



Property Services Regulatory Authority

Communication Policy

CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1. PURPOSE AND AIMS | 3 |
| 2. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS | 3 |
| 3. COMMUNICATION METHODS | 4 |
| 4. COMMUNICATION | 7 |
| 5. PUBLIC CONDUCT AND COMMENT | 10 |
| 6. MEDIA | 10 |
| 7. COPYRIGHT | 10 |

1. PURPOSE AND AIMS

1.1 The Property Services Regulatory Authority (“the Authority”) was established on 3 April 2012 under the Property Services (Regulation) Act 2011 to licence and regulate licensed Property Services Providers (licensees), namely Auctioneers, Estate Agents, Letting Agents and Management Agents. The aim of this Policy is to build on the groundwork already in place in the area of communications with licensees and stakeholders.¹ The Authority is committed to ensuring that appropriate policies, procedures and monitoring arrangements are in place to support both internal and external communications.

1.2 The Authority is further committed to developing communication channels recognising that the key stakeholder groups who can support the Authority to improve services are those who deliver and use the services.

1.3 It is the aim of the Authority to continually improve communications, thus assisting stakeholders and the general public to understand the Authority’s objectives and reasons behind them.

2. OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

2.1 The Authority recognises that an important way forward is to ensure there is successful, meaningful and active engagement internally and externally between licensees, staff, members of the Authority, members of the public and professional bodies. This engagement can be achieved through effective communication.

As a Regulatory Body, the Authority advises licensees of progress and changes to legislation. It further informs the general public by utilising various communication methods about the Authority’s statutory remit, in particular the importance of using a licensed PSP. In instilling confidence and trust in the public’s use of a licenced operator and in working with stakeholders for the benefit of all, significant progress can be

¹ Stakeholders can include any group or individual affected by or with an interest in the remit of the Authority including licensees, the general public, professional bodies, government bodies, media and staff.

achieved. The Communication Policy sets out a number of ways in which the Authority can achieve this through effective communication.

2.2 The Authority's planned communication aims to:

- Communicate effectively and in a timely manner with all stakeholders regarding the wide range of functions and statutory responsibilities of the Authority.
- Engage with the media to highlight important legislative requirements of licensees and promote public awareness of the Authority.
- Increase public awareness / understanding of the role and achievements of the Authority. This includes in particular, the importance of using a licensed Property Services Provider and the function of the Authority's three public registers.
- Develop opportunities for personal / face to face contact with licensees and members of the public and other stakeholders.
- Engage effectively and immediately with all stakeholders through its website.
- Listen to the views, issues and concerns of all stakeholders.

2.3 The Authority promotes a culture of openness and the Chief Executive and the Senior Management team regularly meet employees on a formal and informal basis to engage on current issues.

3. COMMUNICATION METHODS

The methods outlined in this Communication Policy represent an open and transparent communications framework. There are internal and external Critical Success Factors which will impact on the Authority's ability to deliver on this Policy. These include:

- Appropriately trained staff.

- Financial resources to enable the Authority to fulfil its objectives.
- Effective and responsive IT systems.
- On-going co-operation from and with all stakeholders.

| Action | Communication Method |
|--|---|
| Communicate effectively and in a timely manner with stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Newsletters – 4 per annum. • Email updates regarding regulation requirements and important information for licensees, as required. • Seminars. • Property Services Regulatory Authority Forum Meetings. |
| Engage with the media | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up media lists and issue press releases as required to advise stakeholders of relevant policy changes, legislative requirements and consumer matters. • Promote the Authority and its functions through media engagement. • Liaise with the media in the preparation and development of newspaper articles regarding key information to be disseminated to the public – develop and foster contacts, particularly in Property Sections of newspapers. • Publish newspaper adverts particularly in Property Sections. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in interviews with the media. • Promote particular themes of the Authority through media advertisement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unlicensed Operators. ○ Effectiveness of the Authority’s Public Registers. ○ Consumer Protection. |
| <p>Increase public awareness through</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising Outlets/Articles/Engagement. • Attendance at public events such as the Ideal Homes Show and the National Ploughing Championships. Other events to be considered. • Promotion of the Authority through publicising its public engagements and attendance at events on its website, www.psr.ie and through its newsletters. • Ongoing update of the Authority’s Public Registers. • Authority’s published guidance documents. |
| <p>Personal / face to face contact with stakeholders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with licensees through regular compliance audits and Authority seminars. • Meetings with licensees as required. • Attendance at Continuous Professional Development which promotes opportunities for engagement. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at public events such as the Ideal Homes Show or the National Ploughing Championships. |
| Engage effectively through the utilisation of the website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website to be updated regularly providing current, relevant and accurate information. • Promotion of the Authority’s three Public Registers (Register of Licensees, Property Price Register and Commercial Leases Register). • Publication of Prosecutions, Convictions and Major Sanctions. |
| Listen to the views, issues and concern of all stakeholders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback at time of audit of licensees. • Engagement with stakeholders at public events. |

