TO:	Management Committee
PREPARED BY:	Pauline Munro (Executive Officer)
SUBJECT:	Communication Strategy
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APPROVED BY:	Paul Martin (CEO)

Communication Strategy 2026

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This strategy will be supported by the following:

1	Communication plan/s
2	Newsletter schedule
3	Social Media communication plan

1.0 MHA's Strategic Objectives

MHA's mission is to provide excellent homes and services in a thriving community. We believe that people living in the MHA community should:

- Have warm, safe, and affordable homes, and receive excellent services from MHA.
- Live in neighbourhoods that are clean and well cared for, with real community pride.
- Have access to opportunities and services that promote a good quality of life.

2.0 MHA's Values

Working as 'One Milnbank' so that we offer the same quality of services, support and housing to all tenants and residents.

3.0 Strategy Purpose

3.1 The aim of this Communications Strategy is to outline the approach we will take to ensure our tenants and other customers, staff, stakeholders and the general public understand our vision, values, objectives and what we are doing to achieve them. This will make certain that we continue to build on our excellent reputation.

3.2 The strategy aims to ensure that we have different ways to share information to make it as easy as possible to communicate with our target audience/s, as well as providing ways for them to share their views and other information with us.

3.3 Well timed, clear and tailored communications contribute to the delivery of all areas of the MHA Strategic Business Plan and our success as a community controlled Housing Association. We will provide all of our customers with the right information, at the right time and in the right way, to meet their needs.

3.4 As a community controlled Housing Association everything we do has the community at its heart. It is important to ensure we connect with all the different groups of people whose lives we affect in ways that suit them and ensure value for money.

3.5 Our Communications Strategy will be reviewed annually to reflect changing customer needs and perceptions, legislation, social, economic and political influences.

3.6 Digital transformation is high on the agenda for MHA as a way to better communicate internally and externally, to become more accessible, cost effective, efficient and ensure GDPR compliance. At the same time, we

have to ensure we don't create an environment where there is digital exclusion.

4 Links to other strategies

4.1 Good communication underpins all of our work and the Communications Strategy links with all other strategies across the organisation, led primarily by the Strategic Business Plan.

4.2 It is also closely connected with:

- Customer First Strategy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Disaster Recovery Strategy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Risk Management Strategy
- IT and Acceptable Use Policy
- GDPR Policy

5.0 Legal & Regulatory Compliance

The Management Committee leads and directs MHA to ensure good outcomes for its tenants and other service users. The Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework Financial & Regulatory, Standard 6 states that the governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective. MHA adheres to all relevant legal employment requirements associated with this policy.

The outcomes on ensuring equalities, communication and participation apply across all sections of the Charter.

5.1 Scottish Social Housing Charter

5.1.1 How we will ensure MHA meet the SSHC targets.

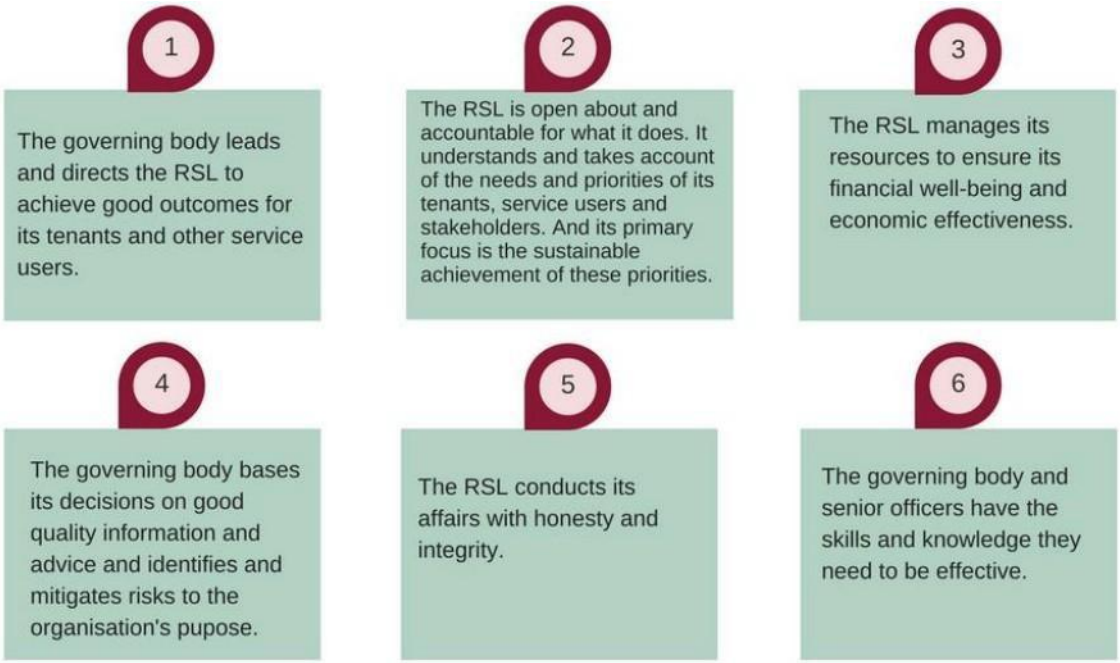
Standard 1 Make MHA's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy easily accessible to tenants including via our website. Ensure an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool used to ensure that equality and diversity is effectively considered when developing/ reviewing policies or considering new proposals.

