

Making a Difference

Engaging and inspiring

Communications Strategy
2025-2030



watford
community
housing

Effective **communication** is vital to every relationship. We believe in proactively driving **positive engagement** with our customers and communities, as well as fostering **strong partnerships**, to enhance our reputation and build trust.

Through clear communications, we will help people to understand and access the full range of services and support we offer, and we will inspire them to work with us to make a difference.

Our Communications Strategy sets out how we will deliver consistent and informative messages that provide the foundations for excellent relationships with our customers, communities and stakeholders.

By building our brand, we will continue to be recognised as a partner of choice for other organisations, and an employer that attracts talented individuals and top performers who can help us succeed.



Reflecting who we are

The way that organisations communicate says a lot about who they really are.

Through all our communications, we will demonstrate our commitment to putting people at the heart of our work and making a real difference, reflecting our status as a Community Gateway housing association and reinforcing our brand.



Our key principles

There are several key principles we follow, to make sure that we deliver a clear and consistent message about who we are. Everything we do is underpinned by both our **vision** and our **values**, emphasising our focus on delivering for our customers and communities, and being professional, forward-thinking and collaborative.

As a valued local partner and a service provider that people rely on, we commit to being **open, honest, friendly, supportive** and **informative** in all our communications.

We will demonstrate a clear understanding of our target audiences, ensuring that we tailor our communications to make them accessible and appropriate for the recipient.

To build trust in our brand and give reassurance to our customers and other stakeholders, we will maintain high standards of quality, professionalism and accuracy.

We will also ensure that our communications are inclusive and reflect the diversity in our communities.

Succeeding together

The purpose of all our communications is to ensure that we deliver for our customers, communities, partners and people. With this in mind, our approach will always be informed by our Business Plan objectives and the needs of our key audiences.

We will be proactive, with comprehensive plans in place for customer communications and key projects, to ensure we are thinking ahead and planning for success.



A trusted brand

Our branding also plays a key role in showing people who we are and what we stand for. To build trust and recognition, we will continue to develop our brand to position ourselves as a dynamic, forward-thinking, values-driven business that puts customers and communities first.

We will provide information and support to ensure employees understand our branding, and can use it correctly and confidently, upholding our standards and values.

To support our growth, we will also continue to develop our Group brands – including our commercial subsidiary, Clarendon Living, and our joint ventures with key local authority partners. By managing and utilising these brands effectively, we will increase recognition and trust in our work.

Knowing our audiences

We are committed to delivering personalised services for our customers and building strong partnerships with a variety of different groups of people.

To ensure that we engage effectively, we will tailor our communications according to who we are talking to, understanding the kinds of information they need and how they prefer to receive it.



Our customers and communities

Our customers include tenants, leaseholders, shared owners and other people who use our services – such as those who hire our community hubs or rent our garages. By offering the right information and support, we can deliver a great customer experience and help people to get the most out of the services we provide.

We will champion engagement opportunities to build a strong and influential membership, and we will also aim to reach the wider population in the areas we serve, to promote the work we do to enhance communities.



‘By offering the right information and support, we can deliver a great customer experience and help people to get the most out of the services we provide.’

Partners and stakeholders

Our partnerships are central to our success. We work closely with the local authorities in our area to deliver new homes and nurture safe and vibrant communities – alongside other key organisations such as the police, health services, charities, other housing associations and development partners.

We also have valued relationships with stakeholders including MPs, local councillors, industry bodies, regulators, lenders and funders. To maintain close and meaningful relationships with existing and potential partners, we will continue to enhance our reputation as a forward-thinking organisation by sharing our success stories and showcasing opportunities to work with us.



Our people

Our success is built on the vision, dedication and talent of our employees, as well as our Group Board and committee members, and the resident representatives on our Gateway Membership Team.

Our internal communications will help our teams to work more closely and effectively together, by building a strong values-based culture with high levels of employee satisfaction. We will ensure our people are engaged and inspired by the work we do, and we will tell a compelling story externally, so that prospective employees recognise us as an excellent employer.

‘We are proud of the positive impact we have on our local communities.’

Press and media

We are proud of the positive impact we have on our local communities, so we will promote our achievements by sharing them with local and sector press and media. Through proactive PR and media management, we will grow our brand and raise awareness of our work, the services we offer, and the support we give to our communities.

To enhance and protect our reputation, we will also manage reactive communications professionally, including comprehensive and proactive crisis management if it is required. In the event of more complex situations arising, we may use external agencies to support our communications activity and ensure a good service to customers and stakeholders.



Reaching people

We want to make it as easy as possible for people to engage with us. By using a range of external communications channels, we will maximise our reach and offer customers and partners a choice of ways to interact with us and find the information they need.

With the right array of channels in place, we will be able to communicate key messages proactively, as well as delivering effective reactive communications when they are needed.



Online options

Because online services offer the simplest way to get things done, we take a 'digital first' approach. We will continue to enhance our online offer, empowering people to self-serve and access key information whenever they need it.

Our Group website, at **wcht.org.uk**, will remain the first port of call for those looking for information and support. We will maintain and develop the site, along with our Clarendon Living website at **clarendonliving.co.uk**, to meet our business objectives and the needs of our customers, partners and stakeholders.

In line with our Digital Strategy, we will continue to improve our **online services** to offer greater choice and flexibility, making it easy for people to manage their tenancy through their online account.

We will utilise **social media** to communicate key messages, boost engagement with our services and promote our work. By monitoring social media trends and usage patterns, we will ensure we are using the right platforms to reach our key audiences.

To celebrate the work we do, share updates on our services, help people to get the most out of their tenancy and promote partnership opportunities, we will also produce regular **email newsletters** for three of our key audiences – customers, stakeholders and local councillors.