4. COMMUNICATION

4.1 Communication Principles

The Authority recognises that excellence in communication practices will contribute to better public awareness and understanding of the Authority thus enhancing corporate reputation.

The Authority wishes to create positive and effective communication channels with all stakeholders and it is expected that such engagement will further highlight the Authority’s corporate identity and objectives.

The Authority is committed to the following communication principles for all of its stakeholders.

Our engagement with all stakeholders will be

- Clearly worded.
- Open and honest.
- Relevant, timely and accurate in content.
- Reflective of the importance and value we place on stakeholder engagement.
- Guided by the principles of transparency, fair procedure and appropriate confidentiality.
- Regulated by the provisions of legislation, such as Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

4.2 Communication Policy Objectives

- To develop effective communication channels between the Authority and its stakeholders.
- To ensure timely communication of changes or developments in functions of the Authority to stakeholders.
- To build and maintain stakeholder confidence in the quality of services provided by the Authority.
- To develop and sustain positive relationships with all stakeholders.
- To ensure that any developments or changes in regulation within the property sector are appropriately communicated to the relevant stakeholders both internally and externally.

4.3 Communication Engagement

The Authority recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders about key developments in a timely manner.

The Authority will achieve this through:

- The development of and adherence to the Authority’s Communication Policy.
- Increasing awareness amongst stakeholders of relevant information regarding the Authority’s remit and services.
- Promoting a positive corporate identity.
- Maintaining and monitoring methods of external communication such as:
 - Authority’s website material
 - Publications
 - Events
 - Media relations
 - Publication of details of major sanctions, revocations or convictions, including the identity of the company or individual involved, on the Authority’s website for the detailed period as outlined below:

| SANCTION | CLASS OF SANCTION | DURATION |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Major Sanction | Revocation | Duration of Revocation |
| Major Sanction | Suspension | Duration of Suspension |
| Major Sanction | Financial | 2 years |
| Conviction | | 2 years |
| Prosecutions with a recorded conviction | | 2 years |
| Injunctions granted by the High Court | | 2 years |

Once the relevant duration as set out above has passed, the identity of the company or individual involved will be anonymised. In the absence of a recorded conviction the authority does not identify parties to a prosecution.

Where multiple major sanctions are imposed, duration of publication of the company's or individual's identity is based on the duration of the longest sanction affirmed by the High Court.

5. PUBLIC CONDUCT AND COMMENT

The Chief Executive is the primary spokesperson for the Authority where public comment on behalf of the Authority regarding an aspect of the Authority's business is desirable or necessary. Otherwise, it is the Chairperson, in consultation with the Chief Executive. On sector specialist matters, other members of the Executive may be designated to speak by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Authority.

6. MEDIA

- Media Queries are dealt with through the Authority's Communications Team.
- Media Queries must be emailed to info@psr.ie.
- Media Queries will be acknowledged within one working day and responded to as soon as practicable.

7. COPYRIGHT

The supply of information under the Freedom of Information Act does not give the recipient or organisation that receives it, the right to re-use it in any way that would infringe copyright. This includes, but is not limited to making copies, publishing or issuing copies to the public. Permission to re-use the information must be obtained in advance from the Authority.