

# RIHA

**Environmental, Social &  
Governance Report  
2023 - 2024**

OPENNESS  
SUPPORT  
CULTURE  
PROPERTIES  
COMMUNITIES  
OUR TOWN  
HOMES  
IMPROVING **LIVES**  
HOUSING  
HEALTH  
SPACES  
WHAT WE DO  
FUTURES  
INTEGRITY  
ASPIRATIONS  
SERVICES  
PEOPLE  
VALUES  
WELL-BEING  
SKILLS  
AUTHENTICITY

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## Introduction

RHA operates at the heart of Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have a strong commitment to make positive change for our tenants and stakeholders, and those who live and work in our local area. Our values and behaviours underpin everything that we do, and we are ambitious in our plans, working collaboratively to make positive improvements that have a wider impact across Wales

RHA are proud to be early adopters of the new Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing, presenting our fourth annual report, and among a small number of the first Associations in Wales to publish to date. It is our aspiration that regular ESG reporting and data analysis will provide us with increased understanding of risks and opportunities for RHA, and will help to demonstrate the importance of the links between financial and non-financial information and capturing added value. It will also provide us with valuable information to help us understand our performance and how we can continue to improve and develop. In early 2024, RHA secured its second ESG-linked funding facility with a new term loan supported by Principality Building Society, this will complement our existing ESG linked funding with Barclays Bank, generating savings on interest costs that can be reinvested into other activities.

As a Welsh organisation, we are also committed to delivering on the seven goals of The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act; to think about the long-term impact of our decisions, to work better with people, our communities and each other, and work to reduce poverty, health inequalities and the impacts of climate change.

In November 2023 RHA announced that we are exploring a merger opportunity with Coastal Housing Group. Both organisations believe that by joining forces we can create an even more resilient organisation with greater capacity and scale to invest and improve in services for the future. Both organisations have a shared vision for how we can work together and we remain committed to our communities and tenants as we explore this. We have spent a number of months working through the various stages and we are well advanced in this process. We continue to ensure that our focus remains on delivering against our current objectives and our usual business activities. We aim to complete the merger towards the end of 2024.

### The Seven Well-being Goals



**A Prosperous Wales**



**A Resilient Wales**



**A More Equal Wales**



**A Healthier Wales**



**A Wales of Cohesive  
Communities**



**A Wales of Vibrant  
Culture & Thriving  
Welsh Language**



**A Globally  
Responsible Wales**

## Our Vision

To create places where people can prosper.

## Our Values and Behaviours

At RHA, our values underpin all aspects of our work and it is important to us that all our stakeholders embrace and support our values and behaviours.

### VALUES. We act with...



#### RESPECT

We demonstrate respect for all, treating people equally and demonstrating an inclusive culture throughout the organisation



#### TRANSPARENCY

We are open with our customers, our colleagues and our partners. We involve our tenants in key decisions wherever possible and provide up to date accurate information



#### INTEGRITY

We aim to deliver to the highest standards possible and do not settle for second best



#### OPENNESS

We continually challenge ourselves to do things better, looking outside our business and our sector to learn new ways of working

### BEHAVIOURS. We will be...



#### POSITIVE

We will approach our work with a can-do attitude and try to overcome any barriers or hurdles



#### INNOVATIVE

We think creatively and embrace new ideas and ways of working.



#### PROFESSIONAL

We demonstrate the highest levels of professionalism in all that we do.



#### AUTHENTIC

We are proud of what we do and we want to do it in a meaningful way. We are committed to providing our tenants with the best possible services and products

# Our ESG Report

The background of the page is a solid teal color. It features several large, overlapping triangles in different shades of teal, creating a modern, geometric design. One large triangle points upwards from the bottom left, while another points downwards from the top right. A third, darker triangle is positioned in the lower left, partially overlapping the others.

## Summary of the ESG Themes

| ESG Area      | Theme | Theme Name                  | Description  |
|---------------|-------|-----------------------------|--|
| ENVIRONMENTAL | T1    | Climate Change              | This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider acts to prevent and mitigate the risk of climate change.   |
|               | T2    | Ecology                     | This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider is protecting the local environment and promoting ecological sustainability.   |
|               | T3    | Resource Management         | This theme considers the sustainable management of natural resources.  |
| SOCIAL        | T4    | Affordability and Security  | This theme seeks to assess the extent to which the housing provider provides homes that are genuinely secure and affordable to those on low-incomes.   |
|               | T5    | Building Safety and Quality | This theme seeks to assess how well the housing provider manages building quality and resident safety.   |
|               | T6    | Resident Voice              | This theme seeks to assess how effective the housing provider is at listening to and empowering residents.   |
|               | T7    | Resident Support            | This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that the housing provider runs to support individual residents and the local community.  |
|               | T8    | Placemaking                 | This theme seeks to highlight the wider set of activities that housing providers undertake to create well-designed homes and places that meet local needs and provide great places for people to live and enjoy. |
| GOVERNANCE    | T9    | Structure & Governance      | This theme seeks to report on the legal structure of the organisation and assess its approach to governance.   |
|               | T10   | Board & Trustees            | This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the board of trustees.  |
|               | T11   | Staff Wellbeing             | This theme seeks to assess the extent to which the housing provider is a good employer and supports its employees at work.   |
|               | T12   | Supply Chain Management     | This theme considers how the housing provider ensures that it procures responsibly.  |

The background is a solid teal color. It features several geometric elements: a large, lighter teal trapezoid in the center, a vertical teal bar on the left, and a horizontal teal bar at the top. Three thin yellow lines are scattered across the design: one in the top right, one in the bottom left, and one horizontal line above the text on the right.

