

Southside

HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ICT

Acceptable Usage Policy

February 2019

Issued:	February 2019
Update:	N/A
Next Review:	February 2022

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1. Introduction

It is the responsibility of all users of the Southside Housing Association (SHA) Information & Communications Technology (ICT) services to read and understand this policy. This policy is subject to update from time to time, in order to comply with legal and policy requirements.

1.1. Purpose

This Acceptable Usage Policy provides a framework for the use of the SHA ICT resources. Specific guidance relating to the use of specific ICT platforms and technology is provided within the appendices of this policy, however the policy should be interpreted in its widest application and includes new and emerging technologies and uses, which may not be explicitly referred to.

SHA staff who have been issued SHA mobile devices should read, sign and return the 'Acceptable Usage Policy and Agreement (Association Issued Mobile Device)' to the SHA ICT Manager.

1.2. Scope

Members of SHA and all other users (staff, volunteers, customers, visitors, contractors and others) of the SHA network are also bound by this Acceptable Use Policy.

2. Acceptable Use

SHA seeks to promote and facilitate the positive and extensive use of ICT in the interests of supporting the delivery of housing and support services. This also requires appropriate and legal use of the technologies and facilities made available to staff, customers and stakeholders of SHA.

3. Unacceptable Use

Notwithstanding the content set out in section 2, users of the SHA network are required to use SHA ICT services appropriately and in a way that would not present a risk to themselves, SHA or other stakeholders, including third parties. Users are expected to conform to the following guidance relating to content, nature of use, software and access, and exemptions at all times.

3.1. Content

The SHA Network may not be used directly or indirectly by a user for the download, creation, manipulation, transmission or storage of:

- Any offensive, obscene or indecent images, data or other material, or any data capable of being resolved into obscene or indecent images or material;

- Unlawful material, or material that is defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, extremist or which has the potential to radicalise themselves or others;
- Unsolicited “nuisance” emails;
- Material which is subsequently used to facilitate harassment, bullying and/or victimisation of a member of the SHA staff or customer community, or a third party;
- Material which promotes discrimination on the basis of race, gender, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
- Material with the intent to defraud or which is likely to deceive a third party;
- Material which advocates or promotes any unlawful act;
- Material that infringes the intellectual property rights or privacy rights of a third party, or that is in breach of a legal duty owed to another party; or
- Material that brings SHA into disrepute.

3.2. Nature of Use

The SHA Network must not be deliberately used by a user for activities having, or likely to have, any of the following characteristics:

- Intentionally wasting staff effort or other SHA resources;
- Corrupting, altering or destroying another User’s data without their consent;
- Disrupting the work of other Users or the correct functioning of the SHA Network; or
- Denying access to the SHA Network and its services to other users.

3.3. Software and Access

Users of the SHA network shall not:

- Introduce data-interception, password-detecting or similar software or devices to the SHA Network;
- Seek to gain unauthorised access to restricted areas of the SHA Network;
- Access or try to access data where the user knows or ought to know that they should have no access;
- Carry out any hacking activities; or
- Intentionally or recklessly, introduce any form of spyware, computer virus or other potentially malicious software.

3.4. Exemptions

In exceptional circumstances, there may be legitimate activities carried out using the SHA network that could be considered unacceptable use, as defined at 2a-e. In such circumstances advice should be sought, in advance, from the SHA ICT Manager.

Any activities involving unacceptable material must always be discussed and approved in advance with the SHA ICT Manager. If a member of the SHA community believes they may have encountered breaches of any of the above, they should make this known to the SHA IT Manager via email or by completing an incident report.

The ICT Manager must keep the Head of Finance abreast of any matters arising in respect of a deviation from the specified policy as referred to above.

4. Consequences of Breach

In the event of a breach of this Acceptable Use Policy by a user, SHA may in its sole discretion:

- Restrict or terminate a user's right to use the Network;
- Withdraw or remove any material uploaded by that User in contravention of this Policy; or
- Where appropriate, disclose information to law enforcement agencies and take any legal action against a user for breach of this Policy, including but not limited to claiming all costs, fees and disbursements (including but not limited to legal fees) connected therewith.

In addition, where the user is also an SHA staff member or volunteer, SHA may take such action, disciplinary or otherwise, as it deems appropriate in accordance with disciplinary procedures.

