



Annual Assurance Statement 2023

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 Association's performance throughout 2022/2023.

Area of Non-Compliance

Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICRs)

As reported in last year's Assurance Statement, the Association had a number of incomplete electrical inspections at 31st March 2022, and worked towards becoming compliant in this area in the first eight months of the year. Full compliance was achieved in November 2022, and processes are in place which have ensured compliance going forward. In December 2022, the Association's Internal Auditors undertook an audit on electrical compliance which recommended a small number of non-material improvements to processes. These have since been implemented.

This area represents the only material area of non-compliance in the Association's Annual Assurance Statement in 2023.

Non-Material Areas for Improvement

In assessing the evidence, we adopt the approach of continuous improvement and 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 the areas mentioned above, the Board is assured that we have made good progress in 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 equality and human rights issues in our decisions, policy-making and service delivery.

The Board and staff have received appropriate training in this area, an updated Strategy and Policy are both in place and data has now been collected for Board Members, staff, tenants and prospective tenants. This data, along with the Equalities Impact Assessments which are now being undertaken, where appropriate, as part of our policy review processes, will help to ensure that equalities and human rights issues are considered in our future policy-making and operations.

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.

Tenant and Resident Health and Safety

The Board is assured that all relevant health and safety obligations in relation to gas, electrical safety (subject to the paragraph above regarding electrical certification), water safety, fire safety, asbestos, damp and mould and lift safety have been met.

Compliance is assured through regular internal audit conducted by our Internal Auditors and our Health and Safety advisors (and implementation of recommendations), annual review and updating of our Landlord Safety Manual and regular reporting to the Board and Health and Safety and Human Resources Committee. Specific reports were presented to the Board in respect of these areas in July 2023 and September 2023, and evidence has been made available to Board Members to assure themselves of compliance in these areas.

Process

The process commenced and ended with full approval of the Board of Management, and during the period since the 2022 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 28th September 2023 and finally signed off on this 2023 Annual Assurance Statement on this date.

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

- ✓ written report from the Chief Executive;
- ✓ bank of evidence to support the 2023 AAS;
- ✓ progress with the 2022 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 scrutiny 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 and sub-committees on performance in key areas including finance, service delivery, asset management, health and safety, development and risk and assurance relating to compliance with Regulatory Standards;
- ✓ quarterly Management Accounts reports to the Board;
- ✓ 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 28th September 2023 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 29th September 2023.

Signed

Date: 28.09.23

Margaret Baxter (Chairperson)