

Tollcross Housing Association

Annual Assurance Statement 2020

Background

Last year, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) changed its system of assessing compliance with their Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management. The responsibility is for the Management Committee of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to assure themselves that their organisation is complying fully with the requirements of the Regulator. This compliance, or failure to comply, is then issued to the SHR and all tenants and customers in the form of an Annual Assurance Statement. The SHR use this assurance process to determine the level of engagement they propose to have with the RSL and their decision about this is published on their website and the RSLs are expected to publish this for their customers to see too.

What is an Annual Assurance Statement?

This document must be submitted by the Management Committee members of all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on an annual basis. It is to provide assurance that the landlord complies with the relevant requirements of Chapter 3 of the SHR's Regulatory Framework, (<https://www.housingregulator.gov.scot/for-landlords/regulatory-framework#>) the Standards of Governance and Financial Management, that apply to RSLs and is achieving the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-socialhousing-charter-april-2017>).

The Regulatory Framework is SHR's statement on performance of functions and sets out how they regulate RSLs and the housing and homelessness services provided by local authorities.

The Standards of Governance and Financial Management represents a Code of Conduct that must be met by all RSLs, in line with Section 36 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. These are broken into 7 separate Standards (pages 10 – 16 of the Regulatory Framework).

The Scottish Social Housing Charter helps to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide, and supports the Scottish Government's long-term aim of creating a safer and stronger Scotland.

Why is an Annual Assurance Statement it required?

The Regulatory Framework states that: *“Each RSL is responsible for delivering good outcomes and services for its tenants and service users. They need to be self-aware, analytical, open and honest about their performance and identify and drive improvement. When we engage with landlords, we look first at what they have done to assure themselves that they are meeting their regulatory requirements.”*

In order to achieve this, the Association undertakes a self-assessment exercise whereby we look at what the Standards say we should be doing and check that we are doing them. We gather supporting information to evidence our findings. We then

consider whether issues we identify as requiring improvement are “material” enough to require disclosure to the SHR. They will use our Assurance Statement as part of their overall regulatory review of Tollcross Housing Association.

Who carries out the assessment?

Each RSL will determine how they carry out the assessment and this can be either internally or by appointing an external independent assessor. Tollcross Housing Association appointed an independent external assessor to carry out this year’s assessment, to emphasise impartiality when considering the evidence.

The evidence considered during the evaluation includes feedback from our tenants and other service users, such as customer satisfaction surveys and outcomes from the work undertaken by our Performance Improvement Network.

Who approves the Assurance Statement?

Management Committee members consider all of the finding of our independent assessor and then confirm if they believe there to be any material non-compliance in:

- The relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the SHRs Regulatory Framework;
- The relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter;
- Relevant legislative duties and
- The Standards of Governance and Financial Management

What was the outcome?

We are happy to say that the Management Committee’s Annual Assurance Statement submitted to the SHR confirms the Association, through the agreed system of independent assessment, has identified that there were no areas of material non-compliance. However, there were a few areas of improvement, and the Association is taking action accordingly. The Association does not consider these areas for improvement to represent material non-compliance with the Regulatory Framework.

The Management Committee have approved the action plan developed to address the improvements identified and will track these. Should any issues of material non-compliance be identified during the year, these will be reported by the Management Committee to SHR and the Assurance Statement will be revised.

What happens next?

We must submit our Assurance Statement to the SHR between April and October each year. This year, in recognition of the work involved in managing matters relating to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the SHR extended the period for submission to 30th November. We shall publish this document on our website www.tollcross-ha.org.uk and make it available to our tenants and other customers across all of our sites. SHR will also publish our Assurance Statement on their website (www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/).