

Paragon Housing Association Limited

Annual Assurance Statement – 18th October 2023

Annual Assurance Statement

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) requires that all registered social landlords produce an Annual Assurance Statement in relation to compliance with Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework including Standards of Governance & Financial Management. This is the fourth Annual Statement produced by Paragon Housing Association.

Gaining Assurance

The Management Committee has carried out a review of compliance with the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management and the requirements of Chapter Three of the Regulatory Framework.

The evidence bank considered by the Management Committee combines reports, policies, advice and information which the Management Committee monitors and oversees on an ongoing basis throughout the year to provide continuous assurance that Paragon Housing Association is compliant. Additionally, the evidence bank incorporates relevant documents and information that contribute to our assurance, and which form the structure of the Association's business and governance activities. An internal audit of our approach to gaining assurance was carried out recently. It concluded "the approach in place provides the necessary evidence and assurance to the Board to confirm an accurate position regarding the reporting of compliance with the Regulatory Standards".

In reviewing our compliance with the Regulatory Framework, we are assured that we are working towards having appropriate systems in place for the collection of equalities data. We are assured that we are working towards using this data to take account of equality and human rights issues in our decisions, policy-making and day-to-day service delivery. We have employed a specialist consultant to assist us in ensuring compliance. We have reviewed the documents and plans currently in place.

The Association subscribes to the EVH Landlord Safety Manual. This covers key health and safety issues affecting tenants and residents in relation to gas, electrical, fire, water and lift safety and obligations relating to asbestos, damp and mould. This system was audited during 2023 utilising a detailed bank of evidence. The Auditor concluded "Overall, the audit was very good and there is clearly a high level of health and safety compliance." In addition other assurance tools such as Internal Audit and gas quality checks were also used to gain assurance throughout the year. The Association has a Stock Health & Safety Sub Committee in place which reviews performance on safety matters on an ongoing basis and there is standing Health & Safety item on the Management Committee agenda.

We have been unable to complete all of our Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR's) which were due by 31st March 2023. This was the result of a variety of reasons including availability of materials, contractors etc and access issues. As at 31st March 2023, 39 EICR's were completed out with the 5 year deadline but achieved by 31st March 2023 (11 initially refused access & 28 were contractor failure). This left a balance of 24 outstanding at 31st March 2023 where abeyances were applied for through the ARC. We are continuing to work through these.

The breakdown of these 24 are:

- 11 refused access with force entry procedures being followed and at 16/10/2023 are complete.
- 5 not completed due to condition of property (hoarding) 4 of which as at 16/10/2023 are complete.
- 8 were undergoing major works (Buy Backs) and now complete.

As at September 2023 and for the 2023/24 programme, there have been 77 no accesses

- 52 of which are now completed (42 provided voluntary access).
- There is a balance of 25 properties at various stages of the forced entry process (21 not responding, 3 made new appointment and 1 has condition of property issues).

The Association continues to work closely with our consultants and contractor (monthly meetings) to ensure the EICR project is being delivered and target met. In addition to this, our Mechanical and Electrical Consultant has taken a proactive role through streamlining and levelling out the programme over the next 5 years.

The Management Committee receives a monthly EICR report on the progress of the project and is aware of the progress being made.

Given these actions we believe that the Association has taken reasonable steps to complete any outstanding works in relation to EICRs.

Overall we are assured that Paragon Housing Association is materially compliant with the Regulatory Standards and Regulatory Framework requirements

The Management Committee is not complacent about matters of performance and compliance. In reviewing compliance, we have adopted an improvement focus and have also identified a number of improvement actions which we will progress during the course of the year.

We are satisfied that these actions are intended to deliver effective improvement. We recognise that we are required to notify the SHR of any changes in our compliance during the course of the year and are assured that we have effective arrangements in place to enable us to do so.

Section 2: Authority

As Chair, I was authorised by the Management Committee at a meeting held on 18th October 2023 to sign and submit this Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

Name	Audrey Anderson
Designation	Chair
Signature	
Date	
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