

Our Annual Assurance Statement

We comply with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Framework. This includes that we:

- achieve all of the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services

We comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety, with the following exceptions:

- Installations of LD2 compliant fire alarms: we have contracts in place to meet the regulations for all our properties in the next 3 to 6 months;
- Electrical safety testing: we have contracts in place to meet the regulations for all our properties in the next 3 to 6 months;
- Scottish Housing Quality Standard: we have contracts in place to meet the regulations for all our properties in the next 3 to 6 months.

We ensure that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is completed for assessing effects of policies, procedures and strategies to make sure they promote equality of opportunity and don't lead to discrimination. Currently our EIA has an integrated Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment to also assess for any socio-economic impacts and we are in the process of developing a new EIA to also include the Child Wellbeing Impact Assessment.

Human Rights issues are considered, where appropriate, in our Committee Reports.

Tenant Safety

The Regulator has asked all landlords for additional information about compliance with the following areas in relation to tenant safety:

Damp and Mould

A review of our procedures in dealing with damp and mould growth was carried out in early 2023. An updated leaflet was designed for our Tenant Information Packs, as a significant number of reports received are caused by condensation which can lead to mould growth. To ensure we cover all other forms of damp, a process was established

where a Clerk of Works will visit and provide Community Housing Teams with a report and resolutions. Where further investigations are needed in relation to structural damp issues, an external 3rd party report is instructed. We have established a Reactive Repairs Officer role. They will be responsible for the delivery of damp surveys. This revised process will ensure we meet the level of requests for help, find the source of damp issues in tenants' homes and provide a range of solutions to resolve the issues, including referrals to other services such as Angus HEAT and Welfare Rights.

Water Safety

We have a maintenance contract in place which provides annual, quarterly and monthly water safety checks (inc. Legionella testing) at all our sheltered complexes. This ensures our vulnerable tenants are protected in communal sheltered sites. All cold-water storage tanks have been removed and systems are upgraded to pressurised mains supply. The maintenance contract visits identify any plumbing works required, such as temperature control measures, or flushing of systems where they have been shut-off for extended periods. Our Community Housing Teams arrange for flushing-out of systems at Change of Tenancy prior to homes being re-let and, for our tenant's benefit, safety leaflets are included in tenancy packs to highlight a requirement to run taps/showers where the property has been unoccupied.

Lift Safety

A live maintenance contract carries out monthly inspections on all our lifts in sheltered complexes. This picks up any faults and includes a reactive call-out service for repairs reported from the site users. We also have an ongoing review of all lifts to either refurbish or replace older lift installations, five of which have been upgraded in the last 3 years. In addition to this, Zurich Insurance engineers carry out six-monthly visits to our sites to verify that our regular maintenance regime has been carried out.

Gas Safety

The continual review and monitoring of our contractors' access arrangements and inspection of all our gas properties to ensure gas safety has resulted in sound performance. Despite the difficulties regarding access, we are back at pre-pandemic access success rates and all our properties are checked for safety annually. There are exceptional circumstances that sometimes necessitate a delay in completing on time, but these circumstances are generally outwith our control.

Asbestos

We have actively worked to achieve an asbestos survey for every domestic and non-domestic asset within our property portfolio to comply with Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

Re-inspection of domestic properties with known asbestos containing materials present is carried out at every change of tenancy by the designated Housing Officer.

On leasing of a domestic property, the tenants are provided with a letter and leaflet regarding asbestos within the tenancy pack. Non-domestic properties have an onsite register with re-inspections being carried out on a yearly basis. To comply with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance, no works are permitted on a property without the provision of an asbestos survey being made available to the registered contractor, and, where required, further surveys are obtained. All asbestos removal works are carried out by a licensed contractor with HSE being notified.

A revision of the current asbestos procedures is under way to ensure no areas are being neglected and best practice is being achieved to ensure the safety of tenants, contractors and our staff.

Electrical Safety

A recent review of our process of maintaining Electrical Testing throughout our housing stock has highlighted areas for improvement. We are currently proactively addressing this and are providing monthly updates to the Scottish Housing Regulator. We have an ongoing contract, plus a further one to go live in the coming weeks, and these will ensure full compliance with statutory Electrical Testing requirements by early 2024. In parallel with this, we are developing a revised process to ensure that all our homes are fully compliant, both in terms of Electrical Testing and LD2 Fire/Smoke Alarm installations. Inspections and associated works will be carried out on a 5-yearly cyclical basis in accordance with current requirements.

Fire Safety

A recent review of our process of maintaining LD2 Fire/Smoke Alarm compliance throughout our housing stock has highlighted areas for improvement. We are currently proactively addressing this and we are providing monthly updates to the Scottish Housing Regulator. We have an ongoing contract, plus a further one to go live in the coming weeks, and these will ensure full compliance with statutory LD2 Fire/Smoke Alarm requirements by early 2024. In parallel with this, we are developing a revised process to ensure that all of our homes are fully compliant, both in terms of Electrical Testing and LD2 Fire/Smoke Alarm installations. Inspections and associated works will be carried out on a 5-yearly cyclical basis in accordance with current requirements.

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

We approved our Annual Assurance Statement at the meeting of our Communities Committee on 26 September 2023.

I sign this statement on behalf of the Committee.

Convener's signature:

Date: 26 September 2023