



# **Southside Housing Association – Annual Assurance Statement**

**October 2024**

## Annual Assurance Statement 2024

Southside Housing Association is required by the Scottish Housing Regulator's revised Regulatory Framework to prepare and submit its Annual Assurance Statement by 31 October 2024. This document represents the statement that was considered and approved by the Association's Management Committee at its meeting on Thursday 26 September 2024.

Statement of the Southside Housing Association Management Committee:

We can advise that, to the best of our knowledge, we comply with:

1. All relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework;
2. All relevant standards and outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter;
3. All relevant legislative duties; and,
4. The Standards of Governance and Financial Management

The Management Committee confirm that we have seen and considered appropriate evidence to support our assurance of compliance with the above. This includes an independent review of the Association's Business Plan assumptions, Treasury Management Strategy review, our annual programme of internal audit, external audit, a large-scale Tenant Satisfaction Survey, Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2023/24, Management Committee reports, financial reports and tenant health and safety reports, and regular risk management reporting.

We would like to also highlight the following areas in our Annual Assurance Statement.

### **Tenant and Resident Safety**

As the Governing Body of the Association, we place the highest priority in ensuring our tenants and other residents are safe in their homes. An internal audit of our tenant safety arrangements and internal controls and processes in July 2022 provided a substantial level of assurance to the Management Committee and we receive quarterly reports on an on-going basis in relation to our tenant safety arrangements and controls. In addition, the Association has joined the Social Housing Safety Network, and intends to engage further audit and guidance in 24/25 on aspects of tenant and resident safety.

### **Asbestos Management**

We have a robust Asbestos Management Policy and Plan, and we maintain an Asbestos Register which is regularly updated and forwarded to our repairs and maintenance contractors monthly. Where we identify the presence of asbestos as 'high risk', asbestos containing materials are removed in line with our policy.

### **Electrical Safety**

We carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) and inspection on all of our properties at least every five years. We have achieved 93.76% compliance with our EICR programme despite a very challenging target number of EICRs due by their anniversary date during 2023/24, and we anticipate achievement of 100% compliance with our EICR

programme by 31 March 2025. We have commenced a comprehensive programme of replacement stair lighting and electrical distribution boards within the common areas of most of our multi-story and mini-multi housing stock.

We have also completed a review of our Electrical Safety Policy and our internal electrical safety procedures in August 2024.

### **Damp and Mould**

We have developed our Dampness and Mould Policy in February 2024 which sets out our organisational position with regard to prevention, detection and repair of dampness and mould in our tenants' homes. During the 2023/24 reporting period we handled 24 reports of dampness and/or mould from our tenants. We progress remedial actions for damp and/or mould cases which we prioritise as Category 1 – 3 priorities, depending on the nature, extent and ease of solution. For all cases an action plan is put in place and monitored.

We also have a programme in progress to upgrade communal mechanical extraction systems and internal bathroom ventilation ducts across a number of our properties.

### **Fire Safety**

We have a cyclical programme of Fire Risk Assessments across almost sixty of our buildings. We have successfully progressed implementation of minor recommendations arising from Fire Risk Assessment and have incorporated any major recommendations into our planned asset investment programme. We have also just completed renewal of communal emergency lighting and communal fire door renewals over a number of our properties, as well as carrying out an annual service on all of thirty-four lightning protection systems

### **Gas Safety**

We achieved 99.7% compliance for carrying out an annual gas safety inspection by the anniversary date for 2023/24. We have also carried out a review of our internal gas safety management systems including our administrative processes to ensure that we maintain 100% compliance for the current reporting year – this involved an audit by Housemark. We also carried out a review of our Gas Safety Policy and Procedures in September 2023. An external contractor also conducts quality assurance on a 10% sample of our gas safety inspections.

### **Lift Safety**

We have a programme of monthly maintenance servicing across our forty-four passenger lifts, and six-monthly in-depth inspections by insurers and annual inspections in compliance with our obligations under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) and SAFed guidelines on the testing of in-service lifts.

We have also recently undertaken lift replacement works at Newark Drive, Pollokshields and are due to commence lift replacement works at our multi-storey blocks at Moss Heights Avenue in Cardonald.

### **Water Safety**

We have an on-going programme to carry out remedial works arising from our annual programme of Legionella Risk Assessments. We have completed our annual programme of cold-water storage tank inspections and six-monthly bacteriological sampling and temperature testing. Our clean and disinfection programme is scheduled for completion in October 2024

### **RAAC – Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete**

We have had assurances provided by external surveyors alongside our own internal staff that our properties do not contain RAAC, however we will remain vigilant in all of our day-to-day inspections and surveys to ensure knowledge of our stock profiles is fully informed.

### **On-going Improvement Focus**

The Association has just embarked on a new business plan cycle with the launch of our Corporate Plan 2024-2029, and we have developed or are developing a range of key strategies to help us achieve our Strategic Objectives.

To ensure that we can deliver on all of our key objectives we have also sought assurance that our plan is financially viable and based on prudent assumptions. We obtain our assurance from internal audit of our financial controls, a rigorous annual audit process of the Association and our subsidiary Southside Lettings (Scotland) Ltd., short, medium and long-term financial projections, external consultancy, quarterly management accounts and other financial reporting to the Management Committee and sub-committees, our relationship with our lenders, and annual self-assessment of our compliance with Regulatory Standard 3.

Drawing on all of these various sources of assurance we have developed a Finance Action Plan which sits alongside our other action and improvement plans in the SHA Global Action Plan. This will ensure that our financial processes and controls are in the best possible shape as we undertake some key projects over the next year including:

- Implementation of a new housing software solution
- Implementation of new financial forecast and modelling software, and;
- Re-financing of our revolving credit facility

While in an improving situation, we are conscious of a number of legacy issues with regard to aspects of financial management and control, which have arisen in recent audits. Our Finance Action Plan reflects our approach to strengthening these areas, and follows on from discussions with the Leadership Team, Chairperson and Chair of Finance & Corporate Services Sub Committee.

Our Global Action Plan represents the Association's commitment to continuous improvement and also identifies improvements and actions from a range of different sources across areas such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Tenant and Resident Safety, our Governance and other key areas of our business. This includes improvement actions we have identified but which do not constitute material non-compliance with Regulatory Standards and Requirements.

We will review the Association's continued compliance with all regulatory and legal requirements on an on-going basis throughout the year. In the event of any in-year incidences of material non-compliance which affects our level of assurance against any of the requirements of the Annual Assurance Statement, we will notify the Scottish Housing Regulator and our tenants and other customers.

Signed by:-----

Alex Cameron, Chair, Southside Housing Association.



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