

August 2025

West Dunbartonshire Council Annual Assurance Statement

As Convenor of the Housing and Communities Committee I confirm that we have seen appropriate evidence to give us assurance that:

- We comply with all the relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework.
- We are achieving all the relevant standards and outcomes outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter, and
- We are compliant with all relevant legislative duties associated with housing and homelessness services, tenant and resident safety and equality and human rights.

We comply with all the above requirements except for the areas set out below:

Low compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard

Tenant safety within the Councils' housing stock is one of our main priorities and a key concern remains in terms of our rate of compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard. The key driver for this is the number of properties without a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

Whilst we continue to make progress in this area, access to tenants' homes remains a challenge and we are continually reviewing procedures, processes and our communications with tenants to address this and minimise instances where forcing access to a property is considered. In addition to our focus on tenanted homes, an EICR is completed in every property that becomes vacant and in properties that have any major electrical works completed. We remain committed in our efforts to ensure that each Council home has a valid EICR in place and will continue to provide monthly updates on the progress being made.

Lack of compliance with homelessness duties

Whilst we continue to meet most of our homelessness duties including our statutory responsibility of offering temporary accommodation to those that need it, we continue to report breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order (UAO).

Pressures around the homelessness system was one of the key contributing factors to us declaring a Housing Emergency within West Dunbartonshire in May 2024. Challenges remain in terms of the time being taken to move households experiencing homelessness into settled accommodation and the subsequent pressures which exist in terms of providing suitable temporary accommodation.

Progress has been made, with reported breaches of the UAO reducing from 68 in 2023/24, to 26 in 2024/25. This remains a key area of focus, and we have a number of

actions in both our Housing Emergency Action Plan and Housing Solutions Strategy which aim to ensure that we are doing all that we can to minimise any future breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

Failure to submit updated data in relation to factored owners' satisfaction

Our last satisfaction survey of factored owners was carried out in March 2022, and we have submitted data from this survey as part of our ARC for 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24. We had planned to carry out a new survey during 2024/25 and provide updated satisfaction data as part of this years' ARC submission. Unfortunately, due to staffing pressures this survey was not conducted within our expected timeframe, and we therefore have submitted the same satisfaction for the fourth year running. We are currently taking forward an updated satisfaction survey of factored owners and hope to have this completed by the end of August 2025.

Tenant and resident safety

A letter from the Scottish Housing Regulator received in March 2025 stated that for this year, there is a request that landlords provide specific assurance on their compliance with relevant obligations in relation to tenant and resident safety.

Our obligations around tenant and resident safety are a key priority for our Maintenance, Repair and Asset Improvement Services managed by Building Services and are monitored closely. This includes areas such as gas safety, electrical safety, fire safety, lift safety, asbestos safety, water safety and damp and mould.

Relevant assurance around tenant and resident safety is provided to the Housing and Communities Committee and we can confirm that there are currently no cases being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) relating to the safety of our tenants and residents and there have been no cases investigated during the last year.

We are therefore assured that we comply with all the relevant safety requirements and duties in relation to tenant and resident safety (with the exception of the low number of EICR's highlighted above).

Our Annual Assurance Statement was considered at a meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee on 20 August 2025 and was formally approved and subsequently signed by me as Convenor.

**Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal,
Convenor, Housing and Communities Committee**

20th August 2025