



Spire View Housing Association Communications Strategy

Charter Standard - Standard 2

The Customer/Landlord Relationship

2. Communication – Social Landlords manage their business so that: tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get information they need about their landlord how and why it makes decision and service it provides

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Communications Strategy

1. Aim

This Communications Strategy outlines Spire View Housing Association's aims and objectives for communicating with our diverse audience.

This document will outline the approach we plan to take to ensure our tenants and customers, staff, stakeholders and the members of the public understand our vision, values and objectives and what we are doing to achieve them so that we continue to build on our excellent reputation.

It aims to ensure we have different ways to share business critical and operational information with our audience, as well as providing the means for them to share their views and other information with us, as communicating works both ways.

2. Scope

The scope of the strategy includes the following;

- Key communications aims and objectives
- Our audience
- Key Messages
- Key Principles of our Communications
- Methods of Communication
- Tools of Communication – Internal and External
- Dealing with the Media and the press

3. Principles of the Policy

To establish the process for quality communication for the organisation.

In undertaking its works Spire View Housing Association will:

Ensure that our values reflect our commitment to provide locally based high quality, affordable housing and services which will contribute to the well-being of the community we serve.

- **Listen** - Listen, involve and deliver our tenants and residents needs and aspirations
- **Transparent** - be open and transparent
- **Non- discriminatory** –we will not tolerate discrimination
- **Innovative** - provide services that are creative and innovative

4. Key Communications aims and objectives

- To make sure that tenants and other customers are made aware of the services we provide. Written text made publicly available should be accessible and that means reports should be written in plain language, no jargon or acronyms, no legalese.
- Where required we will provide translated information in various languages and provide interpreters to meet the needs of people for whom English is not a first language.
- We will continually boost and promote tenant involvement through regular communication and feedback, using this constructively to improve our services.
- To increase Spire View Housing's profile as a dependable, top performing organisation, responsible for managing our homes to the highest standard.
- To positively engage with, support and encourage employees to communicate effectively internally and externally with tenants ensuring high standards of customer care.
- To build on existing positive and effective relationships with local, regional, and national media
- To build on existing relationships with the people and partners we work with and work collaboratively for the improvement of community.

5. Our audience

One of the most important aspects of communicating well is knowing who you are communicating with. Only when we understand our audiences better can we target messages and be confident they will reach those intended.

We know there are five main audience groups we want to reach, and our aim is to understand them better so we can contribute to the Strategic Business Plan objective to provide excellent customer services.

- Spire View Housing Association tenants and residents.
- Spire View Association Management Committee and Employees
- Stakeholders and partners
- Local Councillors and MP & MSP's
- Local schools, colleges, community groups, voluntary agencies, Local businesses

6. Key Messages

Spire View Housing Association;

- Will consult with, listen to, and appropriately act upon the comments of our tenants and other customers – always striving to use our customer feedback to deliver the best services and improvements to their homes and neighbourhoods.
- Supports and values employees and will encourage and take on board their opinions and ideas for service improvement.
- Is a pro-active organisation – open to a range of audiences
- Forms and maintains professional working relationships with the local community, media, partnership agencies, and Glasgow City Council, and values the opportunity to build and nurture these relationships.

7. Key Principles of our communications

- Consistently encouraging tenants to shape the agenda for our communications and be involved from the outset - what they say matters.
- Producing and delivering communications in formats and style that are clear, easy to read and understandable, accessible to diverse audiences, encouraging and useful to audiences. Producing timely and relevant information for tenants and other customers, staying true to our values and objectives of being 'tenant focused', providing information that is 'value for money', 'Embracing equality and diverse communities' and delivering 'top class customer services' through our communications.

8. Methods communication

- Quarterly Tenants Newsletter
- Tenants' Handbook and service standards
- Spire View Housing Association website www.spireview.org.uk
- Individual branded literature (leaflets)
- Letters and emails
- Conferences, seminar and events
- 'You said', 'We did' feedback in newsletter
- Information available in various formats (languages/large print etc.)
- Promotional and marketing products and displays at offices/events.
- External signage
- Text messaging
- Facebook – other social media as agreed.
- Annual report
- Landlord Report
- Tenant Surveys
- A survey of tenants' satisfaction with the service will be undertaken (every 3 years) as well as a number of more targeted and service specific surveys. The number of surveys sent out to tenants each year will be coordinated and controlled in order to maximise the greatest return and avoid 'survey fatigue'.

