

The Governing Body of Blackwood Homes and Care (the Board) submits this Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). We have considered the requirements set out in the Regulatory Framework and we have seen appropriate assurance that Blackwood complies fully with two of the three elements in the Framework:

- Achieves all the Standards and Outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services
- Complies with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights and tenant health and safety.

Standards of Governance and Financial Management

The SHR has advised us that our historical approach to business planning did not bring together a fully comprehensive and joined up approach to priority setting that made clear the outcomes that Blackwood aimed to achieve for its tenants or our organisation, and how the Board would have oversight of these priorities and monitor progress. As a result, we confirm that:

- Blackwood is fully compliant with Standards 2, 5, 6 and 7
- Blackwood is currently non-compliant and working towards compliance with Standards 1, 3 and 4.

Standard Reference	Details
<p>Standard 1</p> <p>The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.</p>	<p>Non-compliance with 1.1: The governing body sets the RSL's strategic direction. It agrees and oversees the organisation's business plan to achieve its purpose and intended outcomes for its tenants and other service users.</p>
<p>Standard 3</p> <p>The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.</p>	<p>Partial compliance with 3.2: The governing body fully understands the implications of the treasury management strategy it adopts, ensures this is in the best interests of the RSL and that it understands the associated risks.</p>
	<p>Non-compliance with 3.3: The RSL has a robust business planning and control framework and effective systems to monitor and accurately report delivery of its plans. Risks to the delivery of financial plans are identified and managed effectively. The RSL considers sufficiently the financial implications of risks to the delivery of plans.</p>
	<p>Partial compliance with 3.4: The governing body ensures financial forecasts are based on appropriate and reasonable assumptions and information, including information about what tenants can afford to pay and feedback from consultation with tenants on rent increases.</p>

Standard Reference	Details
<p>Standard 4</p> <p>The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.</p>	<p>Concerns about compliance with 4.1: The governing body ensures it receives good quality information and advice from staff and, where necessary, expert independent advisors, that is timely and appropriate to its strategic role and decisions. The governing body is able to evidence any of its decisions.</p> <p>Partial compliance with 4.4: The governing body identifies risks that might prevent it from achieving the RSLs purpose and has effective strategies and systems for risk management and mitigation, internal control and audit.</p>

The Board has considered supporting evidence of the assurance processes that support compliance with the requirements. The evidence which supports this Statement includes:


- feedback from the Scottish Housing Regulator
- reports and updates from our Executive Team
- feedback from our customers and scrutiny group
- benchmarking with other landlords
- assurance from our internal audit function
- assurance, reports and analysis from our external auditors and financial consultants.

Engagement and Improvement

While Blackwood has continued to follow its historic approach to Business Planning believing it was a fully compliant approach, we recognise that work is now required to comply with the standards outlined above. We are fully committed to ensuring that Blackwood meets all the requirements of a Registered Social Landlord. We will work openly and constructively with the Regulator to return Blackwood to full compliance of all the Standards of Governance and Financial Management, including where we are not currently compliant.

We will also meet all the requirements in the Regulator's Engagement Plan with us, including sharing our plans for improvement, the timescales for those improvements, and any further information the Regulator requires.

This Assurance Statement was reviewed and approved by the Blackwood Board on 22 October 2024, and as Chair, the Board authorised me to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Chair's Name:	Julie McDowell
Chair's Signature:	
Date:	22 October 2024