

Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRS) policy – version 1

Date communicated for use:

29th September 2026

Date of next review:

September 2029

About this policy and who it is for

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Dimensions complies with the Government's Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRS). STAIRS gives Dimensions' social housing tenants and their designated representatives a right to access certain information about how we govern and manage our social housing, how we listen to and involve tenants, and where they can find information, support, policies and updates, either through information we publish proactively or by making an information request.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all colleagues and contractors delivering housing management services for Dimensions Group as a Registered Provider.
- 1.3 Responsibilities:
 - Policy Owner: Chief Housing and Communications Officer
 - Day-to-day: Head of Housing and Partnerships, Head of Property & Housing Supply, Housing & Property Operations Managers, Data Security, Marketing & Communications teams
 - All colleagues: follow policy when handling tenant information.
- 1.4 This policy is a Dimensions Group policy. This means it applies to all its subsidiaries as listed in **Dimensions Policy Statements**. The document also contains details about, our regulators, equality, diversity and inclusion, data protection, and policy reviews.

The documents, forms and other policies mentioned in **bold** in this policy can be found on the Hub (Dimensions intranet).

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Policy statement (why we have this policy)

- 2.1 STAIRS is a legal requirement that promotes transparency, fairness, and tenant empowerment. It requires Registered Providers to:
- publish key information under a Publication Scheme from 1 October 2026 – see **STAIRS - Publication Scheme**
 - respond to tenant information requests from 1 April 2027 – see **STAIRS - Responding to Information Requests**.

The impact of not following this policy

- 3.1 Non-compliance may lead to:
- breach of the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard and statutory directions
 - enforcement by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) or Housing Ombudsman
 - reputational damage and loss of trust from tenants.
- 3.2 As a registered provider of social housing, Dimensions is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Dimensions must comply with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, which includes requirements relating to STAIRs. Should Dimensions' service fall below any of the required Standards, the Regulator may take action and require Dimensions to take steps to improve. This could damage Dimensions' reputation and potentially, even its ability to operate as a registered provider of social housing.
- 3.3 There may be an impact for colleagues and the organisation with our regulators. See **Dimensions Policy Statements**.

Policy content

Principles and our approach

- 4.1 Our approach to STAIRs will be guided by the following principles:
- **Transparency**
 - Proactively publish information to help tenants understand services

- **Openness**
 - Disclose information unless there is a lawful reason to withhold
- **Accountability**
 - Ensure decisions to withhold information are documented and justified
- **Accessibility**
 - Provide reasonable adjustments and alternative formats when requested
- **Fairness**
 - Apply a consistent approach for all tenants and representatives.

4.2 Our approach is:

- to respond to all valid information requests within **30 calendar days**, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- for tenants and representatives to make a request through any usual Dimensions contact route. Under the STAIRs requirements, the request must be made in writing and the person making the request must be identifiable. Where the request is made by a representative, we must also be able to establish that they are acting on behalf of a Dimensions tenant. The request does not need to refer to STAIRs for it to be considered.
- that Colleagues who receive a potential STAIRs request must ensure it is passed into the STAIRs process promptly.
- that if a tenant needs additional support to make a request, we will ensure that arrangements are in place for that.
- to acknowledge all requests within **5 working days**.
- to explain reasons for any refusal or redaction in writing and provide an opportunity for review of a decision.
- to help make sure requests are identified and handled promptly, Dimensions tenants are encouraged to contact their Regional Housing Advisor or the Housing Hub, or email housingenquiry@dimensions-uk.org

4.3 This policy promotes equality by ensuring all tenants, including those with protected characteristics, can access information fairly. This includes providing reasonable adjustments, accessible communication methods and alternative formats where required.

4.4 We will:

- Publish information proactively wherever practical
- Make information easy to find and easy to understand
- Disclose information unless there is a lawful reason not to
- Support tenants who require assistance
- Review the publication scheme contents regularly
- Monitor compliance with the Social Tenants Access to Information requirements

See also our **Equality, diversity and inclusion policy** and **Dimensions Policy Statements**.

Personal data and what we cannot share

- 5.1 The information we are obligated to provide under STAIRs does not include personally identifiable data. Requests for personal data will be handled under the **Data handling and protection policy**. Where a request includes both STAIRs information and a request for personal data, the relevant elements will be handled under the appropriate processes.
- 5.2 STAIRs requests are separate to our obligations under Data Protection legislation as they do not focus on personal data. See our [Privacy policy](#).
- 5.3 Dimensions may withhold information if:
 - disclosure breaches data protection laws or confidentiality agreements
 - disclosure could negatively affect the commercial or business interests of Dimensions, its suppliers, or other third-party organisations.
 - information falls outside STAIRs scope. See **STAIRs - Publication Scheme**
 - disclosure would cause harm to individuals, operations, or regulatory compliance
 - the work involved in responding to the information request would exceed the STAIRs limit of **18 hours of staff time**, or if the request is repeated/unreasonable.

Harm assessment factors

- 6.1 When deciding to withhold information, we will consider factors including the severity and likelihood of harm to individuals, together with commercial sensitivity, impact on third parties and the public interest.

Complaints and reviews

- 7.1 If a tenant or their representative disagrees with a decision, they can request an internal review. A request for an internal review should be made within **three months** of the tenant becoming aware of the matter. Requests made outside this period may still be considered where there are reasonable grounds for the delay.
- 7.2 Internal reviews will be undertaken by a manager who was not involved in the original decision.
- 7.3 The internal review should normally be completed within **30 calendar days of receipt**; however additional time may be required in certain circumstances.
- 7.4 If the applicant remains dissatisfied following the internal review, they can escalate the matter to the Housing Ombudsman under the terms of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. Our review response will explain their right to do so.

See our **Concerns, complaints and compliments policy**.

Legislation and external guidance

This policy and related procedures consider the following legal requirements and regulatory codes, standards, and guidance:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations (UK-GDPR)
- Data (Use and Access) Bill 2026
- Equality Act 2010
- Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRS)
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIAA) Standard
- Direction from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Regulator of Social Housing Policy Statement on STAIRS
- Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code

Dimensions related guidance, procedures, forms, or flowcharts

- **STAIRS - Publication Scheme**
- **STAIRS - Responding to Information Requests**

Glossary

An explanation of words and terms that appear in this policy or the related procedures.

Term	Definition
STAIRS	Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements
SAR	Subject Access Request
Representative	Acting on behalf of someone
Redaction	The process of removing commercially sensitive or confidential information
Commercial	The business, financial or competitive interests of an organisation

Ownership and approval

Policy owner	Head of Housing & Partnerships
Policy Responsible Executive Lead	Chief Housing and Communications Officer
Approval level	Dimensions Board via the Quality and Practice Committee (QPC)
People and groups consulted	Head of Corporate Governance Diversity Matters National Colleague Forum Policy Subgroup
Policy review period	Three yearly

Version control

Version number	Approved date	Communication date	Summary of changes
1	2nd September 2026 (QPC and Board)	29th September 2026	New policy.