



Cloch Housing Association

Communications Strategy August 2025-28

Policy Name	Communications Strategy
Policy Category	Corporate & Governance
Policy Number	121
Approved by	Board
Responsibility of	IT
Date Adopted	21/08/25
Last Review	n/a
This Review	21/08/25
Next Review	August 2028
Equalities Impact Assessment Required	Yes
Link to other policies	n/a
Consultation	Yes – Customer Advisory Panel (CAP)
Need for Procedure	No

Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
2.1	Aims of the Association's Communication Strategy	3
2.2	Commitments and Standards	4
2.3	Strategic Alignment with Organisational Goals	4
2.3.1	Enhancing accessibility and engagement	4
2.3.2	Ensuring professionalism and responsiveness	4
2.3.3	Promoting a positive attitude and continuous improvement	4
2.3.4	Strengthening internal communications	4
2.3.5	Supporting community health and wellbeing	4
3.	WHO WE COMMUNICATE WITH	5
4.	WAYS WE COMMUNICATE	5
5.	DELIVERABLES	6
5.1	Year 1: 2025 – 2026	6
5.2	Year 2: 2026 – 2027	6
5.3	Year 3: 2027 – 2028	7
6.	METRICS AND REVIEW	8
6.1	Factored Owners	8
6.2	Internal Communications	8
6.3	Tenant Engagement	8
6.4	Review Process	9
7.	RISK MANAGEMENT AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING	10
7.1	Potential Risks	10
7.2	Mitigation Strategies	11
7.3	Contingency Planning	12
7.4	Continuous Monitoring and Review	12

1. INTRODUCTION

Cloch Housing Association, established in 1968, stands as one of the oldest housing associations in Scotland. Despite its age, Cloch has proven itself to be a leader in the social housing sector, continually developing excellent customer service and outcomes for not only its tenants but also the wider community.

Our business plan sets out our strategic objectives for the Association, incorporating Cloch's values that shape our vision: 'Homes and services which exceed customer expectations delivered by a strong and resilient organisation'.

This Communications Strategy continues Cloch on the journey of 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.

Our values are:

- **Be Positive** in attitude
- **Be Better** and always look to improve everything you do
- **Be Kind** to yourself, to others and in your approach to our services
- **Be Responsible** for yourself, your customers and your community

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

As our Association has grown over the decades, we understand the importance of staying connected with our customers and the wider communities we serve. We recognise the value of tailoring our communication to meet the specific needs of our customers.

2.1 Aims of the Association's Communication Strategy

1. **Enhance Accessibility:** Ensure all services are easily accessible to residents, including those with disabilities, where English is not their first language and those without digital access.
2. **Enhance Customer Experience and Services:** Improve customer experience by providing high-quality, timely communications that support stakeholders in their daily lives and tenancy.
3. **Ensure Professionalism and Responsiveness:** Maintain high standards in all communications and be responsive to questions and concerns.
4. **Foster Inclusivity and Diversity:** Ensure that all communications reflect the diverse nature of our community and promote inclusivity.
5. **Highlight Achievement and Success Stories:** Celebrate and communicate the successes and positive impacts of the Association's work.
6. **Improve Engagement:** Increase tenant participation through community events and enhance feedback mechanisms.
7. **Promote Positive Attitude and Continuous Improvement:** Encourage a positive attitude and continuous improvement in all communications.
8. **Promote Transparency and Trust:** Build trust with stakeholders through transparent and honest communication.
9. **Support Community Health and Wellbeing:** Focus on initiatives that promote community health and wellbeing.
10. **Strengthen Internal Communications:** Use internal communication tools to keep staff informed and engaged, promoting transparency and support within the organisation.

These efforts aim to create a community and customer-focused approach to how Cloch Housing Association connects with its audiences, shares information, and shares the information that matters most to our customers and communities.

