



Communications **Strategy** 2025-27

CORNWALL
HOUSING

www.cornwallhousing.org.uk



1 Introduction

Cornwall Housing (CHL) is a unique organisation in a very special part of the country – in other words **our story is different to the majority of other housing providers in the UK** and its one we want to share.

CHL's organisational priorities set out our main aims as a business and our vision is to deliver:

“
**Safe homes in
strong communities
for one and all**
”

This Communications Strategy aims to ensure we have a range of ways to share information with our audiences to help them to understand everything we do. It also aims to ensure we provide the means for them to share their views and requests with us, because communicating works both ways

An important part of achieving that vision is to make sure we have ways to share and receive information from our residents, staff, Board, stakeholders and the general public.



2 Context

Effective communication at CHL is about ensuring we **successfully communicate our story to the diverse audience we know we need to serve**, and to do this successfully we have to acknowledge and understand the diverse settings we are working in and the expectations that come from these.

Cornwall Council Context

CHL provides homes to rent on behalf of Cornwall Council for people on lower incomes in need of housing across Cornwall. It is our responsibility to look after our homes and the people in them, and the communities in which our residents live.

CHL has acknowledged that to do this it needed to make real change to the way it was managed and the way in which services were delivered, and so embarked on a journey of improvement. As this journey progresses CHL will have a story

to tell and it is important that CHL has the strategy to guide how it will do this, given it is delivering these services on behalf of the Council.

CHL should seek to demonstrate how successful this change has been whilst ensuring it delivers this message in a way that acknowledges the Council's own communication preferences and principles. It is important that CHL recognises when a communications activity will need input and collaboration from Cornwall Council.

Cornwall Housing Ltd Context

As well as delivering this change for the Council, CHL is tasked with delivering this change for its residents, especially as CHL improves services and performance that they can see and experience as well. Communications are important to identify the role we have in providing this and building our reputation.

All our communications should help to create the kind of reputation and culture we want to achieve because every contact builds up a picture of CHL as a landlord, employer, partner and business.

CHL has a clear plan to deliver the improvements all its stakeholders want to see and clear; honest and timely communications contribute to the delivery of its Organisational Priorities

and our success as a business. CHL needs to ensure that both customers and Cornwall Council can see that this change has resulted in improved services and performance, and effective communications will support this messaging.

The Communications Strategy will also ensure CHL is best placed to deal with those issues that could harm its reputation and as a result enable it to manage risk. Having an effective communication approach means that across the organisation all teams know that when managing any difficult situation effective communications, internal or external, are considered just as essential an action as any operational service delivery tool.



Regulatory Context

As a registered provider of social housing, we are committed to delivering against the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RoSH), which include the Consumer Standards. The introduction of the new Transparency, Influence and Accessibility Standard means that we must provide a comprehensive, clear and timely information about our services and residents' enquiries or requests, including:

1. ensuring that our services are accessible and that we publicise the accessibility,
2. providing tenants with information about their rights and our responsibilities as well as the standards they should expect of our services and their homes (including the right to receive notice of a proposed visit to carry out repairs or maintenance.)communicating with residents on the progress, next steps and outcomes when delivering landlord services, and
3. providing timely information about our performance and expenditure

CHL have also been on a well-documented regulation journey, so it is key that our responsibilities, obligations and requirements under any regulation, legislation, Health and Safety etc, are communicated effectively to all relevant stakeholders.

Resident Feedback Context

This document is CHL's commitment to sharing information with residents about the organisation and the services it provides, and to make sure residents have ways to share information with us.

CHL previously completed its Better Connections Survey to gather a wide range of views from over 1,250 residents on how they would like to engage, and it is this intelligence that is also being used to create our Communications Strategy. It has helped CHL to deliver a strategy that addresses how residents would like to be communicated with and to ensure we maximise the impact and reach our communications make.

The next two years of this strategy still represent a challenging time for CHL, with service and delivery change planned as we work to deliver our business plan and organisational priorities. CHL must ensure it delivers effective communications to navigate these changes successfully, helping residents to understand the impact on them and the opportunities on offer.



3 Scope and Definitions

The Communications Strategy is not about everyday customer transactions, but it will touch on **ways to improve how we keep residents informed** during those regular contacts with us.

For the purposes of this strategy we define ‘resident’ as a tenant, leaseholder or other user of our services.

