
To: Communities and Housing Policy Board

On: 31 October 2023

Report by: Director of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure

Heading: Regulation of Social Housing: Assurance Statement 2023

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Council is required to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator in October 2023 demonstrating compliance with the regulatory requirements for local authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
 - 1.2 Appendix 1 lists the requirements as set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework and provides evidence to demonstrate Renfrewshire Council's compliance.
 - 1.3 As Members are aware, regular reports are presented to the Policy Board on housing services performance and benchmarking. These reports demonstrate continuing strong performance across most areas of the housing service in 2022/23 but also highlight some areas for improvement. Section 3 of this reports notes these areas for improvement and highlights several areas where it has not been possible to achieve full compliance.
 - 1.4 The proposed Annual Assurance Statement 2023 for Renfrewshire Council is attached at Appendix 2 for approval by the Policy Board.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Communities and Housing Policy Board:

- 2.1 note the Regulatory Requirements and evidence of Renfrewshire Council's compliance as set out in Appendix 1.
 - 2.2 approves Renfrewshire Council's Annual Assurance Statement 2023 for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator as attached in Appendix 2.
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3. Background

- 3.1 All social landlords are required to prepare and submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator each year. The first Annual Assurance Statement from Renfrewshire Council was approved by the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board and submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator in October 2019, with subsequent statements being submitted annually thereafter.
- 3.2 The regulatory requirements for all social landlords include:
- Meeting all duties, obligations and responsibilities placed on landlords by legislation and through statutory guidance.
 - Achieving the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter
 - Duties to help people who are homeless, including a statutory duty to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
 - Duties relating to the safety of tenants' homes and promoting equality and human rights.
 - Meeting the requirements and adhering to relevant guidance from other regulatory bodies
 - Adhering to statutory guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator and taking account of regulatory advice
- 3.3 The Scottish Housing Regulator lists the regulatory requirements for local authorities under five headings in its Regulatory Framework. Appendix 1, which is attached to this report, shows how Renfrewshire Council meets each of these requirements and gives details of current evidence which demonstrates compliance.
1. Assurance and notification
 2. Scottish Social Housing Charter performance
 3. Tenants and service user's redress
 4. Whistleblowing
 5. Equality and Human Rights
- 3.4 Arrangements are in place to report regularly to the Policy Board on a range of matters relevant to the above requirements. This includes tenant and resident engagement, service improvement planning, service performance and financial and risk management. Where appropriate, these reports address areas for improvement as well as highlighting areas where the service is performing well. The normal annual cycle of reports is detailed in the table below:

Table 1. Annual Cycle of Reports

Subject	Month
Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Levels (report to Council)	February/March
Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) Programme	February/March
3-year Service Improvement Plan	March
Annual Return on the Charter (and management information on allocations, repairs, homelessness and rent collection)	August
Service Improvement Plan Mid-Year Monitoring	October
Annual Housing Performance Benchmarking	October
Tenant Participation Strategy Progress Report	October
Charter Half Year Update (and management information on allocations, repairs, homelessness and rent collection)	January
Budget reports (including Housing Revenue Account)	Each cycle

- 3.5 As part of the preparation for the first Annual Assurance Statement in 2019, a full self-assessment exercise was carried out to see if the Council is achieving the five outcomes and standards in the Social Housing Charter. Subsequent years have seen refresh self-assessments on Housing Options, Value for Money, void management and equalities. This year there was a self-assessment exercise on Housing as Human Right.
- 3.6 This year's Charter return noted that there were still some areas of the Service that demonstrated challenging performance, in particular:
- **Gas Certification:** Performance in issuing gas certificates, whilst improving remains an area for further attention. There were 58 occasions that a gas safety check was not completed within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or its last check. Since then, further improvements have been put in place, and since April 2023 there have been 6 occasions that a gas safety check was not completed within 12 months of a gas appliance being fitted or its last check. That said, all of these have subsequently been completed.
 - The Percentage of stock meeting the **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)** (Indicator 6) increased this year to 67.9%. This increase was achieved despite difficulties in completing our comprehensive EICR programme and associated problems with the construction industry, including resources and materials. We expect our performance in SHQS to continue to improve.

- The Scottish Housing Regulator did not collect **EESH** data this year as they are awaiting the outcome of the Scottish Government review of EESH2. This review will strengthen and realign the standard with the target for net zero heat in houses from 2040 and the outcome of this process will determine the council's strategy to meet EESH2 or any other standard which may emerge from the review. However, the Service returned data to Scotland's Housing Network who collated a return for members. The percentage of homes meeting the EESH increased to 85.1% from 78.4% Indicator C10).
- **Adaptations:** Expenditure on adaptations increased to around £770,000 over the past year but the number of completed adaptations decreased to 184 adaptations. The average time to complete adaptations (Indicator 21) reduced to 96 days from 142 days in 2021/22. Adaptations work has been impacted by issues within the construction sector, including material supply chain delays and increased demand on labour resources. Management actions have been introduced to increase resource for this workstream through the use of additional external contractual arrangements have helped mitigate this issue.
- **Re-let timescales:** The average length of time taken to re-let properties has improved to 60.6 days from 66 days. Although this is better than the local authority average it remains an area that the Service is keen to significantly improve.

