at end of each quarter
ARC review	May
Annual Data Performance	June
Publications	
Annual Report (Members)	August (for AGM mid Sept)
Performance Report (Tenants)	31 st October 2026
Newsletters	July, Nov, Mar
Rent Consultation Letter	End Jan/Beg. Feb
Tenant Surveys and Events	
Short Life Focus Groups	Minimum requirement of 1 per year
Digital Pulse Surveys	Minimum requirement of 2 per year for each management area
Neighbourhood Walkabouts	Minimum requirement of 1 per year for each management area (Spring)
Formal Consultation Events	Minimum requirement of 1 per year
Tenant Satisfaction Survey	Minimum requirement of 1 every 3 years
Big Sit Doon/Conversation Café Events	Minimum requirement of 2 per year (Summer and Winter)

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We will not discriminate in the operation of this policy on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Complaints

Although we will always strive to deliver excellent service, we acknowledge that we will sometimes make mistakes and will not always get things right first time.

We will make it easy for customers to provide us with feedback or make a complaint, formally or informally, by publicising our Comments and Complaints Policy and making it readily available to anyone who wants to use it.

We will investigate complaints and resolve them as closely as possible to the point of frontline service delivery. We will ensure that the person making the complaint is kept fully informed throughout the complaint handling process and if a complaint is about more than one service area, we will ensure that we respond to each one.

If a customer is unable or reluctant to make a complaint, we will accept complaints brought by third parties as long as the customer has given their personal consent.

When we make mistakes we will apologise, put things right as quickly as possible and use the experience to improve our service in the future.

Stakeholder Engagement

We will regularly engage with regulators, funders, local authorities, community organisations, contractors, elected members and partner agencies to build effective relationships and improve services

Risk Management

Effective risk management and contingency planning are crucial to ensure that OVHA can respond promptly and effectively to any communication challenges or crises. Some key aspects to consider are:

Potential Risks

- **Data Breaches:** Unauthorised access to sensitive information can compromise tenant privacy and trust.
- **Failure to follow internal procedures:** This could present issues such as conflicting instructions or decisions, delays in critical responses, loss of accountability and increase the potential for errors or duplication of work.
- **Loss of control of communications platforms:** This can lead to data leakage, exposure of sensitive information, non-compliance and potential reputational damage
- **Miscommunication During Emergencies:** Inaccurate or delayed information during emergencies can lead to confusion and mistrust among stakeholders.
- **Negative Feedback on social media:** Negative comments or reviews on social media can damage the Association's reputation and stakeholder relationships.
- **Regulatory Non-Compliance:** Failure to comply with communication related regulations can result in legal and financial penalties.
- **Technical Failures:** Issues with digital communication platforms can disrupt the flow of information and hinder engagement.

Mitigation Strategies

- **Clear Communication Protocols:** Establish clear protocols for communication during emergencies, including predefined messages and designated spokespersons.
- **Internal Policies and procedures:** These include but are not limited to, meeting and notetaking protocols, social media policy, acceptable use policy and business continuity plan.
- **Social Media Monitoring:** Develop guidelines for addressing negative comments professionally and constructively.
- **Data Security Measures:** Enhance data security measures to protect sensitive information, including regular audits, encryption, and access controls.
- **Technical Support and Redundancy:** Ensure technical support is available to address issues promptly.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Regularly review and update communication practices to ensure compliance with relevant regulations.

Crisis Communications

The organisation will ensure our processes are coordinated towards an effective response to incidents, emergencies and situations that may impact services, tenants, reputation or business continuity. These will include:

- Identification of a designated spokesperson, normally the Chief Executive Officer, Chair, Vice Chair, or designated person.
- Media handling arrangements, including processes for responding to enquiries, issuing statements, managing interviews, and maintaining consistent messaging across all channels.
- A clear approval process for crisis communications to ensure information is accurate, timely, and authorised before publication.
- Business continuity communications to support the ongoing delivery of services and provide updates to tenants, staff, partners, and other stakeholders during service disruption.
- Severe weather and emergency tenant communications, ensuring affected tenants receive timely, accessible, and practical information regarding service impacts, safety advice, and available support.

Measuring Success

Success will be monitored through:

- Tenant Satisfaction Survey
- Complaints analysis
- Website usage
- Social media engagement
- Newsletter open rates
- Participation numbers
- Staff survey results
- Regulatory feedback

Annual Communications Planning

An annual Communications Action Plan will be prepared to support delivery of this Strategy and reviewed by the Management Team.

Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Chair and Board	Approves the Strategy and monitors its effectiveness and acts as organisational spokesperson where required, particularly in respect of promotional communications.
Chief Executive	Leads organisational communications and acts as principal spokesperson
Management Team	Ensures consistent implementation across services
Corporate Support Manager	Coordinates communications, branding and publications
Managers	Communicate effectively with staff and support engagement
All Employees	Communicate professionally, protect confidential information and uphold OVHA values

Related Documents

- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Customer Service Charter
- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Social Media Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Openness and Confidentiality Policy
- Unacceptable Behaviour Policy

Strategy Review

The Corporate Support Manager will ensure that this Strategy is reviewed every three years, and any amendments required will be submitted to the Management Team, Sub-Policy Committee before being submitted to the Board for approval.

Created by	M Elder
Review Date	July 2026
Next Review Date	July 2029
Date Approved – Policy Sub Committee	
Date Approved - Board	