



# Our Annual Assurance Statement

We comply with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's (SHR) Framework, with the exception of those areas we set out below.

We:

- **Achieve all but the following standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services:**

- ◆ **1. Equalities**

Aberdeenshire Council meets all of the requirements of this Charter Outcome, aside from the requirement to collect information on the protected characteristics from existing tenants. We have considered the recently published guidance and are currently considering what changes we will make to our processes to achieve this.

- ◆ **4. Quality of Housing**

Aberdeenshire Council was not able to bring all of our properties up to the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by the deadline of December 2020. The Housing Service is working to identify alternative technologies and ways of delivering improvements to ensure that as many properties as possible are brought up to the standard. While the Covid Pandemic has significantly hampered planned improvements in 2020/21 and beyond, this was also a pre-existing issue.

The Council continues to review EESSH targets in light of EESSH2 2025 and 2032 deadlines and in line with the Scottish Government's guidance on EESSH may reschedule investment to ensure compliance with the 2032 milestone. While the uncertainty caused by the Pandemic has delayed this work, Aberdeenshire Council has started work on scoping and planning this phase of work.

This approach will be for works that are difficult to achieve due to ongoing Covid-19 impacts and are more economically and technically challenging, but which can be demonstrated to be the most cost-effective approach within an overall programme of work to improve the energy efficiency of the landlord's housing stock as part of EESSH2. We will also conduct a review to confirm which stock is a viable and sustainable long-term asset.



◆ **5. Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements**

The impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic prevented us from delivering a significant number of planned upgrades in 2020/21, and shortages in materials and labour have resulted in significant slippage in our Housing Improvement Plan (HIP) into 2021/22. The HIP programme showed substantial progress before the Pandemic, and we are therefore confident in saying that this is solely the result of Coronavirus and the associated ongoing challenges.

Aberdeenshire Council otherwise meets the requirements of this Charter Outcome, with repairs teams currently offering a full service to our tenants.

◆ **13. Value for Money**

Aberdeenshire Council is currently performing below expectations with regard to void turnover times and rent loss, although it meets the other requirements of this outcome. Aberdeenshire Council has now implemented an updated void procedure and lettable standard, following a full review of both processes and procedures. The changes implemented should drive improvements in both of these areas aforementioned. While Coronavirus had a significant impact on our ability to relet properties which is still being felt, void performance is a pre-existing issue, and therefore this failure is not solely the result of Covid-19.

- **Comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety, with the exception of the areas set out below:**

◆ **Gas Servicing**

Aberdeenshire Council has failed to renew 3 gas safety certificates within the correct timescale in 2021/22 to date. In two of these cases, this failure was entirely down to Covid-19, due to the tenant having to self-isolate and resulted in the checks being completed a day after the anniversary date. In the remaining case, the failure was the result of paperwork not being passed from an external contractor. Aberdeenshire Council are investigating measures to address this issue.

We confirm that we have seen and considered sufficient evidence to give us this assurance.

We confirm that our Annual Assurance Statement was approved at the meeting of Communities Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2021.

I sign this statement on behalf of the Committee.

**Chair's Signature:**

**Date: 26/10/21**