3.7 As reported in the ARC Board report in August there were areas where the Service improved, including:

- **Tenancy sustainment:** The sustainment rate for homeless applicants has improved for each of the last 3 years, in line with our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and the overall level of tenancy sustainment remained stable at around 95.3%.
- **Turnover**, the percentage of lettable houses that became vacant over the year reduced to 7.2% from 8.3% last year.
- The percentage of **rent lost due to voids** reduced to 1.86% from 2.00%.

3.8 Our engagement plan for April 2023 to March 2024 notes that that SHR reviewed and compared the data for all Councils from the Scottish Government's national homelessness statistics and the Annual Returns on the Charter. This was reported to Board in May 2023. As with all other Local Authorities, the SHR has asked that Renfrewshire Council should provide it with the information that it requires in relation to our homelessness service; and make it aware of any emerging issues preventing us from fulfilling our statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation when we should and comply with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order. The SHR meets with local authorities annually and at its meeting with Renfrewshire it is expected that it will discuss the homelessness service and decide whether any additional assurance is required. Each year we provide the SHR our Annual Assurance Statement, and Annual Return on the Charter.

- 3.9 The Service has taken steps to review and consolidate its responsibilities in relation to tenant and resident safety. The service has established a Housing Landlord Compliance team and developed a comprehensive Landlord Compliance Strategy and associated policies and procedures:

- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Water safety
- Fire safety
- Asbestos
- Lift safety

The Board received a report in January 2023 and August 2023 on Dampness, Mould and Condensation. This report outlined the processes in place to deal with reports of dampness and mould, and detailed the actions which were taken to review these, as well as setting out further actions to be undertaken. A task force set up to review and improve dampness and mould processes and to develop a Dampness and Mould strategy.

- 3.10 On Equalities and Human Rights, we can provide assurance that we comply with all of the regulatory requirements and standards, including the requirement on equalities and human rights. Section 5 of Appendix 1 provides full details of our approach and how we comply and adapt service to meet these requirements.
- 3.11 Social landlords are required to advise the Scottish Housing Regulator of any material changes to Council's Annual Assurance Statement during the year. Members should note that there were no material changes to our Assurance Statement submitted last year.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None.
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
 - *Our Renfrewshire is thriving* – Providing housing and homelessness services which meet regulatory standards.
4. **Legal** – None.
5. **Property/Assets** – None.
6. **Information Technology** – None.

7. **Equality & Human Rights -**

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.

9. **Procurement** – None.

10. **Risk** – None.

11. **Privacy Impact** – None.

12. **COSLA Policy Position** – Not applicable

13. **Climate Risk** - None

List of Background Papers

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 15 January 2019, 'Regulation of Social Housing- Response to Consultation by The Scottish Housing Regulator'.

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 25 October 2022
Regulation of Social Housing: Assurance Statement 2022

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 17 January 2023,
Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance: 2022/2023 Half Year Update.

Report to Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board on 22 August 2023,
Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2022/2023.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities and Housing Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting.

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Attachment(s):

Appendix 1: Regulation of Social Housing Assurance Statement

Appendix 2: Renfrewshire Council Assurance Statement 2023



ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2023

Appendix 1

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk



REFERENCE INDEX

REFERENCE	REFERENCE DESCRIPTION
AHS	Access to Housing and Support
AICV	Additional Information Covid-19
AIG	Additional Information General
CLR	Customer Landlord Relationship
CPSP	Corporate Plans Strategies & Procedures
GVRSC	Getting Good Value from Rents & Service Charges
HQM	Housing Quality and Maintenance
HSP	Housing Strategies & Policy
NC	Neighbourhood and Community