9. Tools of Communication Internal and External

Internal Communications

It is essential to ensure smooth and efficient running of our business. Information needs to flow between the Director, the Management Committee and Staff team.

It is the Directors and managers responsibility to ensure a close, open and effective working relationship exists between the Management Committee members and staff team. This will ensure that time is spent productively and that energies are channelled into constructive and mutually agreed business matters.

Chairperson/Director Liaison

- The Director has regular formal contact with the Chair.

Committee Business Planning Event

- The Annual Business Planning event is an important event for the Association. It is used to consider the key strategic issues and to set the future direction of the Association.

Committee Meetings

- These are held every month and serve as the main body for making corporate decisions for the benefit of our community.

Committee Training and Development.

- The context within which housing Associations operate is constantly changing. A Committee Training Plan is developed and will be reviewed annually. This will ensure that the Committee are kept updated with any regulatory or technical requirements.

10. Staff Communication

Spire View Housing Association will support internal communications systems consistent with a culture, that encourages the interest, pride, respect, and ownership. To maintain this culture employee involvement is necessary. For staff two-way and team communication needs to be relevant, continuous and effective. Senior staff should make themselves available to listen and to actively encourage their staff to contribute. SVHA will promote and build on effective leadership throughout the organisation. The following is a range of communication required;

- Employee consultation that will help us to continually reassess the aspiration, attitudes, concerns and support needs of our customers.
- The Website will generate awareness and understanding about the organisation and staff will be encouraged to contribute to news issues and to become readers of the site.

- Collective ownership of the wider Performance Management Framework is important. In terms of expectations of each service area staff need to be clear and they need to understand how their work is contributing to delivering Spire View Housing Association objectives
- There should be a strong awareness of the roles and responsibilities of individuals within the Association with clear lines and protocols of communication.
- Staff will continue to be invited to become directly involved in helping to shape and deliver effective communications across the Association.
- Staff will use communications to make themselves aware of training and development opportunities and to take advantage of them.

11. Tenant Communication

- The Association understands the importance of listening and understanding its customer's requirements.
- Central to the Association's work is its Tenant Participation Strategy, and approach in delivery of customer services.
- The Association will endeavour to ensure profile data of tenants is kept up to date including preferred methods for communication including email and mobile phone contacts.

When we communicate with our Tenants, we must ensure the following:

- Letters and verbal information are clear, precise and understandable and communicated in understandable formats
- All communications must be meaningful and in a form that is user friendly.
- We use plain language to explain fully to the tenant e.g. legal language used in letters
- Interpreters and translators will be used where required.
- We will provide opportunities and encourage feedback so as to build views and preferences into future communications and the development of services and policies.

Consultation Events

- A key vehicle to give and receive feedback from our tenants is at consultation events.

Newsletters

- Will be produced quarterly, with positive news stories, information about Spire View Housing Association, details of local news, articles of interest to be

overseen with tenants' involvement in considering and approving content of a range of publications.

12. External Communications

- Ensuring that all written communications are assessed and approved by the appropriate Manager or Director to verify they are 'Tenant friendly'.
- To promote Community involvement and activities to tenants using a wide range of methods including social media, Facebook, and Twitter.
- Ensure the website is effective in navigation, usability and Accessibility, and create a high impact site that is attractive to the public. Equally we must continually review the quality and relevance other content and measure customer satisfaction.
- The Tenant's Handbook is on the Website providing useful information on; Tenant Issues, access to services and service standards. It will be kept under review and sections can be added and/or updated in consultation with tenants.

13. Dealing with the Media and the Press

- All formal press releases appertaining to the Association must be approved by the Director.
- Use of photographs must be with the consent of individuals in the photograph.
- Dealing with the media under these circumstances should be kept simple:
 - Inform the Director
 - A press release will be prepared.
 - Do not fabricate or give false information.
 - Only the Director or designated Board members should talk to the press.

14. General Data Protection Regulations

Spire View Housing Association Ltd will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Privacy Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Spire View's employee privacy notice.