5. Appendices

- **Appendix 1:** Internet Usage Guidance
- **Appendix 1:** Email Usage Guidance

Appendix 1: Internet Usage Guidance

1.	SHA provides users with access to the internet for the purposes of conducting business on behalf of SHA, or for researching and gathering information required within the users' job role.
2.	SHA allows appropriate personal use of the internet out with working hours including lunch times. This policy applies to personal use as well as business use.
3.	Users are required to comply with and observe all restrictions as personal use may be notified from time to time.
4.	Users are reminded that SHA regularly monitors and audits all users' internet activity.
5.	SHA applies a content filter to all users' internet access to control access to unauthorised sites. The filter restricts access to non-work related sites during working hours
6.	Although software is available for download from the internet, it is not permitted and restrictions are in place to prevent this.
7.	Some organisations accept orders for goods or services via the internet. The fact that internet access has been granted does not authorise a user to place orders in the name of SHA. No orders are to be placed via the internet without prior authorisation through the normal departmental procedures. Failure to comply with this may result in disciplinary action.
8.	To ensure security and to prevent the spread of viruses, users accessing the internet through an Association ICT resource must do so through the internet firewall. Bypassing SHA's internet firewall by accessing the internet by other means is strictly prohibited and will result in suspension of access and/or disciplinary action.
9.	The email address supplied to you by SHA should not be used in conjunction with any internet site unless required for a business purpose.
10.	SHA strongly advises against conducting any personal sensitive or financial transactions using Association ICT resources, as no special precautions are in place to protect information associated with this. SHA cannot be held liable for any loss or damage arising from the personal use of its ICT

	resources.
11.	Personal use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter may not be used during working hours.
12.	Information or images belonging to SHA, for example images of tenants, staff or service users must not be uploaded to any internet site including social media sites without the express written permission of the individual involved. Failure to comply with this may lead to disciplinary action.

Appendix 2: Email Usage Guidance

1.	E-mail communications, either internally or via the internet, are not guaranteed to be private or to arrive at their destination either within a particular time, or at all.
2.	E-mail is a business communication tool and as such should reflect a professional business image at all times. This applies to emails sent internally within and externally of SHA.
3.	Care must be taken when using e-mail as a means of communication as all expressions of fact, intention and opinion via e-mail may bind you and/or SHA and can be produced in legal proceedings in the same way as oral or written statements.
4.	SHA's standard disclaimer will be automatically incorporated in all external email communications.
5.	Do not make personal or other inappropriate remarks about customers or colleagues in internal or external e-mails as this could result in action for defamation for which you would be held liable.
6.	Users should not abuse other users in e-mail messages (known as 'flaming'), even in response to abuse directed at them. Any abusive e-mails should be reported to the ICT team.
7.	SHA's e-mail service should not be used to conduct personal business i.e. confirmation of an online purchase, booking holidays. This should be conducted via an external provider of internet mail accounts e.g. Hotmail, Yahoo etc. Users should keep the use of personal email to during break periods or in exceptional circumstances and should note that the content of any personal e-mail is the property of SHA and subject to the conditions of Privacy outlined in Section 13 of this Policy.
8.	SHA e-mail address assigned to you should only be used for business communications and only submitted on the internet for business purposes.
9.	If you receive an e-mail for which you are not the intended recipient, you should inform the ICT team and delete the message from your system.
10.	Although e-mail is not formal media and should not be used for formal communications of a contractual nature where a permanent record needs to

	be kept, it can constitute a legally binding contract in some circumstances.
11.	Users should not forward confidential or personal material e-mailed to them by others, particularly to internet newsgroups or mailing lists without the permission of the original sender of the message
12.	Users should avoid sending excessively large e-mails or attachments. This is not an economical or sensible way to handle large documents and can effectively halt the e-mail system.
13.	Users must not use anonymous mailing services to conceal their identity when mailing through the internet, falsify e-mails to make them appear to originate from someone else, or provide false information to any internet service which requests name, e-mail address or other details.
14.	Circulation of chain mail or jokes which may contain defamatory or offensive content is strictly forbidden on SHA's ICT resources

6. SHA Employee Statement

I have read the Southside Housing Association **IT Acceptable Usage Policy** and I agree to comply with the guidelines set out within it.

Print Name:	
Date:	
Signature:	