Standard 2 Provide tenants and other service users with information needed to complain and seek redress. Make publicly available, including online, up-to-date details of: Board members, board minutes. Report performance in achieving/progressing towards Charter outcomes and standards to tenants and other service users by October each year.

Standard 4	Report annually on performance to tenants and other service users.
Standard 5/6	Make SHR's Landlord Report easily accessible to tenants including via our website.
Standard 7/8/9	MHA's Allocation Policy is easily accessible to tenants including via our website.
Standard 11	MHA provide tenants with the information they need to obtain support to remain in their home via our website/social media, in person meetings, via their housing officer and newsletter.
Standard 13	MHA produce a Value for Money Strategy and a Voids Policy which is easily accessible to tenants including via out website.
Standard 14	MHA Rent Setting Policy is easily accessible to tenants including via our website. Tenants are invited to take part in the annual rent setting policy and outcome.

5.2 Responsibilities under the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management

MHA must ensure the following standards are met.



6.0 Communication plan

6.1 A Communication Plan is developed in line with this strategy to support specific business areas which reflects their individual priorities. This will highlight the differences across the communication channels and allow planning for when a specific campaign can be communicated across all channels.

6.2 Communication planning is vitally important, particularly when there is a message we wish to promote. Planning allows for campaigns to be developed and ensures that customers are communicated in a timely manner, provided notice and then reminders, (where appropriate).

6.3 A Communication Plan will be created annually and populated with any key events in advance for the calendar year and then updated regularly to include in adhoc requirements. For example, there is several MHA events which take place each year, dates for these events should be set at the start of the year to allow for event planning.

6.4 **Annual Communication Plan** – This will include all communications such as the quarterly newsletter, annual report, annual events, policy reviews or consultation, sector related communications, SKIP meeting and CEO Update (changes to regulatory requirements) etc.

To support the delivery of the MHA Communication Plan will be the development of:

6.4.1 **Newsletter Schedule and content planning –** This will include all articles that need to be included in the quarterly newsletter, ensuring we meet regulatory requirements, promote events and consultations in advance and that follow-up feedback is provided in the following editions. Standing items will be created but updated regularly to include any ad-hoc information if required.

6.4.2 **Social Media Plan** – This will include posts to increase engagement, such as national campaigns. Regular signposting to our support services and community activities.

6.4.3 **Crisis Communication Plan** – This will give clear guidance in the event of a crisis on who is responsible for communicating with staff, our customers and the media. The Crisis Communication Plan is part of the Disaster Recovery Plan.

7.0 Our communication aims

7.1 To ensure the strategy is successful, and that we have a consistent approach, communications will aim to;

7.1.1 Celebrate our success and share how we are achieving our vision, values and objectives so we build a culture and reputation of ambition and excellence.

7.1.2 Develop efficient, effective and accessible communication channels that represent value for money and improve access to and understanding of our services.

7.1.3 Be clear and open so our staff and customers understand our plans for the future, how we will achieve them, how it affects them and how to contact us.

7.1.4 Provide and promote opportunities for our customers, staff and stakeholders to share their views, influence how we work and ensure high satisfaction with our services.

7.1.5 Increase the involvement of our tenants and the community in the decision-making process, consult with them and listen to their needs and views to assist us in making better informed decisions.

