



## **RESIDENT COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

The purpose of Tonic's policy is to ensure that we communicate effectively, transparently and impartially with our residents and provide appropriate systems for our residents to communicate with us.

Good communications will enable Tonic to:

1. Better understand the needs of our residents and the community in our schemes, and thus develop appropriate strategies and priorities around these
2. Ensure residents have a clear understanding of information and decisions which affect them

### **General Principles**

Tonic will uphold all of the following principles when communicating with residents:

1. Our communications are always open, honest and transparent.
2. Information will be made easily and readily available to residents.
3. We always treat our residents with respect.
4. Different forms of communication should be used to reflect the preference and need of residents.
5. Written communications are simple and straightforward and are written in plain English.
6. Jargon is avoided. Over-use of acronyms is not recommended unless they are explained clearly or are already commonly used terms.
7. We will provide a range of accessible formats of written communication (e.g. large print, braille) for residents who require it and we will keep updated records of resident accessibility requirements.
8. We will make reasonable adjustments to work with residents who require different forms of spoken communication (e.g. providing British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation) where communication would be otherwise hindered.

9. Our communications always aim to be proactive; we aim to anticipate information that residents need.

### **How we communicate with our residents**

Tonic will always seek to communicate in person with residents directly in the first instance, thereby reducing complexity of communications and ensuring we continue to build trusted relationships. This may take the form of informal home visits, resident discussions or tea mornings, for example.

Where it is appropriate or necessary to provide written communication, such as in the case of providing updated service charges, we will provide residents with simple, clear and accessible information in written form.

We may choose to share information in other accessible formats, such as on-site communications (posters, flyers etc).

We may publish information online from time to time, either on our website, via other portals or our social media pages. In these cases, paper alternatives and accessible formats will always be made available to residents who are not online.

Formal communication with residents (e.g. service charge statements) will be stored on the respective resident(s) Customer Relationship Management (CRM) file. We may also keep records of informal discussions with residents that support us in becoming a better housing provider (e.g. recording a disability or a discussion held around care). All staff engaging with residents are responsible for sharing any communications that are relevant to other staff.

### **How residents communicate with us**

We will provide a range of opportunities for residents to communicate with us, all of which will be simple and accessible contact methods. The main point of contact is with our Community and Customer Engagement Manager, who can be contacted by call, text, email and WhatsApp within working hours. A representative will often be available within our schemes for residents to speak to in person. Residents can also communicate with Tonic via post or through our general email inbox. Residents will be provided with clear information about how to communicate with Tonic in an emergency or out of hours situation.

We will create further opportunities for engagement and involvement for residents so they are able to directly influence and shape Tonic's organisational direction and strategy, as well as have a direct influence on decisions which affect their housing and living environment. More information on this can be found in our Resident Engagement and Involvement Policy.

**Policy review**

This policy shall be reviewed at least every 24 months by the Board, and will be revised to take account of changes in legislation, resident feedback and best practice.

Signed 20th March 2023