

Communications Policy

1. Summary

- 1.1. SHAL recognises that consistent, effective and appropriate communications (both external and internal) are essential for it to deliver its purpose and maintain its reputation as a professional organisation and registered provider of social housing.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the way in which SHAL will communicate both internally and externally and with tenants and other organisations it works with, including partners and professional and regulatory bodies.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The aim of this policy is to:
 - 2.1.1. Reduce the risk of ineffective, unclear and erroneous communication
 - 2.1.2. Ensure all staff are aware of how communications are best conducted
 - 2.1.3. Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities in all communications
- 2.2. External Communications include all the messages and information SHAL provides to:
 - 2.2.1. Tenants
 - 2.2.2. Other organisations, companies and regulatory bodies it works with
 - 2.2.3. Members of the public
 - 2.2.4. Visitors to SHAL
- 2.3. Internal Communications include all the messages and information shared within the organisation.
- 2.4. Communications can be:
 - 2.4.1. Electronic (including email, social media and text)
 - 2.4.2. In writing (including letters and newsletters)
 - 2.4.3. Verbal (including telephone/video calls and conversations)

3. Details

Current version	Date agreed/reviewed	Review due	Owner	Pages
1.0	2023-08	2025-08	SCO	Page 1 of 6

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SHAL is registered in England and Wales as a Community Benefit Society and an exempt charity (number 27772R).

- 3.1. Good and effective communications will ensure SHAL clarifies and achieves a better understanding of its purpose, work as effectively as possible, and:
 - 3.1.1. Meet its purpose
 - 3.1.2. Promote transparent and open communication, allowing service users to find information themselves
 - 3.1.3. Present a ‘professional’ image to and give everyone the confidence to be effective communicators
 - 3.1.4. Provide a choice of methods of communication allowing all service users the flexibility to access the same information and receive the same message at a time and via a method that is most convenient for them
 - 3.1.5. Provide clear and accurate information at the right time and in the right method
- 3.2. All Communications are important and need to be considered carefully. Some communications can be linked to (and have implications for) SHAL’s strategic objectives and business plan.
- 3.3. All communications (including corporate and marketing communications) should be considered as part of the wider sector in which SHAL operates (including housing, communities, national/local government and social services).
- 3.4. All communications should be sensitive to current events and should not inadvertently cause offence by being inappropriate or timed badly.
- 3.5. All communications will either initiate or contribute to a conversation. This conversation could include many different audiences holding a wide range of views and opinions. All communications should be polite and professional.
- 3.6. If any conversation is becoming confrontational, aggressive or hostile (or the conversation can no longer progress) the conversation can be ended in a polite and professional manner. However, if this conversation is being held in public (including social media) it would be more appropriate to end the conversation and continue to communicate privately.

- 3.7. If further conversations are not appropriate and SHAL will not enter into further conversations the reasons should be explained in a polite and professional manner.
- 3.8. Communications play a necessary and positive role in the day-to-day operations of SHAL. All staff have a responsibility to communicate effectively both internally and externally.
- 3.9. SHAL must nurture a culture that encourages transparency, trust and clarity in all its communications.
- 3.10. All staff must be aware that all communications they make will be linked to SHAL and considered to represent the views of the organisation, even if they are made privately outside of the organisation, including on social media.
- 3.11. All staff will be subject to SHAL’s disciplinary procedure if their communications are considered to be an act of misconduct.
- 3.12. Effective external communications should be targeted and tailored to specific audiences. For example:
 - 3.12.1. Tenants (including potential, current and former tenants)
 - 3.12.2. Other organisations, companies and regulatory bodies it works with
 - 3.12.3. Members of the public (including tenants of other social housing providers, private landlords and owner occupiers)
 - 3.12.4. Funders and auditors
- 3.13. Information communicated should be high quality, clear and accurate and reflect SHAL’s values and purpose as an organisation.
- 3.14. External communications should always seek to have a beneficial dialogue with its audience using research and feedback to gain insights, answer queries and deliver key messages about SHAL’s work.
- 3.15. Internal communications are actively managed across SHAL to ensure that:
 - 3.15.1. Staff are informed of the most important information relating to how SHAL is operating, performing and delivering its purpose
 - 3.15.2. Internal e-mail, meetings and telephone calls are thoughtful, respectful, efficient and well disciplined

- 3.15.3. Feedback from staff is actively sought and responded to and communications are, where possible, changed and evolved to become more effective and engaging
- 3.16. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that all communications reflect SHAL’s values and purpose. Members of staff are deemed to include:
 - 3.16.1. Operational staff
 - 3.16.2. Management team
 - 3.16.3. Executive Directors
 - 3.16.4. Non-Executive Directors (i.e. Board Members)
 - 3.16.5. Shareholders
- 3.17. All members of staff are expected to be familiar with SHAL’s current activities and projects.
- 3.18. All members of staff are responsible for maintaining good internal and external communications, suggesting improvements wherever possible and for reporting breaches of this policy.
- 3.19. All members of staff are responsible for promoting SHAL’s purpose, brand and reputation.
- 3.20. The CEO is responsible for:
 - 3.20.1. The overall clarity and coherence of SHAL’s external communications
 - 3.20.2. Working to create an internal culture of open, honest, efficient and transparent communications
 - 3.20.3. Promoting effective communications
- 3.21. The management team has overall responsibility for ensuring that staff share information and knowledge and for ensuring members of their team are thoughtful and consistent in their communications and are aware of the principles and guidelines available for different aspects of their work.
- 3.22. The Communications Officer is responsible for:
 - 3.22.1. Ensuring SHAL offers clear and consistent messages about its objectives and its work
 - 3.22.2. Overseeing all communications including marketing, social media, reception, online, printed communications, emails, letters and texts

3.22.3. Ensuring communication is appropriate and as clear as possible

3.22.4. Promoting good internal communications

3.23. All communications should comply with the General Data Protection Data Regulations, alongside the Data Protection Act 2018 and personal data should be processed legally.

4. Outcomes

4.1. Communications are clear and effective

4.2. Communications are tailored and targeted for individual audiences and conducted in a polite and professional manner

4.3. All information is clear and accessible

4.4. SHAL's reputation and purpose are both respected and communicated clearly

5. Consultation

5.1. A draft copy of this policy will be available on our website to allow members of the public an opportunity to comment on its contents prior to being submitted for approval by SHAL's board

5.2. All tenants will be contacted by text to advise of its availability online and a draft copy will also be made available on request

5.3. SHAL's tenant scrutiny panel will also be invited to review the policy and suggest any comments and amendments prior to the policy being approved by the board

6. Equality and Diversity

6.1. We will apply this policy in a fair and consistent manner and will not discriminate against anyone based on their age, gender, nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or any other matter that may cause a person to be treated with injustice

6.2. The needs of vulnerable residents will be considered in accordance with the Equality Act 2010

7. Value for Money

7.1. We will regularly review our processes to ensure resources and services are providing best value for money to our residents.

8. Owner

8.1. Systems and Communications Officer

9. Version and Revisions

9.1. This policy will be reviewed every 2 year(s).

9.2. Revisions

New version	Date	Revision details