Checklist of Regulatory Requirements / Standards

1. Assurance and Notification

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
AN1	Prepare an Annual Assurance Statement in accordance with SHR published guidance, submit it to the SHR between April and the end of October each year, and make it available to tenants and other service users.	<p>A briefing session and presentation on the Annual Assurance Statement 2023 was provided to members of the Policy Board.</p> <p>The Policy Board has been advised in previous reports of the changes to the Regulatory Framework implemented in 2019.</p> <p>Officers have undertaken a targeted self-assessment exercise on Housing as a Human Right, building on the previous assessments and information gathering exercises to ensure sufficient evidence is available to provide assurance on compliance with the regulatory requirements.</p> <p>Account has been taken of the SHR's guidance on Annual Assurance Statements in preparing this report.</p> <p>Some areas for improvement have been identified and these are detailed within this report and in other reports to the Policy Board.</p>	<p>Annual Assurance Statement Presentation to members of the Policy Board 24 October 2023.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board Report 31 October 2023 – Regulation of Social Housing Assurance Statement.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board Report 16 August 2023 – Response to Consultation on Regulatory Framework 22-23 by SHR on ARC Return.</p> <p>Service Improvement Action Plan for areas of improvement.</p> <p>Annual Assurance Statement 2019 Feedback Letter from the Scottish Housing Regulator, March 2020.</p> <p>Scottish Housing Regulator Engagement Plan 2023-2024 CAH Policy Board Report – 16 May 2023.</p> <p>People's News and Council Website.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>All Annual Assurance Statements have been approved by Policy Board since 2019 and submitted to the SHR thereafter, with the SHR providing feedback as appropriate.</p> <p>The 2023 Annual Assurance Statement was discussed with the Tenant representatives at the joint tenant meeting held in September 2023.</p> <p>Following Board approval, the Annual Assurance Statement 2023 will be available to tenants and other service users with a link to the Council's website.</p>	<p>SHR Letter on Advice preparing Annual Assurance Statement July 2023.</p> <p>Joint Tenant Meeting, 21st September 2023.</p>
AN2	<p>Notify the SHR during the year of any material changes to the assurance in the Council's Assurance Statement.</p>	<p>Service delivery issues remain due to contractors, supplies and resources which have arisen including the coronavirus pandemic.</p> <p>Annual report to charter was submitted to SHR at the end May 2023 and reported to Board in August noting performance in gas safety certification and electrical and smoke detector performance.</p> <p>Procedures are in place to monitor ongoing compliance and any material changes will be reported to the Communities and Housing Policy Board and to the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p> <p>In 2022 the Council appointed a Landlord Compliance Manager and Fire Safety Officer and this year we have appointed a Gas & Electrical Co-ordinator for Domestic Housing.</p>	<p>CAH Policy Board Report 31 October 2023 – Regulation of Social Housing: Assurance Statement 2023.</p> <p>Charter Return 2022/2023.</p> <p>Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2022/23 CAH Policy Board Report, 22/08/23.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
AN3	Have assurance and evidence that the Council is meeting all its legal obligations associated with housing and homelessness services, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.	<p>Customer engagement has taken place to review the strategic outcomes in the new Local Housing Strategy and published in the People's News Autumn 2023.</p> <p>In 2023 a self-assessment exercise was completed with Tenants and Staff on Housing as a Human Right. Further assessments will be undertaken each year on a rolling basis.</p> <p>We continue to collect and analyse data on new and existing tenants to provide a better understanding of the needs and requirements for all equality groups.</p> <p>The Service works closely with other Council Services to effectively manage Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbour Nuisance. 2022 – 2025 Renfrewshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy was presented to the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board in March 2022 and a progress report was presented to the Communities and Housing Policy Board in August 2023.</p>	<p>Council and Housing Strategies, Plans, Policies and Procedures.</p> <p>New Local Housing Strategy– Update, CAH Policy Board Report 31 October 2023.</p> <p>Tenant Participation Strategy 2022 - 2027 – CAH Policy Board 25 October 2022.</p> <p>Tenant Participation Strategy – Update – CAH Policy Board 31 October 2023.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2022- 2025 - CHAPS Board Report 15 March 2022.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2022- 2025 Progress Report - CAH Policy Board Report 22 August 2023.</p> <p>Housing Regeneration & Renewal programme – CHAPS Policy Board Report 18 May 2021.</p> <p>Housing Regeneration & Renewal Programme Year 2 Update – CAH Policy Board Report 22 August 2023.</p> <p>Self-Assessment exercise on charter outcomes – Housing as a Human Right.</p> <p>Service Improvement Action Plan for areas of improvement.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>The service monitors performance on an ongoing basis, with regular monthly and quarterly reports prepared for internal review. Performance reports are presented to the Communities & Housing Policy Board on a six-monthly basis which contain a wide range of management information relating to housing and homelessness services. These reports are publicly available on the Council's website.</p> <p>Year 2 regeneration update provides the Board with an update on progress for tenant rehousing and owner acquisitions across all eight regeneration areas within phase 1 of the programme.</p> <p>Performance across the range of housing services is regularly monitored and reported to the Policy Board, including benchmarking over time and with other social landlords. As part of this regular monitoring, areas for improvement are identified and acted upon.</p> <p>A tenant satisfaction survey is carried out every two years by independent consultants. Feedback from the 2022 Tenant Satisfaction Survey was used to identify areas for improvement.</p>	<p>Performance and Benchmarking Reports.</p> <p>Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in Housing Charter, CHAPS Policy Board Report 19 January 2021.</p> <p>Technology Enabled Care (TEC) in housing The Story so Far.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Child Protection Procedures.