



Housing Association Ltd
more than just a roof

Post and Communications Policy

KARIN HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Post and Communications Policy

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed in all Karin's communications. These include post, email, telephone, fax and communications to and from the Board.

Karin needs to maintain an efficient communications policy so that relevant information is processed and stored. This procedure must be followed by all staff.

1.0. Post

Incoming post

- 1.1. All incoming post should be opened (preferably in the presence of two staff), date stamped and passed to the Director who will then distribute it to relevant staff.
- 1.2. Junk mail should be discarded.
- 1.3. All incoming post (other than magazines, fliers, product information, etc) should be logged in an incoming post register before being passed to the Director.
- 1.4. In the absence of the Director a designated officer will deal with incoming post.
- 1.5. Particular attention should be paid to urgent and important communications.
- 1.6. All items, even those marked "Private and Confidential" unless they are marked "Personal" or "To be opened by Addressee only" must be opened. Quite often many standard communications such as bank statements etc. are marked "Private and Confidential" when they are not at all private or confidential.
- 1.7. Any communication addressed specifically to the Chair or Board members should be passed on to them immediately by post or by fax retaining a copy for the office records.
- 1.8. Any cash received by post (which should be rare) should be counted in front of another member of staff and a receipt should be sent to the person who posted it with the advice that they should not send cash through the post. This amount should be immediately banked and a copy of the receipt

passed on to the member of staff responsible for maintaining the rent accounting system.

- 1.9. Similarly all cheques received should be receipted (other than Housing Benefit cheques) and the receipt posted to the sender. Cheques must be banked within 48 hours preferably within 24 hours.

Outgoing post

- 1.10. All outgoing correspondence should be written in correct English, should be free from errors and neatly typed following the company style. The author's reference should be on all correspondence.
- 1.11. Two copies should be produced, one put in the relevant file immediately or not later than the end of the day and the other in a Day File in date order. This requirement does not apply to *standard* rent arrears letters.
- 1.12. Filing must not be accumulated and all items must be filed in the correct file at the end of the day.
- 1.13. If possible, outgoing correspondence should have as a reference the initials of the person sending it and name or reference number of the file. If it relates to a tenant, the reference should also have the name of the tenant and preferably the tenant's address.
- 1.14. It is Karín's intention to avoid paper communications. Therefore all correspondence should have the author's telephone number and an email address.
- 1.15. Important letters should be copied to relevant officers (senior staff or Board members) for their information.

2.0. Telephone messages

- 2.1. In all cases take down the name of the caller, his/her telephone number and a clear and understandable message. Telephone numbers should be repeated to the caller so that they are correctly taken. The message should then be passed on to the relevant person as soon as possible. All messages should be taken on duplicate message pads in case the message gets lost.
- 2.2. Any important messages should be immediately communicated to the relevant person e.g. another member of staff or a Board member.
- 2.3. All messages should be dealt with and replied to the same or next day.

3.0. Emails

- 3.1. Correspondence by email is encouraged as it is instant, does not cost anything and is easily stored.
- 3.2. When sending an email please ensure that you copy it to other relevant person(s).
- 3.3. If you receive an email message that has been copied to third parties, click on Reply to All when you reply.
- 3.4. All important emails should be printed and put on file.
- 3.5. Emails beyond a certain date, say three months ago, should be archived. They should not be deleted. Use the archive feature in Microsoft Outlook.
- 3.6. Create a Contacts list for all senders of emails by copying the email address of the sender into your Outlook Address Book.

4.0. Faxes

- 4.1. If you send a fax it is not always necessary to send a hard copy. Use your discretion and avoid unnecessary duplication. Only important documents or letters sent by fax should have a hard copy sent by mail.
- 4.2. Faxes received should be immediately passed on to the relevant person.

5.0. Communications to and from Board members

- 5.1. Communications to Board members should be sent by email wherever possible but there may be some communications that have to be sent by post (if there is an enclosure).
- 5.2. File a copy in the "Correspondence to and from Board members" file.
- 5.3. Reports for Board meetings should be collated, paginated and sent to Board members at least seven days before the meeting.
- 5.4. Minutes of Board meetings should be transcribed within seven days and checked with the Chair of the meeting for any obvious omissions or errors. They should then be presented to the next meeting for correction and adoption. Corrections should not be amended in the minutes but listed in the minutes of the following meeting.

6.0. File Notes

- 6.1. File notes should be prepared of all meetings or visits and should be filed in the relevant file with a copy in the day file.
- 6.2. File notes should have the name of the author, the date of the file note, the date of the meeting, visit or event.
- 6.3. File notes should be succinct and have only the relevant information.
- 6.4. Personal comments should be avoided in file notes.

7.0. Files

- 7.1. Files should be kept neat and in date order. Duplicate copies of letters or documents should not be placed in files as these will make the file unnecessarily bulky.
- 7.2. From time to time files need to be "pruned". Older material which is no longer necessary can be discarded or archived.

Person Responsible for the review of this policy:
Date of this review:
Date Board approved:
Date next review is due:

Ibrahim Ali
March 2012
May 2012
March 2015