'We will continue to enhance our online offer, empowering people to self-serve and access key information whenever they need it.'

Enhanced digital channels

To deliver an improved customer experience, we will embrace new channels that allow us to share information with residents more quickly, in ways that are convenient for them.

We will continue to use **text messaging** to keep customers informed, especially for messages that are urgent – such as during an emergency – or targeted only at residents in a particular area. We will make sure that automated messages, such as those generated around repairs, are clear, easy to understand and enhance the customer journey.

To make it easier for customers to get the support they need, we will introduce the option to contact our Customer Service team through an **instant messaging** service.

We will make use of **video calling** for faster resolution of repairs issues, and we will make membership events such as our Annual General Meeting and our Tenant Question Time (TQT) accessible to more people through **live streaming**.

By expanding our use of **digital signage** in our blocks, we will also deliver targeted information and useful updates to more residents.



Reaching people

Making best use of print

Although our aim is to be 'digital first', we understand that people's preferences vary. While we will continue to drive up engagement through digital channels, print remains the most effective method to reach many of our customers, so we will use it to complement our online options and ensure our communications are more accessible.

We will continue to produce our **Voice newsletter**, which contains key updates for customers on our services, activity in our communities and the work of the Gateway Membership Team.

To promote service information and local events, we will produce **booklets, leaflets, posters** and **postcards**.

We will also continue to send **letters** when we need to share key updates and documents, such as information on changes to customers' rent and service charges. We will ensure that customer letters are consistently professional and written to a high standard, and that the use of mail is cost-efficient and only used when it is appropriate, so that we deliver value for money. For customers whose first language isn't English, we will continue to arrange for information to be translated on request.

'We will always embrace opportunities to build relationships with people in person.'



Face-to-face communications

As a Community Gateway organisation, we will always embrace opportunities to build relationships with people **in person**. We will maximise opportunities for events that enable direct engagement with customers, including those who are members, as well as partners and other stakeholders.

Working together

Effective internal communications play a crucial role in helping our people to succeed and our teams to work well together.

By giving people the information and resources they need, and ensuring that our communications are underpinned by our values, we will help to build a strong culture and foster employee engagement.

Embedding our values

Our [People Strategy](#) sets out how we will make a difference to the working lives of our employees. To meet these aims, we will deliver high-quality internal communications that consistently reflect our values, setting the right tone for our business and inspiring people to deliver for our customers and communities.

In line with our commitment to championing equality, diversity and inclusion, we will ensure that our internal communications help to build an inclusive culture, where all our employees feel comfortable to be themselves.



'We will ensure that our internal communications help to build an inclusive culture, where all our employees feel comfortable.'

Informed and supported

To help people succeed, we will make sure that it is easy for them to find the information, support and guidance that they need in order to perform well in their role.

We will maintain and develop our intranet, ensuring it serves as a comprehensive source of information for employees, and evolves in line with our business needs.

To promote events, boost staff engagement and share key information effectively, we will make use of a range of channels, including emails, posters, printed materials, wall graphics and digital screens.



Supporting success

We are proud of the work we do to make a difference to people's lives.

Through our communications, marketing and promotional activity, we will help more people to find out about the positive impact we have on our communities.

By celebrating our achievements, we will support our commercial activities and raise our profile as a great landlord, service provider and employer.



Desirable developments

When we build new homes, we are committed to improving neighbourhoods as well as creating valuable opportunities for individuals. To support community cohesion, we will help to deliver communications around **new developments** to ensure that local communities understand how we are working to enhance their area and minimise the impact of construction works.

We will also work with the sales and marketing agents for our developments, to help promote the availability of homes for shared ownership, sale or market rent, ensuring that marketing materials make proper use of our branding.

Delivering for our communities

Our community hubs help to bring people in our neighbourhoods together. To ensure their ongoing success, we will support the marketing of our community hub spaces, as well as the groups and activities they host. We will also help to promote the availability of garages for rent within our communities.

We will continue to celebrate our forward-thinking approach to partnership working, particularly as we look to play a prominent role in meeting the decarbonisation agenda in the run-up to 2030 – taking a lead on delivering energy-efficient homes by ensuring that all our properties achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of at least band C by 2028, two years ahead of the government’s deadline.

Enhancing our reputation

To attract and retain talented individuals who can help us to deliver for our customers, we will promote our employee offer so that we are recognised in the sector as a rewarding, community-focused business to work for, where people have opportunities to develop their careers and make a difference in the world.

We will also seek to raise our profile through awards, to celebrate our achievements and gain recognition for the work we do.



Informed by our customers

Our work is driven by the needs of our customers and communities.

We will work closely with residents, using their feedback to deliver communications that are informative and accessible.

By monitoring and measuring the success of our communications, we will ensure that we are continuously improving and helping to deliver a great customer experience.





Working with residents

To measure the quality of our communications and ensure that they meet our customers' needs, we will review our main communications and key channels with the Gateway Membership Team (GMT). This will include larger mailings, such as those for changes to rent and service charges, and the content and usability of our website.

We will continue to regularly work with the GMT to agree content for our Voice newsletter and our wider communications – including promoting activities and services that benefit our customers and communities, any changes to our services, and updates from the GMT on their involvement with our work and how they are representing tenants.

Monitoring and measuring

To ensure that our communications activities align with our wider Business Plan objectives, we will provide regular reporting for the Group Board and our Executive Management Team. We will monitor the success of our communications where it is measurable, through usage analytics for our website, intranet, social media posts and digital newsletters.

‘We will review our main communications and key channels with the Gateway Membership Team.’



Making a Difference

Communications Strategy
2025-2030



watford
community
housing