This Communications Strategy will link with all other strategies across the organisation, led primarily by the Organisational Priorities, and will closely connect with Our People and Digital and IT Strategies to encourage a positive culture of committed and motivated staff, as well as digitally enabled staff and residents.

The strategy will also apply to our internal communications approach. The effective flow of information and business direction from our Senior Leadership Team to the wider business is key to our success, as is the way this is done to encourage interest and buy-in from staff. It is also essential when it comes to rolling out key business and process changes, so all are aware of any impacts on their way of working.



4 Our Commitments

Our commitments have been developed in response to the context CHL operates in. They meet:

- What the Council want to see,
- What the Regulator expects,
- And speak directly to what our residents have told us on how they would like to be communicated with.

We have also looked to good practice – both from within the sector and beyond – and engaged with service areas from right across the organisation.

CHL communications will:

- Be driven by residents' needs and our improvement priorities
- Be meaningful – it will be clear what we want people to understand, feel or do
- Be relevant and tailored to suit the target audience
- Be ethical, respectful, inclusive and as accessible as possible to meet our residents' needs
- Be honest, straight-forward, personable and in Plain English
- Be branded and look professional
- Be responsive, timely and engaging

The result is the 7 aims highlighted below:



Be Open and Honest:

CHL is changing so it is incredibly important that we keep residents informed about any plans that will affect them. CHL will also keep residents informed about how we are performing and be honest about where we need to get better.



Informative and Proactive:

CHL communications will be important to people and timely, so we comply with regulations and people understand what we are doing, how it affects them and how to contact us. It will be proactive, with comprehensive and considered communication plans in place for bigger projects and challenges, to ensure we are thinking ahead.



Encourage Engagement:

CHL will promote opportunities for our residents, staff and stakeholders to share their views and influence how we work. We will also support our involved residents in recruiting new members to groups.



Tackle Stigma:

Our communications will help share positive stories about our residents and homes, as well as demonstrating the need for, and value of, social housing in creating strong communities. Support Choice:

CHL will provide communications in different formats where possible and expand our digital offer to encourage a shift towards digital contact for those willing and able.



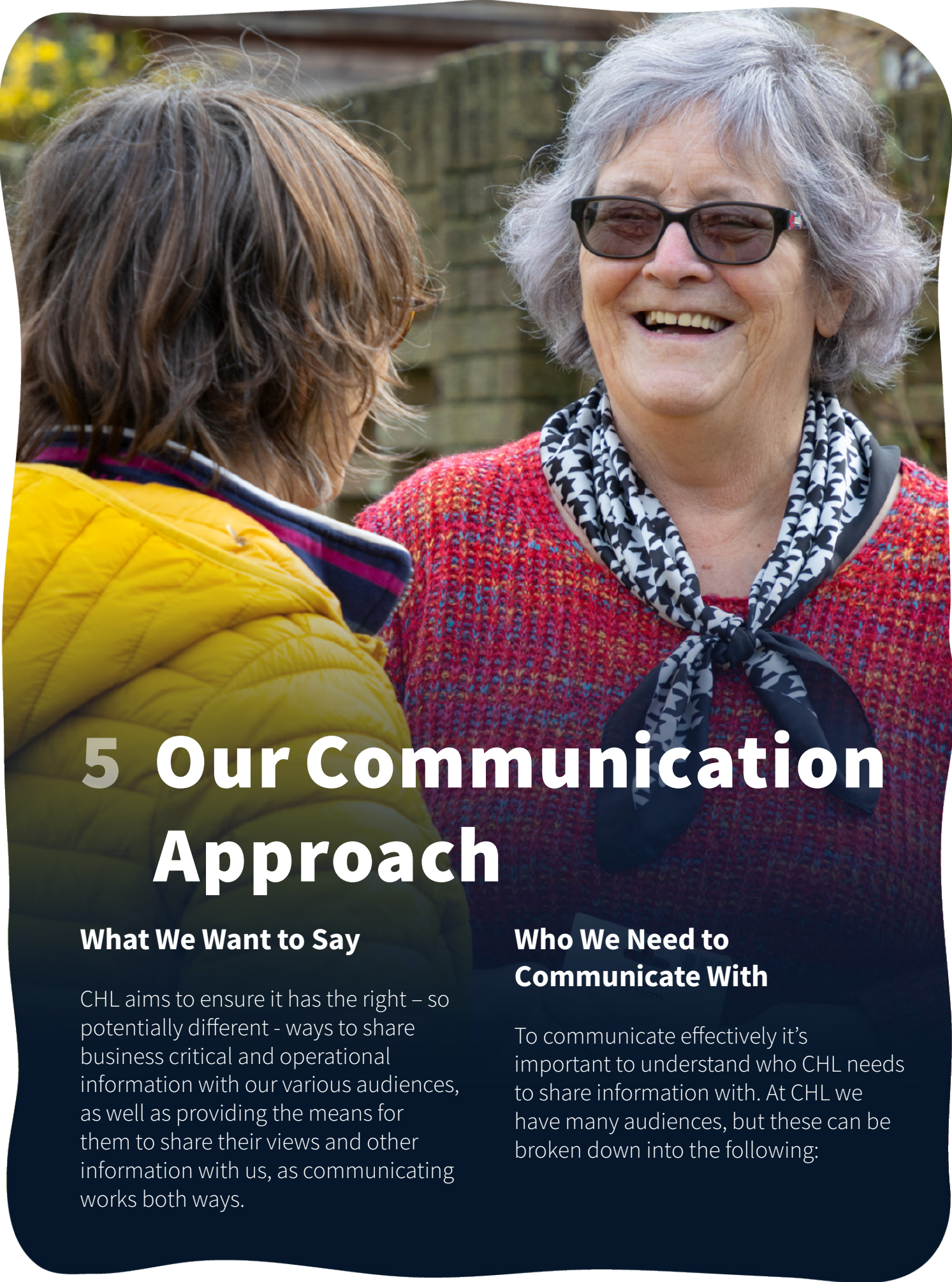
Reduce Avoidable Contact:

CHL will provide online information and tools to enable those who can and want to self-serve to do so, freeing up staff time for those who need it most.



Make the Most of Our Data:

CHL will use the information provided by our customers when they communicate with us to understand them better so that we can improve and proactively provide what we know our customers want.



5 Our Communication Approach

What We Want to Say

CHL aims to ensure it has the right – so potentially different - ways to share business critical and operational information with our various audiences, as well as providing the means for them to share their views and other information with us, as communicating works both ways.

Who We Need to Communicate With

To communicate effectively it's important to understand who CHL needs to share information with. At CHL we have many audiences, but these can be broken down into the following:

Residents

- Social rent tenants
- Affordable rent tenants
- Shared Owners
- Leaseholders/freeholders
- Other services, incl. non-HRA services

People working for/with us

- Employees
- Board members
- Commissioners – Cornwall Council
- Contractors
- Suppliers

Agency stakeholders

- Regulators
- Councillors and MPs
- Partners – such as Council departments, Police, NHS

Media

- Local
- Regional
- National
- Sector

General public

- Parishes
- County-wide
- National
- Prospective employees
- Prospective residents



How We Will Communicate

Our Brand reflects our organisational personality, and from that CHL's image and reputation. So how we use all these elements – e.g. CHL logos, publication images, the media that is posted and the way CHL responds to others – all contribute to shaping this. The effective use of our brand will help demonstrate the success and professionalism of CHL.

CHL will establish its brand and corporate identity through clear rules and protocols for the use of our brand in everything we do from producing letterheads and flyers, right through to organising major launch events and obtaining national media coverage.

Our People are who we are and CHL has developed an open approach to communication with colleagues right across the organisation. CHL has already

established a clear commitment to communication with colleagues through the all-staff events, monthly all-staff briefings and monthly wider staff updates from the various management teams, and this has built a new level of trust and shared direction.

Likewise, CHL colleagues are encouraged to share with each other, and the wider public, the work that they do and outcomes they achieve. We recognise that the people we work with can be our greatest advocates and we will ensure that we support the right culture to allow effective communications to thrive.

Our Tools are what CHL will use to continue to evolve the ways in which we communicate to ensure we reach our target audiences. Below is a summary of the different ways CHL aims to reach the people we are trying to share information with and receive information from.



