Appendix 1

Dumfries & Galloway Annual Assurance Statement 2025/2026 to Scottish Housing Regulator

Housing Options and Homeless Service

Dumfries and Galloway Council's Social Work Services are responsible for the provision of Housing Options and Homeless Services to customers throughout Dumfries & Galloway. As a stock transfer authority Dumfries and Galloway Council has developed close working relationships with Registered Social Landlords across the region to ensure we are able to discharge our statutory duty to provide permanent accommodation which is sustainable and affordable. A person-centred approach is at the heart of our working practices to ensure that we meet our legislative requirements as set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework. We ensure compliance with the relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Monthly and quarterly returns are provided to the Scottish Government and a yearly Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) is provided to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

During 2025/26 there was a decrease of 9% in the number of homeless applications received in comparison to the previous year. The Service continues to experience pressures in relation to provision of Temporary Accommodation resulting in the utilisation of hotel accommodation to fulfil our statutory duty. Where hotel accommodation is provided, we are pro-active in ensuring a move to suitable furnished temporary accommodation as quickly as possible. The Service has access to furnished temporary accommodation and limited access to hotel resources in all areas of high demand. The high levels of demand remain a budgetary and resourcing pressure for the service which is being monitored and managed closely.

The Council recognises it is currently at high risk of systematic failure in their duty to provide temporary accommodation and recognises that whilst there has been a decrease of 3% in the number of breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in relation to this, the number of breaches remains too high. The ongoing pressures are regularly highlighted through the Council's Governance system to the relevant Committee(s). Dumfries & Galloway Council has always fulfilled its statutory duty to offer temporary homeless accommodation to customers. This accommodation may be throughout the Region dependant on availability. We provide monthly reports to Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator on breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and the impact of the removal of Local Connection. Through our engagement plan with the Scottish Housing Regulator and our quarterly meetings we will continue to monitor our "high risk of systematic failure" and our progress in reducing the high number of Unsuitable Accommodation Breaches. Dumfries and Galloway Council are actively looking to decrease the use of hotel accommodation and are working closely with one of the regional Registered Social Landlords to increase our leased portfolio with them.

The service is also looking to upstream prevention activity and have increased resources within our Prevention Team to reduce and alleviate customers falling into homeless crisis.

In relation to resident safety around compliance the Service is not fully complaint. As of 30th June 2026, compliance is as follows

RAAC compliance

- All stock within the Council Temporary Accommodation portfolio is certified as RAAC free ensuring 100% compliance.

Gas Servicing

- All stock within the Council's portfolio which have gas central heating are fully compliant.

Dampness and Condensation

- There is a robust procedure in place in relation to the identification of damp and condensation within the leased stock portfolio and we work closely with the landlords to ensure any issues identified are
  addressed within the required timeline. This procedure is being updated to ensure it fully complies with legislative changes due to come into force in October 2026.

Smoke Alarm and Heat Detection Legislation 2022

- Dumfries & Galloway Council leased stock are all fully compliant with the Smoke Alarm and Heat Detection Legislation following its introduction in February 2022.

Legionella

- All stock leased from Registered Social Landlords are mains water feed and fully complaint with Legionella Legislation.
- 23 of 26 properties leased from private sector landlords are fully compliant. The Council is in the process of returning the 3 non-compliant properties to the relevant landlord.

Asbestos

- Dumfries & Galloway Council currently lease 152 properties from Registered Social Landlords, 14 have been deemed as Very Low/Low Risk manageable risk and 138 are free of asbestos.
- Dumfries & Galloway Council currently lease 26 properties from the Private Rented Landlords 11 are very Low/Low Risk manageable risk. A programme of work is currently underway with our technical inspectors and health safety advisors to put appropriate risk assessment and control measures in place for. 12 properties where there is no asbestos therefore no risk to resident safety; 2 properties have been identified as having medium risk of asbestos and these will be removed from the portfolio. The remaining property has not had the relevant safety inspection undertaken and is currently being handed back to the relevant Private Sector Landlord (31st October 2026).