7.1.6 Continue to improve our digital channels and culture so our customers and staff are digital by choice.

7.1.7 Ensure all employees are informed and have ownership of our activities and take responsibility for effective and appropriate communications, to achieve our corporate aims, objectives and values.

7.1.8 Maintain a clear brand identity, both internally and externally.

7.1.9 Promote the good reputation of Milnbank Housing Association.

7.1.10 Promote us as an organisation that offers opportunity and choice – regardless of any protected characteristics which includes Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Sex.

7.1.11 Help staff be better informed of our priorities and understand how their role, regardless of the grade or location, contributes to the vision.

7.1.12 Recognise the value of the media as a means of providing information to the public and the promotion of Milnbank Housing Association and our successes. To be open and proactive in our dealings with them.

7.1.13 Ensure all Health and Safety requirements are communicated effectively to all relevant customers.

7.1.14 Be compliant with all regulatory standards and requirements, such as sharing our annual report.

8.0 MHA Principles for all communications

8.1 Our communications will be guided by the following values set out in our Strategic Business Plan and Customer Service Standards.



8.2 All communications will be:

- Focused on achieving our key objectives and be driven by our customer needs.
- Honest, open and transparent and represent our values.
- Consistent and relevant - themes, messages, tone and style.
- Tailored to suit the target audience.
- Shared across all relevant communication channels where appropriate.
- In clear, everyday language and be personable.
- Clear in its purpose – what do we want people to understand or do.
- Branded and look professional.
- Timely and current, helpful, courteous and in a professional manner.
- Welcoming of feedback.
- In our customers preferred method of communication and be available in alternative languages and formats when required.

- Utilise the potential and available technology.
- Cost effective, representing value for money and be innovative.
- In line with confidentiality and Data Protection legislation.
- Meet Regulatory Requirements and Standards. See section 5.0.
- Guidance from the SFHA Open All Hours, August 2019, has been reviewed as part of the development of this strategy.

8.3 **To ensure our Customer Service Standards are adhered to, we will ensure that we:**

8.3.1 Treat all tenants, customers and stakeholders with dignity and respect and take individual responsibility for good communication.

8.3.2 Build partnerships based on openness and trust.

8.3.3 Consider new approaches and opportunities for communication.

8.3.4 Consider the impact across other services and policies.

8.3.5 Treat complaints as an opportunity to resolve service failures and improve methods of working.

9.0 Key audiences

9.1 There are seven main audience groups we want to communicate well with, and we aim to understand them better.

- **Existing customers** (including tenants and other stakeholders)
- **Potential customers** (including applicants, staff, partners)
- **Community Groups**
- **Staff**
- **Partners/Contractors/stakeholders**
- **General public** (including local authorities & elected representatives)
- **Media**

9.2 We need to communicate with a wide range of audiences and to do that successfully, the main objectives for each audience group must be considered.

Audience	Main objectives
Existing customers (including tenants, sharing owners and factored owners)	• Build our reputation as a leading housing provider for the East End of Glasgow. • Signpost to key services, both internal and external. • Deliver campaigns on themes including, for example, rent, welfare reform and our Customer First ethos. • Increase usage of digital services • Enhance our status as a trusted provider of affordable homes.
Community groups Tenant Panel, Board Members	• Profile opportunities and benefits of involvement. • Profile reasons to join Governance structure. • Promote as an organisation that listens, learns and responds.
Staff	• Enhance reputation as an employer of choice. • Promote internal campaigns and raise staff awareness of activities. • Increase staff buy-in to key messages.
Partners/ contractors	• Promote benefits of partnership. • Target and influence potential new partners.
General public (Local Authorities, Elected Representatives)	• Build our reputation as a high performing, community-based Housing Association. • Maintain and enhance relationships with Councillors, MSPs etc. and key local authority personnel.
Media	• Effective media response management to lessen reputational risk and promote successes to enhance profile

10.0 Key messages

10.1 The key messages we wish to relay to our target audiences include:

10.1.1 MHA is a tenant-led organisation that puts customers at the heart of everything we do and that MHA is a landlord of choice, keeping its promises and adding value to our communities.

10.1.2 MHA value all internal and external customers and provide a good service that is well managed, well governed, viable and efficient.

