



Annual Assurance Statement 2021

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 2021. This document represents the statement that was considered and approved by the Association's Management Committee at its meeting on Thursday 30 September 2021.

Statement of the Southside Housing Association Management Committee:

With the exception of the COVID-19 impacted areas set out in the table below we can advise that 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 have considered appropriate evidence to support our assurance of compliance with the above. This includes an independent self-assessment against Regulatory Standards, our annual programme of internal audit, external audit, large scale tenant satisfaction survey, Annual Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2020/21, Management Committee reports, financial reports and tenant health and safety reports, external validation of landlord safety compliance and risk management reports.

Equalities

There is a regulatory expectation that we collect equalities data from April 2022. The Association can confirm that we have appropriate plans to implement an effective approach to the collection of Equalities data, and that active consideration is being given to how we may adopt a human rights approach to the work we do and the service we provide as a registered social landlord.

Human Rights

We hope that the way we deliver services and develop policies would generally be consistent with a human rights based approach. We recognise however that this an emerging and developing agenda in terms of current social housing specific guidance. We recognise that the Scottish Housing Regulator, Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission are actively working to develop further detailed guidance on aspects of a human rights based approach in respect to social housing. We welcome this and any other relevant guidance with regard to human rights and undertake to use this guidance and best practice to inform our own approach to revising the human rights impact of our polices, processes and service delivery,

COVID-19 Impact

In considering our compliance with our legal and regulatory requirements during 2021, we have taken account of the on-going impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and consequent business, economic and social disruption. We have complied and continue to comply fully with the temporary changes to legislation, and continue to follow UK and Scottish Government policy and requirements 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 we have put in place and the contingency planning we have implemented have ensured that we have been 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 the changes clearly to our tenants and are maintaining the necessary records to ensure a smooth resumption of normal service levels in the event of further COVID-19 legal restrictions being put in place.

Due to the continuing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including a second period of Scottish Government highest level restrictions imposed from 5 January 2021 until relaxation of restrictions in May 2021, we have not been able to fully comply with all regulatory requirements. The table below sets out the areas where we are not fully compliant in more detail.

Area of Non-Compliance	Covid-19 Impact	Notifiable Event Ref	Intended Compliance Date
AN 3	Allocations	1004272	Non-compliance a consequence of Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions imposed from 5 January 2021. Compliance has been achieved with the resumption of a full allocations service when

			restrictions were relaxed.
AN 3	Repairs and Maintenance	1004272	Non-compliance a consequence of Scottish Government COVID-19 restrictions imposed from 5 January 2021. Compliance has been achieved with the resumption of a full repairs and maintenance service when restrictions were relaxed.
TS2	Responding to Stage 1 and Stage 2 within designated SPSO timescales.	-	Average time to respond to stage 1 and stage 2 complaints was 5.8 working days and 31.8 working days respectively which is beyond the SPSO designated timescales of 5 and 20 working days. The impact of COVID-19 contributed to the Association's failure to meet these targets. Improved complaints handling performance is an organisational priority for 2021/22 and is included in the Association's AAS Improvement Action Plan.

As part of the Association's commitment to continuous improvement an Annual Assurance Statement Improvement Plan has been developed from areas for improvement focus identified from the various ways we have assessed the level of our compliance. This includes the areas

of COVID-19 affected material non-compliance set out above, but also improvement actions we have identified but which do not constitute material non-compliance with the 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 material non-compliance 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:-----

Margaret McIntyre, Chair, Southside Housing Association

Date:-----