



## **Annual Assurance Statement 2022**

### **Basis of Assurance**

The Board of Management confirms that, to the best of our knowledge we have reviewed and assessed a comprehensive bank of evidence to support this Statement that Ochil View Housing Association Ltd is compliant with:

- ✓ all relevant regulatory requirements as set out in Section 3 of the Regulatory Framework;
- ✓ the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management;
- ✓ the relevant standards and outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter;
- ✓ our statutory obligations in respect of tenant and resident safety, housing and homelessness and equalities and human rights;
- ✓ all other relevant legislative duties.

This statement has been derived from a review of the comprehensive bank of evidence and from our ongoing quarterly reporting and evaluation and of the Associations performance throughout 2021/2022.

In considering our compliance with our legal and regulatory requirements in 2022, we have taken account of the considerable impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent business, economic and social disruption. We complied fully with the temporary changes to legislation and continue to follow national and local guidance that is in place.

### **Gas Servicing**

As a result of Covid-19 we had a small number of properties that did not have a valid gas safety certificate because the tenant(s) would not provide access. All of these were completed as soon as it was possible to do so and since April 2022, we have had 100% compliance. This area of non-compliance was wholly as a result of the pandemic.

### **Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs)**

In terms of EICRs, the Association has been working towards full compliance in this area. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, there were areas of non-compliance where the Association had failed to perform the checks or access a number of properties and this was reported in the Annual Return on the Charter. Although a programme had been in place during the year, much of this was stop/start in nature because of Covid restrictions which meant that progress was not made as intended. There were also resource issues due to high demand across the entire sector for the work, combined with working through backlogs in general repairs as a result of Covid.

Since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the position has improved substantially and, as at 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022, there remains a small number of inspections to complete (19 in total, being 1.3% of our overall stock). Full compliance is expected to be achieved by 11<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

Moving forward, processes are in place to ensure all inspections are carried out within the required 5-year period, in a similar way to the management of the gas safety process, and our Internal Auditors have been asked to provide a report about performance in this area and the processes in place to ensure compliance going forward. This audit is arranged for 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

These two areas represent the only areas of non-compliance in the Associations Annual Assurance Statement 2022.

### **Non-Material Areas for Improvement**

In assessing the evidence, we have continued to adopt the approach of continuous improvement and we continue to make good progress in areas such as effective representative tenant engagement and closer involvement of other service users. An internal action plan is in place which is used to track progress in these areas.

### **Equality and Human Rights**

In addition to these areas and following the publication of guidance in 2021 in relation to collecting equality information, we are assured that we are working towards improving the systems we have in place for the collection of equalities data and improving the use of this data to continue to take account of equalities and human rights issues in our decisions, policy-making and service delivery.

We have made good progress with our Action Plan in this area in terms of Board and staff training, working group discussions, approval of an Equality and Human Rights Strategy and Policy and with preparing for data collection from board members, staff and tenants. We aim to complete the other areas identified for improvement during 2022/2023 – this includes collection of data from tenants and other service users.

We have reviewed the areas identified for improvement and are satisfied that all are intended to deliver effective improvement and that none are material to our current compliance with the Regulatory Framework.

### **Process**

The process commenced and ended with full approval of the Board of Management, and during the period since the 2021 submission, progress with the Action Plan and further updating of the Annual Assurance Statement evidence bank for consideration by the Board continues to be part of the Association's Quarterly Management Reporting process.

The Board of Management considered the most recent update to the bank of evidence at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and finally signed off on this 2022 Annual Assurance Statement on this date.

At all of the meetings referred to above the Associations Senior Management Team assisted the Board in their consideration of compliance.

Included in the paperwork provided at each meeting was the following;

- ✓ written report from the Chief Executive;
- ✓ bank of evidence to support the 2022 AAS;
- ✓ progress with the 2021 Action Plan;
- ✓ information and guidance published by SHR, SFHA and others

During the process there were regular opportunities for the full Board of Management to review each of the regulatory requirements and standards and confirm compliance (or otherwise) and / or identify any non-material areas for improvement.

All Board of Management members have access to the full bank of evidence (actual documents) via the Associations secure electronic board papers portal which they are able to access at any time.

The final aspect of the process involved sharing and discussing the contents of the draft statement and summary outcomes and non-material issues identified for improvement with service users via the tenant focus group which meets on a monthly basis. This ensured that the statement could be endorsed by those most affected by the services provided by the Association.

### **Gaining Assurance**

The evidence which supports this Statement includes:

- ✓ various strategic documents including our Corporate Management Plan and Departmental Service Plans, Risk Management Framework, Asset Management Strategy and 30 Year Financial Projections;
- ✓ quarterly management reports to the Board on performance in key areas including finance, service delivery, asset management, development and risk and assurance relating to compliance with Regulatory Standards;
- ✓ quarterly Management Accounts reports to the Board;
- ✓ monthly Covid 19 Impact Assessment Reports to Committee (ceased from April 2022);
- ✓ internal and external audit reports;
- ✓ advice from external and specialist advisers;
- ✓ tenant consultation reports and outcomes;
- ✓ data analysis about our tenants and service user satisfaction results;
- ✓ benchmarking;
- ✓ reports, advice and information from senior staff.

In reviewing the evidence and assessing compliance, we continue to take account of good practice advice obtained from our Internal Auditors in 2019 and 2020 that our approach is both effective and proportionate and that the evidence to support the outcome of our assessment is both comprehensive and robust.

**Ongoing Monitoring**

We are assured that we have the necessary arrangements in place to identify any risks to compliance in the course of the conduct of our business and governance arrangements.

We recognise that we are required to notify the Scottish Housing Regulator of any changes in our compliance during the year.

**Authority to Sign and Submit**

*As Chairperson I was authorised by the Board of Management at a meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022 to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator.*

*I confirm that this Assurance Statement will be published on our website on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022.*

Signed ..... Date: 27.10.22

**Margaret Baxter (Chairperson)**