10.1.3 MHA is proactive in meeting the needs of our diverse communities and respond to service failures positively and seek to rectify and learn from problems in a timely manner in line with SPSO complaint Handling Guidelines.

10.1.4 MHA is a positive provider and partner within our communities and that we listen and actively welcome ideas and feedback and support a scrutiny approach.

10.1.5 MHA ha a focus on modernisation and innovation, with an emphasis on digital services and digital communication.

10.1.6 MHA has a 'right first time' approach as well as combine excellence with value for money.

10.1.7 MHA is a great place to work and invest in our staff through regular training and continuous professional development.

10.1.8 MHA provide great customer service, quality homes for our tenants to live and an efficient repairs and maintenance service.

10.1.9 MHA Support our customers with additional services such as Welfare Rights support.

11.0 Communication development

11.1 To be able to communicate effectively, it is important to have a range of different methods to reach our customers. The aim is to reach people through their preferred method of contact and to provide simple, convenient ways for people to contact us as well as ensuring value for money.

11.2 The main areas of communication we want to develop are:

1) **Digital communication**
   We will continue to build on our digital communication methods working to increase engagement levels across our different tenant groups. We will ensure tenants receive communications relevant to

them. Surveys can be attached to communications allowing for instant feedback for consultations etc. We want to continue to carry out consultations and surveys digitally, increasing return rates and reducing staff time in distributing them. Some surveys, such as Rent Consultation, include a face to face option for engagement.

2) Website and Tenant Portal

Our website is continually updated and reviewed for suitability. This is where our customers, particularly tenants, are encouraged to use to access information. Continuing to develop new online services is crucial to meeting customer expectations and needs, as well as achieving better value for money and developing greener ways of working. As part of the work in renewing our Housing Management System and website, there will be more focus on encouraging tenants to sign up to our Tenant Portal, MyHome. This is a digital gateway for our tenants to gain information on their own personal account quickly.

3) Social media

Social media is a quick and easy way to reach our customers digitally and build our reputation as a high performing Housing Association. Continuing to grow our social media community is an important part of how we will better target our communications, providing information to people we know are interested or involved with us. This provides additional choice for our customers in how they engage with us. Social media content is most effective when it shows the human side or personality of an organisation. We will continue to develop meaningful and engaging content that includes infographics where possible to engage with our customers more.

4) Printed materials

For customers who are not digital or prefer to be communicated with by printed documents, such as our Tenant Handbook, leaflets and standard letters. We also communicate information on our AGM and events by printed posters displayed on notice boards etc.

5) Internal communications

It is important to equip staff with the knowledge, skills and information needed to provide excellent customer service. Internal communications are an important part of this, and we will continue to review our system to ensure we are disseminating information as efficiently as possible. In the past year we have introduced a CEO Update, which is circulated five times per year, SKIP meetings, which take place quarterly and deliver four development sessions each year, which include the management committee and staff. Outcomes of all internal surveys are shared across the organisation.

6) Media management

How we respond to questions from the media and work with reporters is an important part of managing our reputation and brand. We will develop a media approach for outgoing publicity and continue to ensure we are clear about how media enquiries are handled and by who.

7) Marketing

Coming up with ways to promote our services to different groups of people is important. We will review how we promote our services, including those that are set up to benefit our tenants and assist them in sustaining their tenancy.

8) Campaigns

When there is a specific need, with a specific objective in mind, we may need to create a campaign to ensure effective delivery of the messages needed. Campaigns should be used sparingly for big issues. This will be part of an annual communication plan, with set timescales, actions, responsibilities etc. i.e. board recruitment, gas safety/smoke alarms/electrical tests, rent consultation.

9) In person

MHA delivers a variety of in-person events to engage with tenants and other customers, such as pop-up events which are delivered throughout the area, drop in events held at Ballindalloch Hall. A duty officer is also available in reception each day for housing and maintenance-related enquiries.

10) Crisis communications

Being prepared for something bad/unexpected happening is an important part of managing the risks to the organisation and its reputation. MHA's Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity Strategy must be maintained and tested regularly to continue to ensure it is effective.