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Child Protection Committee Child Protection Practitioner Guidance – Legislation Update and information for parents/carers.</p> <p>Housing Information & Advice for People with Disabilities.</p> <p>Tenants Satisfaction Surveys.</p> <p>Consultation on Policy changes and rent setting.</p> <p>Housing First Scotland Annual Check Up.</p> <p>Other Regulatory body reports.</p> <p>People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement.</p> <p>Tenant Newsletters and Information.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>When new policies or procedures are being developed, officers seek advice from the Council's Legal Services team to ensure any legal issues are identified and given appropriate consideration. Any relevant issues are highlighted for Elected Members in reports to the Policy Board.</p> <p>The Common Housing Allocation Policy sets out an agreed, common approach that partner landlords use to allocate homes that become available for let. The allocation process is monitored, and targets and outcomes are agreed by the Policy Board annually.</p> <p>Allocation targets are set to ensure that those in housing need receive an equitable share of allocations.</p> <p>We currently provide 216 properties which are made available for use as temporary accommodation as required, this includes 49 supported accommodation properties. Only as a last resort is Bed and Breakfast accommodation used by the Council. B&B accommodation has been used 129 times since the November 2022.</p> <p>It is clear from the rising demand for housing that we are in an emerging housing crisis. Supply of housing is not keeping up with the demand and as a result the number of people needing temporary accommodation is continuing to rise.</p>	<p>Corporate Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.</p> <p>Internal Audit Report – Council housing Newbuild Programme</p> <p>Fire Safety Guidance for Existing High Rise domestic Buildings</p> <p>Scottish Government Guidance on Sprinkler Systems for all newbuild home building warrants submitted on or after 1 June 2022</p> <p>Internal Audit Statement of Compliance.</p> <p>Compliance Certificates – e.g. Gas Safety.</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2023/2024 CAH Policy Board Report 15 May 2023.</p> <p>Private Sector Housing Grant – Proposed change to Scheme of Assistance in Housing Regeneration Areas.</p> <p>Housing to 2040 CHAPS Policy Board Report, 18 May 2021.</p> <p>Allocations Procedures.</p> <p>Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Guidance.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>We use a range of technologies to keep in touch with tenants – such as Microsoft Outlook Teams and the “Near Me” platform. Other ways to use digital platforms as part of our Tenant Participation Strategy.</p> <p>While the vast majority of annual gas safety checks have been carried out prior to the 12-month due date. In the first half of the reporting year there were 6 occasions where a service wasn’t carried out before it was due. Access has since been achieved and all services are now completed.</p> <p>There continues to be some delays to the Council’s programme of electrical safety inspections which are required to be carried out every five years. Additional resources have been allocated to address. In relation to compliance with tenant health and safety we have allocated resource for three further posts within our Landlord Compliance team and these will be advertised over the coming months.</p>	<p>Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy - Council Housing Allocation Targets for 2023/2024.</p> <p>Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support joint commissioning of a Housing Options Training Toolkit.</p> <p>Housing Options Advice – Housing Options Form.</p> <p>Secure Tenancy Agreement.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Review – CHAPS Policy Board 15 March 2022.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans 2021-22 Activities & Spend Template – Amended Version – June 2022.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25 CHAPS June 2022 and Service Delivery Plan 2021-22 outturn report</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022/25 outturn Report. CAH Policy Board Report 16 May 2023.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>The Housing first report provides evidence of strong partnership working and compliance to address homelessness and demonstrates making best use of measures to help a difficult client group sustain their tenancies through a range of support mechanisms It also provides evidence of our Housing Support and RRTP budget being deployed appropriately to meet the housing and support needs of those who have experienced repeat homelessness, criminal justice involvement and addiction issues.</p> <p>An increase in grant support for owners in mixed tenure blocks within the eight regeneration areas was approved by Board in May 2023 to assist the council in meeting its EESSH objectives.</p> <p>The Council operates a Housing Options Toolkit, the objective of which are to encourage staff to develop person centred attitudes and beliefs towards service delivery, improve staff understanding of Housing Options principals and philosophy, encourage consistency in the way front line staff deliver Housing Options, and improve knowledge of support, resources and partners involved in delivering Housing Options.</p>	<p>Tenant Support Fund Policy.</p> <p>Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Services 2023-2026 Service Improvement Plan CAH Policy Board report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Housing Repairs Policy.</p> <p>Homeless Services Development Plan.</p> <p>Housing Adaptations within Council Stock Policy.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>We have introduced a new “Tenant Support Fund” (TSF) which aims to assist Council tenants who are experiencing acute financial hardship and finding it challenging to keep up to date with payments of rent. The TSF is intended to supplement the current Rent Collection process and is a temporary measure to alleviate existing and emerging financial stress, prevent and reduce escalating rent arrears and contribute to sustaining Council tenancies in Renfrewshire.”</p> <p>Homeless Services have produced a Service Development Plan which outlines the areas of strength and potential challenges with the current service delivery arrangements, and assesses areas for development which will help ensure that the Council and partners continue to meet the statutory obligations to homeless households in Renfrewshire. It has a list of key Action Points summarised at the end of this document which is updated and tracked to support us in properly planning, preparing and funding Renfrewshire’s response to tackle and prevent homelessness.</p>	

