



Yenaa Housing

Digital Inclusion Policy



213 SOHO ROAD BIRMINGHAM B21 9SX



www.yenaa.co.uk



0121 6616 331



operations@yenaa.co.uk

Policy Checklist	
Date of Implementation	Feb 24
Date of Last Review	Feb 26
Date of Next Review	Feb 28

Purpose and scope

This policy describes Yenaa Housing's commitment to promoting digital inclusion for residents, staff, volunteers and applicants. It applies to all staff, contractors and trustees, and to the delivery of services for people living in Yenaa Housing managed supported exempt accommodation in England (Birmingham). The policy seeks to ensure fair and equitable access to digital services, reduce digital exclusion, and meet relevant legal and regulatory obligations including the Equality Act 2010, the Data Protection Act 2018 (UK GDPR), the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 where applicable, and guidance from the Regulator of Social Housing and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Policy statement

Yenaa Housing recognises that digital exclusion (lack of access, skills, confidence or motivation) can deepen social isolation and restrict access to essential services. We are committed to:

- Ensuring our digital services are accessible, secure and inclusive.
- Providing alternative non-digital routes for residents who cannot or choose not to use digital services.
- Supporting residents and staff to develop digital skills, access devices and affordable connectivity where practicable.
- Protecting personal data and maintaining cybersecurity when delivering digital services.

Principles

1. Accessibility and usability

- Digital services (websites, online forms, emails, digital reporting such as WhatsApp) will be designed or selected to be usable and accessible to the widest possible audience, following WCAG 2.1 AA best practice where reasonably practicable.
- Clear information about accessibility features and alternatives will be provided. For statutory content or key resident-facing pages we will aim to meet the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations standard where feasible.

2. Equality and reasonable adjustments

- Under the Equality Act 2010 we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure people with disabilities can access digital services (e.g. larger text, audio options, alternative formats, staff-supported access).
- Individual needs will be considered in service delivery plans and at tenancy/support planning stages.

3. Multiple access routes and avoiding digital-only delivery

- Digital channels (online forms, email, WhatsApp) will complement, not replace, telephone, face-to-face or paper options.
- Where an online application, reporting or payment route is offered, equally effective alternative arrangements will be available without penalty.

4. Skills, devices and connectivity support

- We will signpost and, where possible, facilitate access to digital skills training, community drop-in support, device lending schemes or subsidy options and information on affordable connectivity (including social tariffs).
- Staff will be trained to support residents with basic digital skills and to identify those who need help.

5. Data protection, privacy and cybersecurity

- All digital services will comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Personal data collection will be minimised and processed lawfully, transparently and securely.
- Digital tools (including WhatsApp) will be used in line with Yenaa Housing's data protection, communications and acceptable use policies. Residents will be informed about how their data is used, retained and their rights to access or correct it.
- Security controls, strong password guidance, device management and staff training on phishing and safe use will be maintained to protect residents' and organisational data.

6. Procurement and technology choices

- When procuring digital platforms or services, Yenaa Housing will assess accessibility, data protection, security, value for money and vendor accountability (including data processing agreements).
- Preference will be given to suppliers demonstrating compliance with accessibility standards, robust security practices and ability to provide support or reasonable adjustments.

Operational delivery

- Reporting repairs and welfare concerns: WhatsApp and online reporting forms will be available; guidance on safe use and alternative reporting routes (telephone, in-person via support staff) will be clear. Consent and privacy considerations for messaging apps will be explained; sensitive information should be handled via secure channels.
- Communications: Important notices (safety, rent, repairs, welfare) will be provided through multiple channels to ensure reach to digitally excluded residents.
- Training and support: Staff induction and ongoing training will include digital inclusion awareness, safe use of messaging apps, data protection duties and how to support residents. Yenaa will maintain a directory of local digital skills initiatives and device/access programmes to signpost residents.
- Monitoring and feedback: Usage data, access inequalities, complaints and resident feedback will be monitored to identify gaps. Digital services will be reviewed and adjusted annually or when service change requires.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

- Digital engagement with vulnerable residents must follow safeguarding procedures and confidentiality principles. Staff must not discuss sensitive welfare matters over insecure or public platforms.
- Where safeguarding concerns arise through digital communications, staff will follow the safeguarding policy and escalate appropriately.

Alternatives and reasonable adjustments (examples)

- Paper forms, face-to-face appointments, telephone reporting and advocacy support.
- Assisted digital support where staff complete online forms with a resident's consent.
- Documents in large print, audio, Braille or translated into other languages according to assessed need.

Data handling and record keeping

- Digital records will be stored securely, retained and disposed of according to Yenaa Housing's retention schedule and data protection policy.
- Use of third-party messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp) will be governed by clear guidance: personal staff devices should comply with acceptable use policy, data minimisation applied, consent recorded for storing messages, and transfer of sensitive data to secure case management systems as soon as practicable.