



Rural Stirling Housing Association Annual Assurance Statement 2021

In considering our compliance with our legal and regulatory requirements in 2021, we have taken account of the considerable impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent business, economic and social disruption. We have complied/continue to comply fully with the temporary changes to legislation and continue to follow national and local policy and requirements e.g. in respect of health and safety, physical distancing, travel, office opening, use of PPE, application of Test and Protect requirements and indoor gatherings.

We are confident that the measures that we have put in place and the contingency planning that we have implemented have ensured that we are able to continue to meet our responsibilities to our tenants, service users, regulators and funders. Where we have adopted revised standards of service delivery, we have communicated changes clearly to our tenants and are maintaining the necessary records to ensure a smooth resumption of normal service levels when possible.

During 2020/2021 we had 10 properties where annual Gas Safety Inspections were not carried out within the required 12 months. We notified the SHR and submitted a monthly update and this was also recorded within our ARC 2021 submission. Self isolating and COVID symptoms along with a general reluctance to allow access to trades people were the main cause of these delays. We have an audit trail of communication and contact with residents concerned in line with Scottish Government and SHR requirements. We will continue to work closely with tenants who express concerns about access to carry out gas safety inspections and we will implement all measures to reassure them that all necessary precautions are being taken.

At the time of preparing the Annual Assurance Statement we have no outstanding annual gas safety inspections, and we were 100% complaint at the end of Q2 2021/2022. We were however late in carrying out the gas service of one property during Quarter 1 where the tenant refused to engage. The inspection was completed the day after the anniversary date.

Rural Stirling Housing Association has appropriate assurance that we:

- comply with relevant legislative duties and the regulatory requirements as set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory framework.
- comply with the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services.
- comply with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Standards of Governance and Financial Management.
- have appropriate plans to implement an effective approach to the collection of equalities data and information and have started to consider how we can adopt a human rights approach to our work. 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.

Our Board assesses compliance against the above requirements on a regular basis and considers detailed evidence, together with customer feedback, as part of this assessment. We have adopted an improvement focus and acknowledge that we have some areas where improvements need to be made, however we do not consider these to be material in the context of continuous improvement and have the required action plans in place. To support effective implementation, actions plans will be monitored by the Board at agreed intervals to ensure successful achievement.

We have seen and considered the appropriate evidence to give us this assurance and this will be carried out on an ongoing regular basis. The evidence which supports this Statement includes:

- Reports, advice and information from senior staff
- Reports about performance in key areas including finance, service delivery, asset management, development and risk
- Internal and External Audit reports
- Advice from external and specialist advisers
- Tenant feedback and the outcomes from specific consultation
- Data analysis about our tenants and customers
- Benchmarking

In reviewing the evidence and assessing compliance, we have taken account of good practice advice. We have also obtained external support to provide us with additional assurance that our approach is effective and robust.

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.

We approved our Annual Assurance Statement at the meeting of our Board Thursday 7th October 2021. We confirm that this Assurance Statement is being published on our website on the same date that it is submitted to the SHR.

I sign this statement on behalf of the Board. As Chair, I was authorised by the Board at the above meeting to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Mark Griffiths

Chair's signature:

Date: 7th October 2021