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
AN4	Notify the SHR of any tenant and resident safety matters which have been reported to or are being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive, or reports from regulatory or statutory authorities, or insurance providers, relating to safety concerns.	<p>Any reportable HSE incidents are logged in the Health & Safety Database and investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Health & Safety Policies and Procedures.</p> <p>The Council now employ a Fire Safety Officer and Landlord Compliance Manager and have recently appointed a Gas & Electrical Co-ordinator for Domestic Housing.</p> <p>In relation to compliance with tenant health and safety we have allocated resource for three further posts within our Landlord Compliance team and these will be advertised over the coming months.</p> <p>The Council has a policy on damp and mould with appropriate procedures. Our stock condition survey (100% over five years) will gather data on mould issues by property. Combined with appropriate policies and procedures on mould and dampness, we would suggest that these methods are an effective way to monitor damp and mould.</p> <p>During the past year, there have been no incidents reported to the HSE.</p> <p>Outcomes of investigations are notified directly to the Council by the HSE and copied to the Director and Head of Service.</p>	<p>Corporate Health and Safety Policies and Procedures.</p> <p>Annual Health & Safety Plan – Communities & Housing – CAH Policy Board Report 16 August 2022.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy, March 2021.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy – Gas Safety.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy – Electrical Safety.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy – Asbestos Safety.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy – Fire Safety.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy – Water Safety.</p> <p>Housing Landlord Compliance Strategy – lift Safety.</p> <p>Tackling Dampness, Mould & Condensation – CAH Policy Board report – 17 January 2023.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		There have been no inspections by regulatory authorities this year.	Tackling Dampness, Mould & Condensation – Changes Implemented – CAH Policy Board Report – 22 August 2023.
AN5	Make the Council's Engagement Plan easily available and accessible to tenants and service users, including online.	<p>The Council's current Engagement Plan is publicised on the Council's website and any subsequent plans will be made available online for tenants and service users.</p> <p>The Engagement plan is also promoted to tenants in the People's News.</p>	<p>Council website which includes link to Regulator website.</p> <p>People's News.</p> <p>SHR Engagement Plan from 31 March 2023 – 31 March 2024.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board Report 31 October 2023 – Regulation of Social Housing Assurance Statement.</p>

