



WILLIAMSBURGH HOUSING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT TO THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR 2021

The Management Committee of Williamsburgh Housing Association has now completed the third annual assessment of compliance with the Regulatory Framework and the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management.

In carrying out our assessment, we are satisfied that we have seen and considered sufficient appropriate and reliable evidence to confirm our level of assurance that, to the best of our knowledge and understanding, Williamsburgh Housing Association complies with the following

- The regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework
- The standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Relevant legislative duties
- The standards of governance and financial management for RSLs.

The assurance process that has evolved and been adopted at Williamsburgh Housing Association is based on the good practice advice that is provided in the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's tool kit, along with our own internal reporting considerations.

The Management Committee receives a quarterly "Annual Assurance Statement" report which identifies and summarises compliance evidence throughout the year. This process also informs whether (or not) any notification of change to our compliance status should be made to the Scottish Housing Regulator during the year and in this regard, we would like to formally record that there have been no in year changes to our compliance status reported since the initial 2019 statement was introduced.

Our 2021 evidence is a combination of over 300 Committee reports and back up information presented to and discussed by the Management Committee at our meetings held throughout the year, alongside operational information that is held within our systems and records to support the reports and is readily available to the Management Committee collectively, individually and/or by our auditors as requested.

This combined approach contributes to our assurance on compliance and contributes to the overall control and governance of our Association.

Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic

The Management Committee has received a monthly update on the Coronavirus response and any impact on operations and service provision since the beginning of the pandemic. We continue to comply with changes to legislation, and to follow national requirements and advice from the Scottish Government and the Social Housing Resilience Group (SHRG).

We do however recognise that there has been service disruption and delay and are operating a full service, albeit with the current enforced closure of the office itself. We have redesigned service delivery and operational arrangements to ensure that corporate governance oversight, health and safety responsibilities and financial control have been maintained throughout.

Service performance

In an attempt to analyse impact on performance, we have compared our 2019/20 and 2020/21 performance return against the Charter outcomes in our 2020/21 annual report and identified a marginal reduction in performance in 9 out of the 22 ARC indicators we examined across 14 charter area outcomes.

Although difficult to quantify objectively, in our estimation, performance reduction in 6 out of the 9 indicators was related to Coronavirus restrictions affecting: repairs (response times and right first time repairs), re-let times and rent arrears levels, with performance on void rent loss and re-let times being the most heavily impacted area. We did however perform equal to or better than the Scottish average in 7 from the 9 areas where performance levels dropped, and our quarterly indicators in 2021/22 show performance improvement in void loss and re-let times compared to 2020/21.

Gas Servicing

During 2020/21, there were 62 annual gas services, which failed to be checked within 12 months of the previous year's check because of Covid-19 restrictions. All 62 services have now been completed and there are no gas service failures to report in the current year to date.

Planned Maintenance

The planned maintenance programme for 2019/20 was heavily impacted by the pandemic (mainly due to access restrictions) with the majority of the programme being delayed until 2021/22. We are now, however, experiencing difficulty with the material supply chain and increased costs, and in particular with our window replacement programme. We are currently assessing our options in order to replace components as quickly as possible, whilst achieving value for money and keeping rent levels low.

EQUALITIES & HUMAN RIGHTS

Without being complacent, we firmly believe that we are an equal opportunities organisation and offer a human rights approach and fair and equal treatment to all. We look forward to working with the recent guidance framework issued to the sector in order to build a better evidence base and benefit from its use in this area.

In this regard, we are seeking to employ an additional staffing resource who will report directly to the Chief Executive Officer with the specific remit of implementing the national guidance for Scottish social landlords issued in August 2021.

We acknowledge that the Scottish Housing Regulator will be assessing landlords' compliance with the requirement from April 2022 and we will improve our evidence base to ensure that the Committee are assured that we have a sound basis to state that we are meeting the equalities requirements within the standards and deliver an equal and human rights based service approach to all.

APPROVAL

The Management Committee of Williamsburgh Housing Association approved this Annual Assurance Statement at their meeting held on 27th October 2021 and authorised that it be signed on their behalf, by the Chairperson, Susan James, and subsequently submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

This statement will be made available to our tenants and other stakeholders by publishing it on our website.

We will notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the year ahead and confirm that we have effective arrangements in place to enable us to do so.

Susan James

Chairperson

Williamsburgh Housing Association

27th October 2021