



Our Assurance Statement

In October of this year the Co-op submitted its fifth Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The assessment was supported by an internal audit report and an independent consultant's review that found no material non-compliance. They did find some areas for improvement which the Co-op has accepted and is working on. The statement is shown below.

Annual Assurance Statement 2023

Hawthorn Housing Co-operative's Management Committee has considered its compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements in preparing the Annual Assurance Statement for 2023. The comprehensive bank of evidence that supports this statement includes reports, policies, performance information, financial reporting, internal and external audit reports and reports from external consultants. These have been reviewed by the Management Committee throughout the year.

The Management Committee believes that it has sufficient evidence to assess that we remain materially compliant with the Regulatory Standards. The Management committee believe the Co-op has gathered sufficient evidence to demonstrate we are compliant with:

- All regulatory requirements as set out in Section Three of the Regulatory Framework
- The Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management
- The relevant standards and outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Statutory obligations in respect of tenant and resident safety, housing and homelessness and equalities and human rights.

The Management Committee has also assessed that the Co-op has taken appropriate account of regulatory advice provided by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

This self-assessment is supported by two recent external assessments that reported no material non-compliance:

- An internal audit verification of the Co-op's self-assessment process and working files, and
- An assessment by an external consultant of the Co-op's compliance against the Regulatory Framework.

The Regulator has asked that we provide assurance/commentary on two specific areas. This is covered below:

Equalities and Human Rights

Hawthorn Housing Co-operative acknowledge the requirement to consider equality, diversity and human rights issues when making decisions, reviewing policies and delivering services. We collected equalities information that was reported to the management committee in January this year. This was used to inform our new Equalities, Diversity and Human Rights Strategy that was approved by Committee in March this year, prior to that we amended one of our values to reflect our human rights approach more accurately.

This strategy was informed by a self-assessment approach using the 'Social Housing Equality Framework'. We also self-assessed our approach against the PANEL principles that underlie a human rights approach.

We developed equality, diversity and human rights objectives from this assessment and agreed an action plan to achieve them.

We believe that having the correct culture and understanding is as important as accurate data and we are therefore planning to provide further training on Equalities and on Human Rights. We believe this will help ensure that the Co-op adopts an effective human rights approach to our work.

Tenant and Resident Safety Requirements

The Co-operative has adopted a Tenant Safety Scorecard that monitors our performance against all tenant and resident safety requirements. This is reported to our Audit sub-committee every quarter. The scorecard was one of the most significant outputs from a collaborative review of our approach to ensuring tenant safety. In May this year, our audit sub-committee considered an internal audit report on Tenant Safety. It found no material non-compliance but did identify five low priority areas of improvement. The Co-op has incorporated these improvements into our annual plan.

We recognise that one gas servicing visit was not carried out within 12 months. We have identified the cause of this service failure and believe appropriate controls have been put in place to stop it happening again.

We believe this provides sufficient assurance that we have no material non-compliance in relation to tenant and resident safety, that we meet all our duties in relation to tenant and resident safety and that we have obtained appropriate assurance about our compliance with relevant safety requirements.

Compliance Status and Continuous Improvement

There are no significant areas of non-compliance identified with the Regulatory Framework, but we have identified some improvements that we will implement to strengthen governance, tenant engagement and information management. We recognise that we are required to notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the year and are assured that we have effective arrangements in place to do so.

This statement is provided on behalf of Hawthorn Housing Co-operative. The statement was considered by the Management Committee on 23rd of October 2023. I confirm that as Chairperson I am authorised to sign the statement on behalf of Hawthorn Housing Co-operative's management committee. It is also signed by our director; he is delegated with leading the day-to-day operational activities of the Co-operative and ensuring we are provided with appropriate advice and guidance to fulfil our role as committee members.

Signed by:

Date: 23/10/2023

Cathie Ritchie, Chairperson

Colin Turnbull, Director