2. Scottish Social Housing Charter Performance

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
CH1	Submit an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the SHR each year in accordance with published guidance.	<p>The Annual Return on the Charter was submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator in May 2023. A robust framework is in place for internal data checking prior to submission and a sample data check is independently verified by the Scottish Housing Network.</p> <p>Charter performance is reported bi-annually to the Communities and Housing Policy Board along with an annual report on performance benchmarking to provide comparisons against the Housing Service's previous performance along with that of other local authorities.</p>	<p>Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2022/23 CAH Policy Board Report, 22/08/23.</p> <p>The Scottish Social Housing Charter – November 2022.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board report, 31/10/23, Annual Housing Benchmarking Performance Report 2022/23.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board report, 17/01/2023, Scottish Social Housing Charter Half yearly report 2022/23.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
CH2	<p>Involve tenants, and where relevant other service users, in the preparation and scrutiny of performance information. This must include:</p> <p>Agreeing the approach with tenants.</p> <p>Ensuring that it is effective and meaningful – that the chosen approach gives tenants a real and demonstrable say in the assessment of performance.</p> <p>Publicising the approach to tenants.</p> <p>Ensuring that it can be verified and be able to show that the agreed approach to involving tenants has happened.</p>	<p>Tenants are consulted on how performance information is presented, what indicators should be highlighted and how performance is benchmarked. This information is contained within the Charter supplement of the Autumn edition of the People's News and is distributed to all Council tenants and the articles are made publicly available on the Councils website.</p> <p>As part of our ongoing commitment to customer engagement, performance is discussed with representative tenant groups on a regular basis. Benefits of online meetings realised during the covid period have been continued as these have proved successful in meeting the needs of our tenants representatives.</p> <p>Officers and tenant representatives participated in an online meeting to discuss the Council's Annual Charter Return and the Council's performance in comparison to other social housing providers.</p> <p>At the Tenant Scrutiny Panel meeting which took place in June 2023, the style and layout of the 2022/23 tenant report on the charter was also discussed. A presentation on the ARC took place 21 September 2023. The Tenants' report will be issued to all tenants and the Charter performance will be made available on the Council's website.</p>	<p>Presentation and Minutes of Joint Tenant Representative Group Meetings.</p> <p>Tenant Participation Strategy 2022 – 2027 – CAH Policy Board 25 October 2022.</p> <p>Tenant Participation Strategy – Update – CAH Policy Board 31 October 2023 CAH Policy Board Report 17 January 2023, Housing Customer Engagement Annual Report 2021/2022.</p> <p>Outcome of Consultation on draft Customer Engagement Strategy, CHAPS Policy Board Report 10 August 2010.</p> <p>Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022.</p> <p>Tenant Scrutiny Panel activity.</p> <p>Sheltered Housing and Multi Storey Quality Circle Inspections.</p> <p>2022/2023 Rent Consultation and Council Board report on rent increase on 2 March 2023.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25 CAH Policy Board 7 June 2022 and Service Delivery Plan 2021-22 outturn report.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
	<p>Involve other service users in an appropriate way, having asked and had regard to their needs and wishes.</p>	<p>The tenant Participation Strategy adopted in October 2022 is reviewed annually with its first progress report going to October 2023 Policy Board.</p> <p>The 2022 Tenants' Satisfaction Survey noted that 99% of Council tenants said they were satisfied with the opportunities to participate in decision-making processes. The Tenant Satisfaction Survey is carried out every two years with the next one scheduled to be undertaken in 2024.</p> <p>The Council has a range of opportunities for both individuals and groups to participate and monitor performance, such as: surveys, meetings with Tenants and Residents Associations, the Council Wide Forum, Neighbourhood Forums, Quality Circles, the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The service will continue to work with these groups to review customer feedback and inform future improvements.</p> <p>This year the Council is developing an additional Quality Circle for Estate Management.</p> <p>Neighbourhood renewal groups have been established in 2 of the 8 regeneration & renewal areas. This offers tenants and residents the opportunity to suggest improvements in each area.</p>	<p>Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Services 2023-2026 Service Improvement Plan CAH Policy Board report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022/25 outturn Report. CAH Policy Board Report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Council Wide Forums.</p> <p>Tenant & Resident Association Meetings.</p> <p>Tenant Scrutiny Panel, Letting Standard Report, March 2014.</p> <p>Regeneration & Renewal Area Pop-Up Events Attendance Log.</p> <p>Housing-led Regeneration & Renewal Programme – Consultation Update – CHAPS Policy Board 15 March 2022.</p> <p>Link to Council website for eight Regeneration & Renewal areas.</p> <p>Housing-led Regeneration & Renewal Programme – Consultation – CHAPS Policy Board 18 January 2022.</p> <p>Housing Regeneration Newsletters.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
			<p>Housing-led Regeneration & Renewal Programme – 1 year Update– CAH Policy Board 16 August 2022.</p> <p>Housing-led Regeneration & Renewal Programme – 2 year Update– CAH Policy Board 22 August 2023.</p>
CH3	<p>Report performance in achieving or progressing towards the Charter outcomes and standards to its tenants and other service users (no later than October each year). The format of performance reporting must be agreed with tenants, ensuring that it is accessible for tenants and other service users, with plain and jargon-free language.</p>	<p>Each year tenant representatives are consulted on how performance information should be presented, what indicators should be highlighted and how performance is benchmarked.</p> <p>The annual Report to Tenants is delivered to all Council tenants as a supplement to the People's News each year. The Councils performance against charter indicators is also publicised on the Council Website.</p>	<p>Presentation and Minutes of Joint Tenant Representative Group Meetings.</p> <p>People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement.</p> <p>Council website.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
CH4	<p>When reporting performance to tenants and other service users, this must:</p> <p>Include providing them with an assessment of performance in delivering each of the Charter outcomes and standards which are relevant to the Council.</p> <p>Include relevant comparisons – these should include comparisons with previous years, with other landlords and with national performance.</p> <p>Set out how and when the Council intends to address areas for improvement.</p> <p>Give tenants and other service users a way to feed back their views on the style and form of the reporting.</p>	<p>Tenant feedback is used to develop the annual Report to Tenants which includes current performance against previous years and benchmarking against Scottish averages.</p> <p>The Report to Tenants provides a balanced appraisal of performance and highlights areas of success as well as areas that will be focussed on for improvement.</p> <p>A self-assessment exercise took place on 12th October 2023 with the tenant scrutiny panel as part of the preparation for the Annual Assurance Statement.</p> <p>Charter information presented to tenant groups includes performance information, comparisons with previous years' data and other social landlords.</p> <p>The annual report to the Policy Board on the Charter Return includes areas for improvement that have been identified with actions this year including a focus on average days to re-let properties, adaptations, void management and gas safety.</p> <p>A new department was formed now called Environment, Housing & Infrastructure. The three-year Service Improvement Plan for the new service provides details of service review and development across housing, neighbourhood and homelessness services.</p>	<p>Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2022/23 CAH Policy Board Report, 22 August 2023.</p> <p>Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2022.</p> <p>Self-Assessment exercise on charter outcomes on Equalities.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25 CAH Policy Board 7 June 2022 and Service Delivery Plan 2021-22 outturn report.</p> <p>Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Services, Service Improvement Plan 2023-2026.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022/25 outturn Report. CAH Policy Board Report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>People's News – Autumn edition - Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board report, 25 October 2022, Annual Housing Benchmarking Performance Report 2021/22.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board report, 17 January 2023, Scottish Social Housing Charter Half yearly report 2022/23.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		The People's News provides opportunities for tenants to "Tell us what you think" inviting comments on the format and content of the newsletter. The content and design of the newsletter is also discussed regularly with tenant groups.	Presentation and Minutes of Joint Tenant Representative Group Meetings. Council website.
CH5	Make the report on performance easily available to tenants, including online.	The annual Report to Tenants is delivered to all Council tenants as a supplement to the People's News each year. The Councils performance against charter indicators is published on the Council Website.	People's News – Annual Return on the Charter Tenant Supplement. Council website.