Communication of Major Investment and Safety Works

11.3 In addition to the communication methods outlined above, MHA recognises that major investment works such as stonework repairs may raise safety concerns and require clear and effective communication with tenants and owners. This communication will include:

- Advance letters where surveys or works are planned
- Text message updates where appropriate
- Close notices within relevant blocks where safety concerns are identified
- At least quarterly features within the Milnbank Messenger providing updates on stonework issues and safety matters
- Encouragement to tenants to report concerns regarding the condition of stonework and how to do so
- Use of existing digital channels to provide wider updates where required

Where works affect mixed tenure blocks, engagement with owners will be delivered through Milnbank Property Services.

12.0 Risks

12.1 Communications will need to tackle existing challenges, including:

1) **Digital exclusion** –it is important that we work to ensure digital support is provided to tenants where required. The representation levels of surveys will be monitored to prevent digital exclusion and to ensure that all customer groups are engaging with surveys/consultations. MHA currently provide free IT drop-in sessions each week for tenants and our in person events provide an opportunity to speak direct to wider tenant groups.

2) **Increasing diversity** –we will ensure our communications are easily translated, in plain English, free of jargon and have a readability score in line with the UK's average reading age of 9-11 years old. MHA use the services of

3) **Wide range of communication mechanisms** – with the benefit of having many different options on how we can communicate with our tenants, there also is the risk of potential resource challenges. One key piece of information is now expected to be shared in multiple ways, all of which require their own design, for example website noticeboard, social media, text, newsletter article, reception screen etc. There is also the risk if the information is not being designed to suit the appropriate channel it will not represent value for money and be ineffective.

4) **Communication fatigue** – with the ability to now communicate with our different tenant groups more easily and quickly, it is important that communications are planned where possible to prevent fatigue and result in tenants not engaging. Our communication plans will allow for consultations, surveys and digital communications to be evenly spaced out across the year. The Executive Officer will oversee ad hoc communications to ensure they are targeted, relevant and aim to minimise the frequency of communications where possible.

5) **Value for money** – with the need to communicate through various channels, it is important that we understand which channels represent the best value for money.

12.2 **Risk Management implications**
Protecting the reputation of the company is an important part of the work we do, and the implementation of this strategy will continue to reinforce this work.

12.3 The Communications Strategy also plays a key role in helping to mitigate the risks identified in the Risk Register. This ensures we provide effective, appropriate and high-quality communication of our key messages to all stakeholders.

12.4 Major investment works such as stonework repairs can raise safety concerns for tenants and cause disruption if not communicated clearly. Where information is limited, this can lead to uncertainty for residents and reputational risk for the Association. The Communications Strategy therefore includes a more structured approach to keeping tenants and owners informed of any issues and how concerns about building safety can be reported

13.0 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

13.1 MHA is committed to equal opportunities, and we will respond to the different needs and service requirements of individuals, and we will not discriminate against any individual for any reason outlined in Equality & Human Rights Legislation.

14.0 Value for Money

14.1 This means balancing the need to have a varied approach to all communications, providing communication using the customer's preferred method of contact but also gaining value for money in terms of return rates and levels of engagement.

14.2 The increasing use of social media, online access to services by our customers and in-person events will continue to reinforce this VFM approach.

15.0 Measuring success

15.1 The plan will be monitored by our Executive Officer. Where appropriate, we will look to evaluate impact using a variety of methods to demonstrate our impact and reach including:

- Website and social media analytics.
- Engagement level reports with digital communications
- Survey/consultation returns compared per channel of communication
- Staff feedback
- Awards and accreditations
- Value for Money

16.0 Strategy Monitoring & Review

16.1 We will review this Communication Strategy annually alongside the Tenant Participation Strategy to ensure that it continues to reflect our Strategic Objectives and the commitments laid out in our Business Plan.

16.2 Analytical measures are important as they will help define the transparency, accountability and performance of our communication methods. These results will be reported to the management committee and will include the website, social media. As new communication technologies are introduced, we will ensure that analytical reporting is available.

16.3 Evaluation, through more effective use of short surveys and other tenant participation activities, will be incorporated into our Communications Action Plan and the annual Communications Planner and Tracker, which provides a calendar of communication activities, both internally and externally.

16.4 Once an action point in the Communications Action Plan has been completed and signed off, the Communications Strategy will be updated to reflect this where necessary.

16.5 The Communication Strategy will be reviewed by the management committee on an annual basis, or as otherwise deemed necessary.

16.6 The next review will be completed in January 2027.