2.2 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 spreading false details.
- **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

2.3 Strategic Alignment with Organisational Goals

Our Communications Strategy covers both external and internal communications. The goals set in this document are closely linked to those noted in our Business Plan, including but not limited to:

2.3.1 Enhancing accessibility and engagement

- **Strategic Priority 10:** Enhance tenant and community involvement.
- **Strategic Priority 12:** Strengthen our digital services to support participation.
- **Strategic Priority 8:** Promote our “wider reach” within the community

2.3.2 Ensuring professionalism and responsiveness

- **Strategic Priority 17:** Embed a “can do” approach
- **Strategic Priority 18:** Continue to adopt modern working practices
- **Strategic Priority 21:** Demonstrate effective governance and financial control

2.3.3 Promoting a positive attitude and continuous improvement

- **Strategic Priority 17:** Embed a “can do” approach
- **Strategic Priority 19:** Embrace change and encourage diversity
- **Strategic Priority 14:** Further develop our IT systems and software

2.3.4 Strengthening internal communications

- **Strategic Priority 20:** Support our people
- **Strategic Priority 22:** Maintain robust risk management and continuity practices
- **Strategic Priority 18:** Continue to adopt modern working practices

2.3.5 Supporting community health and wellbeing

- **Strategic Priority 6:** Enhance and expand our tenancy support and provision
- **Strategic Priority 8:** Promote our “wider reach” within the community

- **Strategic Priority 25:** Comply with tenant and resident safety regulations

3. WHO WE COMMUNICATE WITH

Our audiences are broken down into two groups:

Type	Examples
External	This includes but is not limited to 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	This includes but is not limited to agency services/staff, Board, contractors, customer advisory panels, or focus groups, and staff members and volunteers.

4. WAYS WE COMMUNICATE

The Association has a wide range of methods and tools which we use to communicate with customers. This includes but is not limited to:

Type	Examples
Digital	E-newsletters, email, infographics, intranet ⁽¹⁾ , animations, videos, interactive PDFs, online booking tools, online chat, push notifications, SMS campaigns, social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter/X, YouTube), surveys, text messaging, video conferencing, webinars or live Q&A sessions, website.
In-Person	Board and subcommittee meetings, community events, Customer Advisory Panel, drop-in surgeries, estate inspections, pop-up info stalls, walkabouts.
Printed/Posted	Annual report, branded calendars or magnets, clothing (e.g. branded materials), flyers and posters, letters, noticeboards, postcards or leaflets, tenant welcome packs, tenants' handbook.
Third Party	Local radio or community TV, media management, networks, paid advertising, partnership bulletins, public relations, tenant champions or ambassadors.

(1) The communication specified is internal to Cloch Housing Association.

5. DELIVERABLES

5.1 Year 1: 2025 – 2026

Description	Group/Officer
Create a Communications Plan <i>(includes crisis communications and communications plan template)</i>	IT and Communications Officer
Relaunch staff intranet.	Digital Comms Team
Review existing content management plan.	Digital Comms Team
Review the Association's Android and iOS application.	IT and Communications
Relaunch Customer Portal alongside new MIS.	Digital Comms

5.2 Year 2: 2026 – 2027

Description	Group/Officer
Introduce and implement an AI-powered chatbot within our customer portal.	IT and Communications
Review internal staff communications systems to consolidate.	IT and Communications
Provide awareness training around external and internal communications.	TBC

5.3 Year 3: 2027 – 2028

Description	Group/Officer
Review and consolidate internal voice communication platforms	IT and Communications
Improve the Associations' Website (Consistency, discoverability, ease of access, content quality and search).	Digital Comms
Develop a customer journey communications journey using CX Feedback e.g. Communications for someone who has become a Cloch tenant	Digital Comms
Revise a Communications Policy that incorporates the Associations' social media Policy. (see when next review and tie in then).	IT and Communications Officer
Develop online induction platform.	Digital Comms
Create a knowledge hub (help) for customers	
Develop suite of guides for customers	TBC
Create online version of Tenants Handbook (non-PDF).	TBC

6. METRICS AND REVIEW

To ensure the effectiveness of our Communications Strategy and its alignment with the Business Plan, we will track and review various metrics. These metrics will help us measure engagement, satisfaction, and the overall impact of our communication efforts.

6.1 Factored Owners

- **Customer Activity:** Monitor key actions e.g. logins, opening of documents etc. on the online portal by factored owners.
- **Email Open Rates:** Monitor the open rates of emails sent to factored owners.
- **Feedback Collection:** Gather qualitative feedback through focus groups and one-on-one interviews.
- **Survey Satisfaction Scores:** Conduct regular surveys to measure satisfaction levels among factored owners.

6.2 Internal Communications

- **Internal Surveys:** Conduct periodic survey to ensure that staff communications are fit for their intended purposes.
- **SharePoint Analytics:** Analyse usage data from SharePoint to track engagement and document access.
- **Staff Feedback:** Collect feedback through regular staff surveys and suggestion boxes.

6.3 Tenant Engagement

- **Customer Logins:** Monitor the number of logins to the online portal by tenants.
- **Email Open Rates:** Measure the open rates of emails sent to tenants.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Collect feedback through suggestion boxes, online forms, and direct interactions.
- **Social Media Engagement:** Monitor likes, shares, comments, and overall engagement on social media platforms.
- **Survey Satisfaction Scores:** Conduct regular surveys to measure tenant satisfaction levels.

6.4 Review Process

- **Biannual Review:** Conduct a biannual review of the Communications Strategy to assess its effectiveness and alignment with the Business Plan. This review will include analysing the metrics mentioned above and gathering feedback from stakeholders.
- **Quarterly Updates:** Provide quarterly updates to the Board and staff on the progress of the Communications Strategy, highlighting key achievements and areas for improvement.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Use the insights gained from the metrics and reviews to continuously improve the Communications Strategy, ensuring it remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of the Association and its stakeholders.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

Effective risk management and contingency planning are crucial to ensure that Cloch Housing Association can respond promptly and effectively to any communication challenges or crises. Here are some key aspects to consider:

7.1 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.

7.2 Mitigation Strategies

- **Clear Communication Protocols:** Establish clear protocols for communication during emergencies, including predefined messages and designated spokespersons.
- **Contracted support:** We have a data specialist who can advise and give guidance.
- **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:** Implement a social media monitoring system to quickly identify and respond to negative feedback. 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. Implement redundancy measures to minimize the impact of technical failures.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Regularly review and update communication practices to ensure compliance with relevant regulations. Provide training to staff on regulatory requirements.

7.3 Contingency Planning

A Crisis Communication Plan should be developed. This comprehensive crisis communication plan will outline the steps to be taken in the event of a crisis. This plan should be referenced in the Associations overarching Business Continuity Plan. The plan should include the below:

- **Crisis Team:** Identify key members of the crisis communication team and their roles.
- **Communication Channels:** Determine the channels to be used for internal and external communication during a crisis.
- **Message Templates:** Prepare templates for common crisis scenarios to ensure timely and consistent messaging.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Outline the process for communicating with different stakeholder groups, including tenants, staff, media, and community partners.
- **Regular Drills and Training:** Conduct regular crisis communication drills and training sessions to ensure that staff are prepared to respond effectively.
- **Feedback and Improvement:** After a crisis, gather feedback from stakeholders and conduct a review to identify areas for improvement in the crisis communication plan.

7.4 Continuous Monitoring and Review

- **Risk Register:** Maintain a risk register to track potential communication risks and mitigation measures. Regularly update the register to reflect new risks and changes in the communication environment. External and internal communications should also be captured within the Associations strategic risk register.
- **Performance Metrics:** Use performance metrics to monitor the effectiveness of risk management and contingency planning efforts. Metrics can include response times, stakeholder satisfaction, and the number of incidents successfully managed.
- **Regular Reviews:** Conduct regular reviews of risk management and contingency planning processes to ensure they remain effective and relevant. Adjust as needed based on feedback and changing circumstances.