3. Tenants and Service Users Redress

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
TS1	Make information on reporting significant performance failures, including the SHR's leaflet, available to tenants.	<p>Information for tenants on reporting significant performance failures, including the SHR's leaflet, is available from the Council website.</p> <p>A link to the SHR's website is also publicised on the Council's website.</p>	<p>Council website includes a link to the Scottish Housing Regulator's website.</p> <p>SHR Significant Failures Leaflet.</p>
TS2	Provide tenants and other service users with the information they need to exercise their right to complain and seek redress and respond to tenants within the timescales outlined in the Council's service standards, in accordance with guidance from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).	<p>Information on how to complain is publicised widely, including online and in tenant newsletters.</p> <p>The Council adheres to the SPSO guidance in relation to complaint timescales.</p> <p>The Council monitors complaints handling, and this is reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator through the Annual Return on the Charter.</p> <p>Complaints performance information is covered in the Annual Report to Tenants within the Autumn issue of the People's News.</p>	<p>Complaints Handling Procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Guide • Complaints Form <p>People's News.</p> <p>Council website.</p> <p>Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2022/23 CAH Policy Board Report, 22 August 2023.</p> <p>CAH Policy Board report, 31 October 2023, Annual Housing Benchmarking Performance Report 2022/23.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
TS3	Ensure the Council has effective arrangements to learn from complaints and from other tenant and service user feedback, in accordance with SPSO guidance.	<p>Complaints are analysed to identify any themes that require addressing. Officer meetings are held to gain insight into complaints.</p> <p>As part of the 2022 Tenant Satisfaction Survey, tenants were asked about the main reason for complaints and their experience of making a complaint. Around 5% of respondents said they had made a complaint, with the main reasons related to repairs or anti-social behaviour, of those who did complain 75% said they found it easy to do so.</p> <p>Good News section of Sheltered Housing Newsletter and Housing Support Newsletter.</p>	<p>Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures.</p> <p>Complaints by Service Area Spreadsheet.</p> <p>People's News.</p> <p>SMT Weekly meetings.</p> <p>SPSO – Link on Council website.</p> <p>Sheltered Housing Newsletters.</p> <p>Sheltered Housing Good News.</p> <p>Housing Support Newsletters.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25 CAH Policy Board 7 June 2022 and Service Delivery Plan 2021-22 outturn report.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022/25 outturn Report. CAH Policy Board Report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Services 2023-2026 Service Improvement Plan CAH Policy Board report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>2022 Tenant Satisfaction Survey.</p>

4. Whistleblowing

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
WB1	Have effective arrangements and a policy for whistleblowing by staff and elected members which the Council makes easily available and which it promotes.	<p>The Council's Staff Code of Conduct includes information on Whistleblowing. This is available for staff and elected members on the Councils intranet site.</p> <p>Following the local government elections in 2022 all councillors in the new administration were provided with a briefing pack which contains key aspects of services.</p> <p>Elected members must comply with the Councillors' Code of Conduct which is available on the Standards Commission website.</p>	<p>Staff Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Councillors' Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Convenor Pack.</p> <p>New Councillor Introduction to Wards 1- 12.</p> <p>New Councillor Presentation 2022.</p>

5. Equality and Human Rights

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
EH1	Have assurance and evidence that the Council considers equality and human rights issues properly when making all of its decisions, in the design and review of internal and external policies, and in its day-to-day service delivery.	<p>All matters being reported to Board are reviewed for any equality and/or human rights implications.</p> <p>The Council monitors equality outcomes corporately with all policy changes subject to Equality Impact Assessments are carried out and noted by the relevant Board.</p> <p>In 2023 a self-assessment exercise was completed on Housing as a Human Right. Further assessments will be undertaken each year on a rolling basis.</p> <p>The Service Improvement Plan includes a statement annually relating to equalities.</p> <p>The Tenant Satisfaction Survey results highlight high satisfaction rates for access to services and for participation opportunities, with respondents noting that they find it easy to participate.</p> <p>As part of the annual update on the Strategic Housing Investment Plan, a consultation exercise takes place to provide individuals and groups an opportunity to provide comments on the proposals.</p>	<p>Council Guide for Assessing Equality and Human Rights Impacts.</p> <p>Collecting Equality Information: National guidance for Scottish social landlords, June 2022.</p> <p>Progress Report on Equality Mainstreaming Equality 2023.</p> <p>Housing Information & Advice for People with Disabilities.</p> <p>Digital Support for Council Tenants.</p> <p>Digital Support for Council Tenants – Digital Participation Overview 2022-2023.</p> <p>Link to Language Line translation service & Alternative formats are available on request.</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible customer service centre with Loop hearing systems in place.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy.</p> <p>Housing Options, mobility, Sheltered and HSPC housing application process.</p> <p>Tenant Information Booklet – Polish Translation.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>The Renfrewshire Council Newbuild Specification document has been designed to ensure properties meet housing for varying needs standards and a mix of property types and sizes are delivered to meet current and future needs, including an element of wheelchair accessible homes in suitable locations and homes that are future proof for changing needs. The specification is continuously updated to improve the quality of housing being delivered. The new housing developments planned for Ferguslie/Broomlands, Gallowhill and the Howwood Road Area will use the most up to date Newbuild Specification.</p> <p>The housing-led regeneration and renewal will not only enhance a significant proportion of the Council's housing stock but will also contribute to the wider transformation of Renfrewshire as a place and will be central to the economic and social recovery of Renfrewshire, thus improving the outcomes and opportunities of residents in datazones in the lowest deciles of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).</p> <p>The Council has introduced hybrid ways of working and staff will continue to deliver services whilst both working remotely and in neighbourhood offices.</p>	<p>Tenancy Agreement Polish Translation.</p> <p>Annual Re-registration process for housing applicants.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Review 2022.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Homeless Partnership multi-agency approach.</p> <p>Housing Providers Forum.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Common Housing Allocation Policy Equalities Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Housing-led Regeneration and Renewal Programme for Renfrewshire - Equalities Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25 CAH Policy Board 7 June 2022 and Service Delivery Plan 2021-22 outturn report.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022/25 outturn Report. CAH Policy Board Report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Services 2023-2026 Service Improvement Plan CAH Policy Board report 16 May 2023.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
		<p>The 'Near Me' online platform is used to provide an additional method of communication with tenants.</p> <p>All customers who are looking for alternative accommodation are invited to discuss their housing options with a housing expert.</p> <p>The discussion will include options that best suit each customer's housing need, such as Council housing, other social housing providers, the private rented sector or owner occupation.</p> <p>The Council also employs a specialist Housing and Disabilities Advisor who can provide information and advice to older and/or disable people in more complex cases, for example those that relate to hospital discharge, or to people who are housebound. A member of staff will make a referral to them on your behalf where appropriate.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Review 2022 was sent to the Scottish Government. We completed these returns at request of Scottish Government, but there have been no requests or templates sent out so far this year.</p>	<p>Tenants Satisfaction Survey 2022.</p> <p>Draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024-2029, Consultation CAH Policy Board 22 August 2023.</p> <p>Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2022-2029, CAH Policy Board 31 October 2023.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Council Newbuild Specification.</p> <p>Front line service adjustments – 'Near Me' online platform.</p>