Lift Safety

- Dumfries and Galloway have one leased property within its portfolio where a communal lift is in situ, this is a Registered Social Landlord leased property, and the lift is serviced yearly – this is fully compliant.

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to ensuring that all individuals seeking access to homelessness services are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and that their equality and human rights are fully considered throughout the assessment and support process. We recognise the diverse needs of people experiencing homelessness and take proactive steps to remove barriers to accessing services.

To support people whose first language is not English, the Council provides access to professional interpreter and translation services. This ensures that customers can communicate effectively with staff and fully understand their rights, responsibilities, housing options, and support available to them. Key documentation can be translated into an individual's preferred language to enable informed decision-making and meaningful participation in the homelessness process.

The Council also seeks to recognise and accommodate cultural, religious, and individual needs wherever possible within temporary accommodation provision. This includes considering factors such as dietary requirements, cultural practices, family circumstances, and any specific support needs, to ensure that accommodation and support services are accessible, inclusive, and respectful of individual identities and backgrounds.

Through these measures, Dumfries and Galloway Council aims to uphold the principles of equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights, ensuring that homelessness services are accessible to all members of the community regardless of language, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic.

This approach supports the Council's commitment to delivering person-centred services and to meeting its obligations under equality and human rights legislation.

In July 2023, the Service introduced a Prevention Team who work alongside the Welfare and Housing Options team. The purpose of this team is to provide early intervention to improve tenancy sustainment, improve customer outcomes and reduce the number of customers accessing the homeless route. During 2025/26 there were collectively 260 tenancies saved from eviction due to the intervention of these teams. 48 of these were through the new dedicated Prevention Team that has been set up. As at end of Quarter 1 2025/2026 21 tenancies have been saved from eviction due to the intervention of the dedicated Prevention Team.

Dumfries and Galloway Council are committed to ensuring that the voices of customers and service users are central to the design and delivery of our services. Through regular consultation and engagement activities, we actively seek feedback from customers, service users, partner organisations, and other stakeholders. This feedback is used to inform and shape procurement activities, service contracts, strategic priorities, operational protocols, and service delivery approaches.

We also recognise the importance of learning from customer complaints and expressions of dissatisfaction. Complaints are viewed as a valuable source of insight, helping us identify opportunities for improvement and informing policy development, procedural changes, and service review activity where appropriate.

To support a culture of continuous improvement, we hold monthly complaints and dissatisfaction review meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to analyse trends, identify learning outcomes, share good practice, and implement service improvements. Lessons learned through complaints and customer feedback are used to strengthen our services and ensure they remain responsive to the needs and experiences of those who use them.

Gypsy/Travellers

The refurbishment of the Council's Gypsy/Traveller site at Glenluce was completed in May 2021 and is now above the Scottish Governments Minimum Site Standards.

The Council meet the standards in terms of services. However, the Collin site does not meet the physical standards as a result of issues with complex ground conditions (extensive peat bog). An options appraisal for the site was presented to Full Council on 14 December 2023. The Council's decision was **Option 1** to "agree to redevelop on current site as the preferred option".

A budget of £700k from the capital programme was agreed at Full Council on 27 February 2024 to support the design phase of the re-development of the Thistle Grove Gypsy/Travellers Site in 2024/25. The Capital investment Strategy for 2024/25 to 2033/34 was updated to include an allocation of £14.7 Million in year 10.

A design team, including architects, engineers, and cost consultants has brought the project to RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 2 concept design. However, members agreed to pause further design work and progress identification of alternatives sites at the Council's 11 December 2025 Economy and Environment Committee due to material changes required to the original scope of the project, increased costs in addition to continued high levels of risk and uncertainty associated with the current project.

The project Board has now shifted focus to ensure a robust process is developed and followed to identify potential alternative site options. Additional council officers have been brought into this work to ensure the process is appropriately supported whilst utilising the Scottish Governments 2021 Interim Site Design Guide.

A framework has been developed to present a structured, evidence base for identifying, shortlisting, and assessing suitable sites. In parallel, the identification of a longlist of potential sites is being developed for assessment against this framework.

Signed

Andrew McFarlane, Chair, Social Work Service Committee

Date ..25th August 2026