YMCA
NORTH TYNESIDE

Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) Policy

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1. Purpose

Because of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, YMCA North Tyneside promises to be open, responsible, and to work closely with you, our residents. The Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) is a standard that gives you the right to see information about how we manage your homes and services.

This policy explains how we follow the STAIRs rules set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). It shows what information we automatically publish online and how you can ask us for more information.

2. Scope

This policy covers information kept by YMCA North Tyneside, or our partners (like contractors and support workers), about how we manage social housing.

It relates to all YMCA North Tyneside residents with a YMCA tenancy agreement.

2.1 Who Can Ask for Information?

- You as a current tenant of social housing (including supported accommodation).
- People acting for you with your clear, written permission (like support workers, family members, or Members of Parliament).

2.2 Who Cannot Ask for Information?

- Private renters
- The general public or journalists (unless they have written permission to act for an eligible resident).

3. Definitions

- **STAIRs (Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements):** The rules that give social housing tenants the right to ask for information about how their homes are managed
- **RSH (Regulator of Social Housing):** The government body that sets the rules and checks how social housing providers are performing.
- **Publication Scheme:** The list of documents and information that we automatically put on our website for anyone to read.
- **Reactive Request:** When you ask us for specific information that is not already on our website.
- **Exemption:** A legal reason why we cannot share a certain piece of information (for example, to protect someone's privacy or keep a building secure).
- **Redaction:** Blacking out or removing private or sensitive details from a document before we share it with you.
- **SAR (Subject Access Request):** A different type of request under data protection laws where you ask for personal information we hold specifically about you

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Data Protection Officer:** Logs and handles your requests; gathering information from different teams, checking if any details need to be hidden (redacted), and making sure the final reply is sent on time.
- **All Staff:** Must help find requested information quickly and provide it to the Data Protection Officer when asked.
- **Senior Managers:** Responsible for carrying out internal reviews if you complain about how your request was handled.
- **Contractors and Partners:** Outside companies that work for us must share any housing information they hold with us within 7 to 14 days when requested, so we can answer a resident on time.

5. Main Body of Policy

5.1 What We Publish Online (Publication Scheme)

To be open with you, YMCA North Tyneside regularly publishes important information about how we manage housing on our website. This is easy to find, and you can ask for it in other formats if needed.

Information Category	Details Published on Website
How we make decisions	Details about our Board, staff, housing plans, meeting minutes (with private details removed), and how residents can get involved.
Spending	Yearly financial accounts, how we get value for money, and our buying strategies.
Managing your home	How we manage our buildings, repairs policies, Decent Homes standards, and environmental plans.
Performance	Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), yearly performance reports, complaint numbers, and reports from the housing regulator.
Services for you	Policies on anti-social behaviour (ASB), keeping people safe, managing tenancies, and resident support (like money advice).
Lists and registers	Safety checks for fire, gas, electrics (EICR), asbestos, and water (Legionella). Also, reports on damp and mould and how fast we fix them.
Social housing management	Policies on lettings and allocations, how rent and service charges are set, rent collection rules, example tenancy agreements, and rules for moving or swapping homes

5.2 Asking for Information (Reactive Requests)

If you are an eligible resident, you can ask for specific information about how your housing is managed, if it isn't already on our website.

5.2.1 How to Ask

You can write to us by email, through our resident portal, or by letter. You can also speak to our Customer Service team, who will write down your request and confirm it with you. You do not have to say the word

"STAIRs" to make a request.

5.2.2 How We Handle It

We log all requests in our system. A specific staff member will check the request, gather the data, and make sure we are allowed to share it before giving it to you.

5.3 How Long It Takes (Response Timeframes)

We must reply to STAIRs requests quickly and within strict time limits:

- **Standard Reply:** Within 30 days of getting a clear request.
- **Checking What You Mean:** If your request is unclear, we will contact you within 5 working days to ask what you mean. The 30-day limit pauses until you reply.
- **Extra Time:** If the request is very complicated (like needing to get lots of old files or speaking to partners), we might need more time. We will tell you why before the first 30 days end.

5.4 When We Cannot Share Information (Exemptions and Refusals)

We want to be open, but we cannot share everything. We only have to share information that already exists. We do not have to create new reports or documents just to answer your request. If part of a document is private, we will black it out (redact it) and give you the rest. If the whole document is private, or if a rule means we must refuse the request, we will say no. We will always write to you to explain why.

Reason for Refusal / Hiding Details	Description
Personal Data (UK GDPR)	Information about other people (like neighbours or staff) will be hidden to protect their privacy. Note: If you want your own data, this is handled differently as a Subject Access Request (SAR).
Business Interests	Information that could hurt the business of YMCA North Tyneside or our partners, like exact pricing or contract details.
Health, Safety & Security	Information that could put someone's health or safety at risk, or make a building unsafe.
Legal & Police Work	Confidential legal advice or information that might stop police from catching

Reason for Refusal / Hiding Details	Description
	criminals.
Unreasonable or Abusive Requests	Requests meant to cause trouble or take up too much time. This includes abusive requests that break bullying laws, and repeated requests for the exact same information.
Taking Too Much Time (18-Hour Limit)	If it will take our staff more than 18 hours to collect the information, we can refuse the request (unlike Subject Access Requests).
Unverified Identity	If we cannot prove who you are, we will refuse the request to keep data safe.

5.5 Complaints and Appeals

If you are unhappy with how we handled your request—for example, if we were late, said no, or hid too much information—you can challenge it.

1. **Internal Review:** You can ask for a review within 40 working days of our reply. A senior manager who was not involved before will check it. We will finish this review within 20 working days.
2. **Housing Ombudsman:** If you are still unhappy after our review, you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman Service. They oversee the STAIRs rules and can force us to make changes.

5.6 Rules for Our Partners (Contractors)

Sometimes our partners or contractors hold information about your housing. Their contracts state they must help with STAIRs requests. They usually have to give us the information within 7 to 14 days so we can meet our 30-day deadline.

6. Related Policies

- Data Protection Policy
- Information Sharing and Confidentiality Policy
- Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Resident Engagement Policy

7. Relevant UK Legislation

- Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Housing Ombudsman Scheme Rules
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

8. Monitoring and Review

YMCA North Tyneside is committed to ensuring our policies and procedures remain relevant, compliant and effective.

This policy will be reviewed regularly in line with significant changes in legislation, regulations, risks or operations occurring or if monitoring reveals a need.

We are dedicated to ensuring our policies work for you. The Data Protection Officer will oversee this process, and any necessary updates will be clearly documented, communicated and promptly implemented.

9. Appendix

Appendix A: Code of Conduct: STAIRs Code of Conduct

Revisions

This section details all significant changes and updates made to this policy document.

Revision Number	Date of Revision	Description of Change
1		New Policy