Ref	Requirement	How we Comply	Evidence of Compliance
EH2	<p>To comply with these duties, landlords must collect data relating to each of the protected characteristics for their existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists, governing body members and staff. Local authorities must also collect data on protected characteristics for people who apply to them as homeless. Landlords who provide Gypsy/ Traveller sites must also collect data on protected characteristics for these service users.</p>	<p>As part of the Housing Options process we ask all housing applicants for information in relation to protected characteristics.</p> <p>The Council collects protected characteristic information from existing tenants, waiting list applicants and new tenants (where they have chosen to provide this information) and anonymised in the Tenants Satisfaction Survey.</p> <p>The Service Improvement Plan outlines how the Service aligns with the 5 strategic outcomes within the Council Plan 2022/27 and each of the actions within the SIP is grouped under one of the 5 outcomes.</p> <p>There are currently no Gypsy/Traveller sites in Renfrewshire.</p>	<p>Scottish Social Housing Charter: Annual Return 2022/23 CAH Policy Board Report, 22 August 2023.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022-23 to 2024-25 CAH Policy Board 7 June 2022 and Service Delivery Plan 2021-22 outturn report.</p> <p>Communities and Housing Services, Service Improvement Plan 2022/25 outturn Report. CAH Policy Board Report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Services 2023-2026 Service Improvement Plan CAH Policy Board report 16 May 2023.</p> <p>Final ARC Submission 2022/23 – May 2023.</p> <p>Unauthorised Encampments Procedures (Gypsy/Travellers).</p>



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Renfrewshire Council Assurance Statement 2023

Renfrewshire Council complies with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

We achieve the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services.

In relation to equalities data collection and human rights, the Council has established policies and procedures in these areas which are embedded in service delivery. We review and adjust our approach in the collection of equalities and human rights information along with any other changes in accordance with statutory requirements or regulatory guidance.

The Service has taken steps to review and consolidate its responsibilities in relation to tenant and resident safety. The service has established a Housing Landlord Compliance team and developed a comprehensive Landlord Compliance Strategy and associated policies and procedures covering the following areas:

- Gas safety
- Electrical safety
- Water safety
- Fire safety
- Asbestos management
- Lift safety

The Board received a report in January 2023 and August 2023 on Dampness, Mould and Condensation. This report outlined the processes in place to deal with reports of dampness and mould, and detailed the actions which were taken to review these, as well as setting out further actions to be undertaken. A task force has been established to review and improve dampness and mould processes and to develop a Dampness and Mould strategy.

With regards to service performance there are areas that the Board have been advised:

- Performance in several areas, as reported to Board, including repairs performance, adaptations and re-letting empty properties.
- Although improving, complete compliance with the requirements on annual gas safety checks remains to be achieved.
- The Council is working to towards full electrical testing and smoke alarm compliance.
- The Council's SHQS compliance improved over the past year but is still working towards full compliance and meet the interim target for the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)

There have been limitations on the amount of repairs performance reports available following the introduction of a new repairs ICT system, Workhub. We are continuing to work with our colleagues in Building Services to improve the quality of the data and develop further reports to improve the performance management and service delivery for repairs.

The background papers that support our Assurance Statement for 2023 advise that there had been no reportable Health and Safety incidents.

The Council's Communities and Housing Policy Board regularly receives reports which provide information and evidence to support assurance.

The Annual Assurance Statement 2023 was considered and approved by the Communities and Housing Policy Board on 31 October 2023.

Signed:

Councillor Marie McGurk
Convener of the Communities and Housing Policy Board

Date:
