

# **Money and Home Energy Advice Service Communications Strategy 2025/27**

## **Approved by ELHA Board 29/05/25**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This document sets out the goals and objectives of East Lothian Housing Association's (ELHA) Money and Home Energy Service Strategy for communicating and engaging with tenants and Sharing Owners.
- 1.2 This Communication Strategy details the methods we will use to ensure that our tenants and Sharing Owners understand the Money and Energy Advice Service objectives and the actions we will undertake to achieve them. This is crucial for the continual enhancement and development of our service and reputation.
- 1.3 This document supports the Associations Communication Strategy by ensuring that information is presented in a manner that is appropriate, clear and concise.
- 1.4 Although the Group operates a 'digital by default' policy, this Strategy is designed to ensure that there are varied and traditional channels available for anyone unable or unwilling to use digital communication. We will only print information when required to do so, for example, where a tenant does not have access to a mobile phone or other device or has needs that make digital communication difficult for them.
- 1.5 Over the next three years we are dedicated to enhancing our communications strategies with the following key initiatives:
  - **Revise and Expand Online Resources:** Update our current Money and Home Energy advice webpages on elha.com and create printable versions to ensure accessibility for all tenants
  - **Strategic Communication Campaigns:** Launch targeted campaigns to help tenants transition smoothly from existing welfare benefits to newly introduced British and Scottish welfare benefits, ensuring clear, understandable guidance is accessible
  - **Biannual Money Advice and Home Energy E-news Specials:** Publish biannual money and home energy advice e-news that cater to both tenants and Sharing Owners (who are paper-free), keeping them informed and empowered about managing their finances and energy consumption effectively
  - **Social Media Engagement:** Develop a comprehensive social media calendar that highlights important events promoting the uptake of welfare benefits and energy advice throughout the year
  - **Targeted Notifications for Key Milestones:** Implement a system to proactively reach out to tenants on significant birthdates, informing them about their new or adjusted entitlements to welfare benefits
  - **Support for Technological Transitions:** Offer guidance and support for tenants impacted by the discontinuation of the Radio Tele-switch system, assisting them in finding and transitioning to suitable alternatives

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### **2.0 Objectives**

2.1 The key objectives of our Communication Strategy are to:

- Positively raise awareness and the profile of the Service through effective communication
- Continually improve and promote our services through regular updates and feedback
- Strengthen existing relationships with tenants, Sharing Owners, and external partners, working collaboratively to enhance community wellbeing
- Ensure all communication is instantly recognisable and corporately branded
- Provide a framework that provides clear, informative guidance to ensure high quality communication is produced that meets the needs of tenants and Sharing Owners
- Reduce costs by ensuring the most efficient and appropriate communication method is used

### **3.0 Key Principles**

3.1 The key principles underpinning our Strategy are to:

- Ensure that all communication is in plain English, easy to understand and reflects the values of ELHA
- Ensure that written messages are not 'hidden' by using detailed pictures as a background
- Provide a range of options to choose from when communicating
- Ensure that we consider accessibility issues when designing information and communicating with our customers (we will try to anticipate user requirements and encourage them to tell us if we need to adjust the way we deliver services to them)
- On request, provide alternative communication methods where reasonable to do so, such as arranging interpreting and translation services (we are members of Happy to Translate), information on CD, in larger print, and in languages other than English, where this is required

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### **4.0 Legal & Regulatory Framework**

#### **4.1 Scottish Social Housing Charter**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 sets out the foundations for the regulatory system that formally takes account of tenant's views, and in April 2012 the Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) was launched. This was last revised in 2021, and the new version launched on 1 November 2022.

The purpose of the Charter is to help improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords in Scotland provide and to set out who is responsible for meeting the 16 Charter Standards and Outcomes. There are two outcomes and standards applicable to this Strategy:

##### **4.1.1 Outcome 1 Equalities**

'Social Landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that they support the right to adequate housing, and every tenant and other customer had their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect and receives fair access to housing and housing services.'

##### **4.1.2 Outcome 2 Communication**

'Social landlords manage their business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.'

#### **4.2 This Strategy takes account of the following legislation and good practice:**

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of information (Scotland) Act 2002
- Equality Act 2010

#### **4.3 The Strategy also considers the following:**

- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Comments & Complaints Policy
- Information and Advice Policy
- Customer Care Policy
- Customer Service Charter
- Tenancy Sustainment Policy
- Openness & Confidentiality Policy
- Equality & Human Rights Strategy

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Privacy Policy
- ICT Strategy
- IT Policy

## **5.0 Key Messages**

5.1 The key messages of the Strategy are to:

- Highlight the availability of the Money and Home Energy Advice service and its relevance to meet the specific needs of tenants and Sharing Owners.
- Simplify the process of accessing the Money and Home Energy Advice service
- Provide clear guidance on eligibility criteria and the application processes
- Encourage positive engagement and promote self-sufficiency

## **6.0 Target Audiences**

6.1 Though our focus is primarily on our tenants, our audiences are all the people we come into contact with, during the course of our work and include:

- Tenants
- Sharing Owners
- Household members
- Members of the public
- East Lothian Council
- The Department for Work and Pensions
- Social Security Scotland
- Other organisations that we work with

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- 6.2 By acknowledging the diversity of our customers backgrounds and needs, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences, expectations, and preferences. This insight-driven approach will enable us to ensure that our communications go beyond merely providing information; they will be supportive, engaging, and customised to address the specific requirements of our community members. This tailored Communication Strategy aims to enhance user satisfaction and foster a stronger, more connected community.

### **7.0 Communication Methods**

- 7.1 We recognise the importance of listening to and understanding our customers' needs. The Money and Home Energy Advice Service Communication Strategy is crucial to our method of delivering excellent customer service. This service will ensure that the profiles and communication data of tenants and Sharing Owners are kept current and shared with the rest of the organisation.

- 7.2 When we communicate with tenants and other customers, we will ensure:

- All types of communication will be clear, precise, and available in understandable and accessible formats
- All communications will have a clear purpose and be presented in a user-friendly corporate style format
- We will use plain English to enhance understanding for all tenants
- Interpreters and translators will be provided when necessary, including the use of Google translate for simple translations
- We will actively encourage feedback on our communications to continually improve our service

### **8.0 Communication Channels**

- 8.1 Our communication channels include:

- Tenants' e- Talk & Talkback newsletter
- My Home account
- My New Home
- Website – [www.elha.com](http://www.elha.com)
- Live Help Service
- Printable web pages
- Satisfaction surveys

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- Case studies
- Home visits
- Letters, emails, phone calls and text messages
- Digital and paper satisfaction surveys
- Conferences, seminars and events
- Social media
- Quarterly and annual reporting
- Telephone calls
- Performance 365
- Consultations and Surveys

### **9.0 Corporate Branding**

- 9.1 To ensure that all communication is instantly recognisable and corporately branded, all forms of communication will include the appropriate logo(s), colours, contact details, registration number and web / social media information.

### **10.0 Engagement Strategies**

- 10.1 This list highlights the key communication strategies we will use to ensure effective and inclusive engagement with tenants and Sharing Owners. By adopting these practices, we aim to enhance understanding, participation, and accessibility.

- 10.2 The strategies include:

- Using plain English to connect effectively with diverse communities
- Communicating with tenants, residents, staff, and business partners using the most suitable formats for each group
- Collaborating with trusted local organisations to enhance community engagement
- Providing translation services for non-English speakers to ensure accessibility for all

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### **11.0 Equality and Diversity**

- 11.1 We will not discriminate in the operation of this strategy based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We aim to promote equal opportunities and comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 11.2 When we are communicating with or about someone whose gender is unknown, we will not use gendered language, e.g. we will use 'they', rather than 's/he'.
- 11.3 We will provide information in a suitable alternative format if required by a tenant. We will provide material in formats such as large print, CD or audio file, on request. We will provide these additional services at no cost to the person who requests the information.
- 11.4 We are members of Happy to Translate, and if a tenant needs any of our publications translated into another language, we may provide this on request where it is reasonable to do so.
- 11.5 On request, we will arrange for an interpreter to be present where necessary, for example interviews. This includes sign language interpreters.

### **12.0 Complaints**

- 12.1 Although we will always strive to deliver excellent service, we acknowledge that we will sometimes make mistakes and will not always get things right first time.
- 12.2 We will make it easy for customers to complain, formally or informally, by publicising our Comments and Complaints Policy and making it readily available to anyone who wants to use it.
- 12.3 Our website includes various ways for customers to give feedback, such as contact forms, "praise or grumble" and the Live Help service, as well as giving on-line access to, and information about, our Comments and Complaints Procedure.
- 12.4 If a customer complains on any of our social media platforms, we will always signpost them to our Complaints Handling Procedure and to support available.
- 12.5 We will investigate complaints and resolve them as closely as possible. We will ensure that the person making the complaint is kept fully informed throughout the complaint handling process and if a complaint is about more than one service area, we will ensure a single co-ordinated response is made.
- 12.6 If a customer is unable or reluctant to make a complaint, we will accept complaints brought by third parties if the customer has given their personal consent.
- 12.7 When we make mistakes we will apologise, put things right as quickly as possible and use the experience to improve our service in the future.



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### **13.0 Performance Monitoring**

13.1 This list outlines the key metrics we will use to evaluate the effectiveness of our Money and Home Energy Advice Communication Strategy. These indicators help us understand the impact of our outreach, the level of engagement with our services, and the overall satisfaction of our tenants and Sharing Owners.

13.2 The metrics include:

- Number of direct, staff and partner referrals for money and home energy advice
- Number of satisfaction surveys completed
- Positive survey feedback
- Number of complaints
- Website traffic for the Money and Home Energy Advice webpages
- Attendance at outreach events
- Social media reach and interaction metrics
- Collecting feedback through surveys and tenants' groups

### **14.0 Strategy Review**

14.1 The Director of Housing will ensure that this Strategy is reviewed at least every three years, and any amendments required will be submitted to the ELHA Board for approval.