



## **Moray Council Housing and Property Service Assurance Statement**

We comply with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework with the exception of the areas set out below.

We achieve all but the following outcomes and standards in the Scottish Social Housing Charter:

- **Outcome 1 - Equalities**

We are working towards compliance in relation to the recently published SFHA guidance on equalities. We are in the process of implementing an effective approach to the collection of equalities information. However, we routinely complete Equalities Impact Assessments on all of our strategies, policies and plans which form an integral part of our decision making process.

Moray Council has initiated work on development of improved equalities and human rights outcomes as part of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Corporate Plan and its Equality Outcomes. Progress on the Equality Outcomes are now reported through the Council's performance reporting framework. This will improve mainstreaming of response to equalities and human rights issues throughout the Council.

- **Outcome 4 – Quality of Housing**

### **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)**

At 31 March 2022, 4,653 of our 6,297 properties did not meet the SHQS. An additional 1,003 properties were classed as exempt and 242 properties were in abeyance. The main areas of non-compliance are:

- Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH);
- Fire Safety; and
- Electrical Safety.

Our Housing Investment Programme was significantly delayed due to the pandemic but we have approved a 30 year plan which will allow us to make improvements to our housing stock. This will be supported by the implementation of an asset management module for our housing management system within the next 18-24 months to improve compliance monitoring and make better informed investment decisions. In addition, we have reviewed our Asset Management Team structure and are recruiting additional officers to manage the projects and target future works to ensure compliance with legislation.

### **Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH)**

At 31 March 2022, we reported that 1,399 of our 6,297 properties do not meet the ESSH, reduced by 560 properties from March 2021. We continue to focus on a range of energy efficiency upgrades including installation of more efficient/renewable heating systems. Our business plan provides for a significant expansion of this in the period ahead, subject to market conditions, with over 500 properties due to benefit from this in 2022/23.

### **Fire Safety**

At 31 March 2022, 862 properties did not meet the updated fire safety regulations. The main reasons for the delay are access issues and the need for building warrants for certain types of properties. We are actively working to gain access to each of the remaining properties. At 30 September 2022, this had reduced to 324 properties. A programme is in place which aims to complete the remaining upgrades by the end of the reporting year.

### **Electrical Safety**

At 31 March 2022, 5,413 properties did not have a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) although some of these were in abeyance. Housing investment works over the past decade or so involved key elements of electrical upgrade work as part of planned/cyclical maintenance programmes. However, this work was recorded on partial electrical certificates rather than full EICRs, meaning that most of our properties are slightly below the required standard. We have set aside additional investment to ensure the non-compliant properties are inspected to the required standard by 31 March 2024.

- **Outcome 13 – Value for Money**

### **Void Management**

Our average re-let time reduced by 13 days in 2021/22 to 62 days. Labour resources and utility company issues have both been a factor in our overall performance. Our void working group continue to review processes to minimise the time our properties are empty. Whilst we are encouraged that our recovery efforts following the pandemic have brought us closer to the local authority average, we have a plan in place to deliver further improvements. Our focus remains on achieving our ambitious target of 32 days.

We comply with all relevant legislative duties, including our legal obligations relating to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety with the exception of:

### **Gas safety**

In 2021/22 we did not meet our statutory duty to complete a gas safety check within the required timescale for 4 properties but this was rectified at the earliest opportunity and all are now compliant. The reasons for the checks not being carried out on time related to the pandemic:

No of failures	Reason
3	Tenant/household member with Covid symptoms so safety check/forced entry was postponed.
1	Covid restrictions prevented tenant from returning home from another country. Forced entry was carried out late and meter was capped.

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

We approved our Assurance Statement on 26 October 2022 and sign this statement on behalf of the Housing and Community Safety Committee.

Councillor Amber Dunbar  
Chair of Housing and Community Safety

Councillor Donald Gatt  
Depute Chair of Housing and Community Safety