

Housing and Communities

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Falkirk Council
*Transformation, Communities
& Corporate Services*

Our Annual Assurance Statement

The following statement confirms that:

We comply with the majority of regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework. This includes that we:

- Are achieving standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services.
- Comply with our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.

Our review of outcomes 4, 5 & 12 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, relating to quality of housing, repairs and homeless people have shown that we are not fully compliant with these outcomes in the following ways:

Outcomes 4 & 5: Quality of Housing & Repairs

- Gas safety checks – we were unable to carry out 9 checks within the required timescales in 2022/23.
- We were unable to complete the installation of interlink smoke alarms for over 1,300 properties in 2022/23.
- The number of properties meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard was reported as 70.06% in 22/23. Failures were because of being unable to carry out electrical safety checks.

Outcome 12: Homeless People

- We reported 32 breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in 2022/23. There have been 28 further breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.
- On 3 occasions in 2023/24, we have failed to meet our duties in terms of housing homeless people.

We expect to return to full compliance in 2024.

We have made progress in ensuring our properties are compliant with electrical safety requirements. This is confirmed by our improved compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, improving from 59.85% in 2021/22 to 70.06% in 2022/23.

We improved how we use external contractors, with those contractors who carry out electrical safety checks now also fitting interlinked smoke alarms as part of this work. Despite repeated attempts to engage with households, access to properties remained the biggest issue. Forced entries, to fit the interlinked smoke alarms, started in June 2023. This led to significant reductions in the number of properties still requiring interlink smoke alarms.

At the end of the financial year, no gas safety checks remained outstanding.

We confirm that we have considered an appropriate level of evidence to give us this assurance. The evidence provided has been reviewed by our Internal Audit Team and was awarded 'Substantial Assurance.' The information required to provide the necessary level of assurance will continue to be reviewed on an on-going basis.

We approved our Annual Assurance Statement at the meeting of our Executive Committee on 17th October 2023.

I sign this statement on behalf of the Executive Committee.