

East Lothian Housing Association Assurance Statement

29 September 2023

We have now completed our assessment of compliance with the Regulatory Framework and the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

In undertaking our assessment, we established a Governance Standards Working Group (GSWG) in May 2019. In preparing our 2023 Statement, the GSWG has met three times (in April, May and August 2023), and has reported directly to our Management Committee. The GSWG also prepares quarterly reports for our Audit & Assurance Committee to consider whether any changes or updates are required to the Statement during the course of the year.

In gaining assurance, the GSWG has overseen the review and updating of our Evidence Bank, using the June 2023 version of the Toolkit produced by the SFHA to assist the process. The Evidence Bank combines reports, policies, advice and information which the Management Committee monitors and oversees on an ongoing basis throughout the year to provide continuous assurance that we remain compliant. Additionally, the Evidence Bank incorporates relevant documents and information that contribute to our assurance, and which form the structure of our business and governance activities.

Using our cloud-based IT infrastructure, we have given secure access to the Evidence Bank, including access to all linked documents within it, to all the members of our GSWG. We have also provided refresher training to GSWG members about how to use the Evidence Bank. This means that all members of the GSWG can access every document within the Evidence Bank at any time of day, and from any location.

We are confident that, taking into account the current economic and social environments, we continue to meet our responsibilities to our tenants, service users, regulators and funders. We did not experience significant disruption to our services during the pandemic, and we are confident we have maintained normal service levels since the lifting of restrictions.

In reviewing our compliance with the Regulatory Framework, we are assured that we have established appropriate systems for the collection of equalities data. We are assured that we are working towards using this data to take account of equality and human rights issues in our decisions, policy-making and day-to-day service delivery.

We are satisfied that we meet all of our duties in relation to tenant and resident safety. In particular, we have gained the necessary evidence-based assurance of our compliance in respect of duties relating to gas, electrical, fire, and water safety and our obligations relating to asbestos, damp and mould. We have sought appropriate specialist advice to monitor our compliance in these areas and to support our assurance. All of our homes have heat and smoke detectors to meet the new safety standards introduced in February 2022, and only two properties do not have a valid EICR certificate.

To ensure effective governance, the Management Committee continues to prioritise Succession Planning.

In reviewing the evidence and assessing compliance, we have taken account of good practice advice. We have also obtained external support from Linda Ewart of Ask Linda Ewart consultancy to provide us with additional assurance that our approach is effective and robust. Linda reported to the Management Committee as follows:

The process adopted by ELHA for the review of the Evidence Bank, periodic reporting to the Audit & Assurance Committee and onward reporting to the Management Committee demonstrates the implementation of practices designed to provide continuous assurance. The approach described is consistent with the advice and guidance contained in the Self Assurance Toolkit and takes account of the annual updates and revisions.

Accordingly, having reviewed and assessed a comprehensive bank of evidence to support this Statement, the Management Committee confirms that East Lothian Housing Association is compliant with the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management and the requirements of Chapter Three of the Regulatory Framework.

We recognise that we are required to notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the course of the year and are assured that we have effective arrangements in place to enable us to do so.

As Chair, I was authorised by the Management Committee at a meeting held on 28 September 2023 to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator. I confirm that this Assurance Statement is being published on elha.com, on the same date that it is submitted to the SHR.

ELHA Chair