Digital



- CHL website
- E-bulletins (direct email)
- Facebook
- Linked In
- You Tube
- Texts
- Videos
- Animations
- On-line surveys
- Phone calls
- CHL Intranet
- All staff briefings
- All staff emails

Print/post



- Home magazine
- Annual rent/service charge letters
- Ad-hoc letters
- Posters/flyers
- Resident handbook
- Surveys
- Estate signs
- Notice boards
- Building branding
- Uniforms
- Vehicle graphics

Face to face



- Meetings
- Board and Committees
- Home visits
- Community groups
- Resident meetings
- Walkabouts
- Tenant Forum
- Scrutiny Panel
- Events

Non-owned channels



- Public relations
- Media management
- Networks
- Paid advertising
- Cornwall Homechoice
- Cornwall Council website

The strategy gives CHL the opportunity to move away from our more traditional ways of working and existing communication channels, to expanding to other platforms and formats through the use of improved technology. This will enable CHL to communicate with all our audiences in

more effective ways.

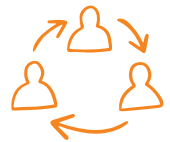
The action plan that CHL develops to accompany this strategy will drive this, as will other initiatives that develop from other areas of work, e.g. CHL's Digital and Resident Engagement strategies.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

Setting the context for the roles within the organisation.



The Board has the **overall responsibility** for this strategy.



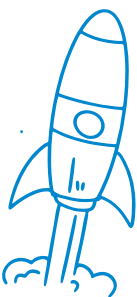
The **Executive Leadership Team** will be responsible for **implementing the strategy** to meet the key aims.



The **Senior Leadership Team** will be responsible for the **operational activity within their service areas** which are required as per the strategy action plan.



The **Head of Customer Services & Engagement** will be responsible for **developing the action plan** to support the delivery of the strategy.



The **Communication & Engagement Manager** will be responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the Action Plan and **ensuring our communication approach is administered and supported**.

All staff are required to participate in **contributing to the success** of this strategy and are expected to:

1. Demonstrate their contribution to delivering this strategy through departmental, team and personal objectives.
2. Understand the impact of their behaviour and approach, and ensure they deliver their role in line with the 7 key aims

7 Measuring success – Monitoring and Review



To ensure we are successfully delivering this strategy, we will use the following measures:

- Produce an action plan which supports the delivery of this strategy by setting out the activities required. The delivery and progress of the action plan will be reviewed quarterly by the Executive Leadership Team and reported annually to the CHL Board and Tenants Forum.
- Establish a cross-departmental communications group to review delivery of this strategy and to identify further opportunities, including how the strategy can assist teams to deliver stakeholder relationships to support CHLs role.
- Establish a scorecard of performance information data to assess delivery of this strategy, including the ability to assess the impact and reach of CHL content through such methods as our website and social media analytics, and press placements.

Demonstrate the impact of the strategy on delivering increased staff and resident engagement.



Demonstrate a record of successful participation in annual, sector and local campaigns, including opportunities for awards and accreditations.



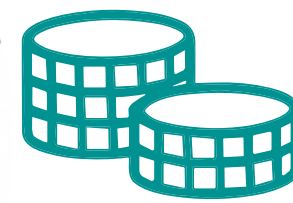


8 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

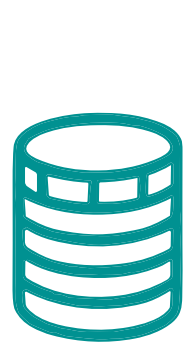
We are committed to equality of opportunity for all.

This strategy provides the basis for a modern, effective communication approach in a changing communication environment. It reinforces the fundamentals of communication,

recognising the importance of successfully engaging with our audiences but ensuring we engage with them in a way that meets their needs, making sure nobody is left behind.



9 Value For Money



CHL is committed to ensuring that all services are delivered with value for money in mind and so will always look for opportunities to both improve services and reduce costs across the business to achieve this.

Our organisation is changing and at the core of this change is ensuring we run our operations as efficiently and effectively as possible, so we can maximise the resources we have available to maximise the outcomes they produce. This will enable us to grow our investment in providing good quality and good value services for residents.

Our Communications Strategy will play its part in this both in terms of the value for money CHL can seek from the provision of this service but also the effective messaging this service will deliver in respect of value for money decisions made and achieved in other areas of the business. Communications will also form a key element of any major project planning or service delivery change.

Strategic Review

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This strategy will be reviewed at least every 3 years or when good practice, regulation or legislation changes mean we need to ensure the activities and anticipated outcomes remain relevant.



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