

# **Openness & Confidentiality Policy**

Approved on: 13 December 2007  
Board of Management

Openness is essential to Accountability. The Association recognises the importance of conducting its affairs openly and is committed to the objective of open access to information unless there are good and justifiable reasons to withhold that information.

The Association will generally respond to all reasonable requests for information about its activities, policies and procedures and performance unless the information requested is commercially or financially sensitive, personal or confidential, or unless its release would amount to a breach of the law. The Association will undertake the following specific actions:-

- **Board and Committee Meetings**

Ensure that all meetings of the Board and of the Committees of the Board are held in accordance with the Rules and Standing Orders of the Association and that Members discharge their responsibilities for the effective governance of the Association.

Publish Minutes of Board and Committee meetings on Bield's web-site and make available upon request, with the exception of confidential and restricted Minutes.

- **Board and Committee papers**

Make available upon request Board and Committee papers, with the exception of confidential or restricted papers.

- **Policies**

Publish main policies on Bield's web-site and make available upon request.

- **Inspection Reports**

Publish copies of Inspection Reports issued by Communities Scotland and the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care on Bield's web-site and make available upon request.

- **Annual Report - Performance Report – Annual Accounts**

Publish the Annual Report, Performance Report and Annual Accounts on Bield's web-site.

Circulate the Annual Report and Performance Report to all members of the Association, to Members of the Scottish Parliament, to Scottish Members of the Westminster Parliament, to local authorities and other stakeholders as appropriate. Copies will also be circulated to tenant members of the Partnership Forum and a supply sent to all housing schemes and projects owned and managed by the Association. Copies of the Annual Accounts will be circulated to members and appropriate stakeholders.

Provide upon request copies of the Annual Report, Performance Report, Annual Accounts, Rules of the Association and Membership Policy.

- **Bield Bulletin**

Publish on Bield's web-site and distribute the Bield Bulletin to tenants, service users, staff and volunteers normally three times each year with a broad range of information on Bield's activities. Provide a broad range of information to tenants and service users through Handbooks, additional Newsletters, etc as appropriate.

- **Partnership Forum** (16 elected tenants, Chairs and senior staff)

To share information and ideas within the Partnership Forum in an open and transparent manner in accordance with Bield's Tenant Participation Strategy.

- **Joint Information and Consultative Forum(s)**

To share information and ideas within the Joint Information and Consultative Forum(s) in an open and transparent manner in accordance with our Framework for Employee Participation.

- **Equality of Access**

To seek to ensure equality of access to information through appropriate and sensitive means in relation to language or sensory impairment.

- **Confidentiality**

The Association reserves the right to withhold information deemed by it to be commercially or financially sensitive, personal or confidential or where release would breach the law. Further guidance on the use of, or access to, personal information is given within Bield's Data Protection Policy and within departmental Confidentiality Policies.

Requests for information should be sent to:-

The Business Support Manager  
79 Hopetoun Street  
Edinburgh  
EH7 4QF

Bield will seek to respond to any such requests within 20 working days.

A charge of £15.00 for each request may be made at the discretion of the Association.

(no charge will be made in respect of the Annual Report, Performance Report or Annual Accounts)