# ENVIRONMENTAL

Climate Change

Ecology

Resource Management



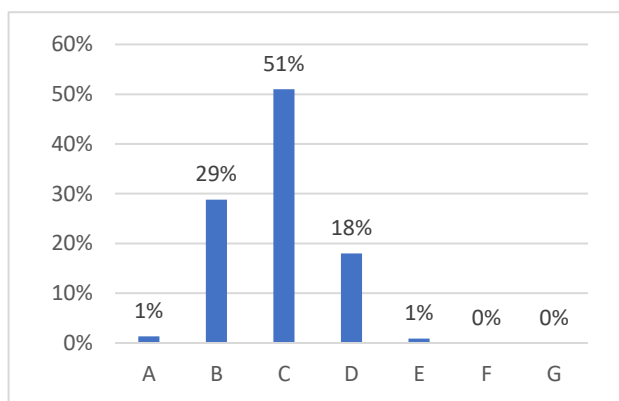
## T1 Climate Change

Climate change is becoming an increasingly urgent global priority and, as an owner of a large portfolio of homes and buildings, and as an employer, we recognise that we have a responsibility to take action to reduce our own impact on the environment and contribute towards this important global issue.

### C1 Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the start of the previous financial year)

The distribution of EPC ratings for our owned homes as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023:

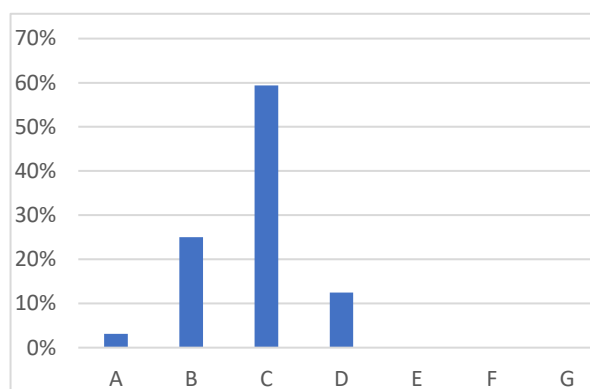
| EPC Band     | No of Homes | Percentage  |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A            | 28          | 1%          |
| B            | 617         | 29%         |
| C            | 1091        | 51%         |
| D            | 385         | 18%         |
| E            | 19          | 1%          |
| F            | 0           | 0%          |
| G            | 0           | 0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>2140</b> | <b>100%</b> |



The average SAP rating of these homes was 75.

### C2 Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the previous financial year)

| EPC Band     | No of Homes | Percentage  |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A            | 1           | 3%          |
| B            | 8           | 25%         |
| C            | 19          | 59%         |
| D            | 4           | 13%         |
| E            | 0           | 0%          |
| F            | 0           | 0%          |
| G            | 0           | 0%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>32</b>   | <b>100%</b> |



1 new home was completed in the 2023/24 financial year which achieved EPC rating A.

31 homes were acquired from another social landlord in the 2023/24 financial year. 8 homes were EPC rating B (SAP 81-91), 19 homes were EPC rating C (SAP 69-80) and 4 homes were EPC rating D (SAP 55-68).

The new property built in year complies with building regulations and the Welsh Governments 'Beautiful Homes and Spaces' standards.

The average SAP rating of these homes was 77.

**C3 Does the housing provider have a Net Zero target and strategy? If so, what is it and when does the housing provider intend to be Net Zero by?**

As a result of the increasing focus on climate change and forthcoming decarbonisation targets set by Welsh Government, RHA felt it is right to formalise our first decarbonisation strategy – RHA Optimise. The strategy was written in 2021 and is intended to be used for the period 2021-2030.

RHA are committed to cutting emissions, providing warmer homes and helping our tenants to reduce their energy bills. We can help strengthen the local economy through our green investment and procurement. We can also help to improve the air quality in the areas we work and live.

Our vision for RHA Optimise is that by 2030, our operations, buildings and a higher proportion of our homes will be cleaner, more efficient and overall use less energy and produce less carbon than in 2021. This vision is split across three key areas:

- Our office and commercial buildings
- Our homes
- Our people and ways of working

Despite completing numerous retrofit projects, ensuring new homes meet EPC A and calculating our carbon footprint, we are currently within our discovery phase in which we are reviewing our data to model potential improvements to our properties and buildings. Therefore at this stage, we have not added specific quantifiable targets into our strategy to reduce carbon emissions.

We are committed to completing the whole stock assessment and target energy pathway requirements in line with the requirements of Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023.

We have not written our strategy in line with the Science Based Target Initiative however, will look to incorporate the principles of this into any revision of the strategy in the future.

**C4 What retrofit activities has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months in relation to its housing stock? How do these activities align with, and contribute towards, performance against the housing provider's Net Zero strategy and target?**

During the 2023/24 financial year, we have continued to access Welsh Government Optimised Retrofit Programme funding which has enabled us to continue to work with GB-Sol who are a Welsh manufacturer of Solar PV panels. Funding of £707,067 was obtained which along with our contribution of £121,987 enabled us to install Solar PV or Solar PV and battery storage to 61 homes in various parts of Rhondda Cynon Taf. The funding requirements also dictated that we must install environmental and energy monitoring equipment for a period of three years so that we can demonstrate the effectiveness of the installations.

This project equates to 3% of our housing stock but we appreciate that further measures will be required to fully decarbonise the homes as they are all currently heated by gas.

The properties included were either a high C or low B EPC rating and as a result of the works completed are now either a high B or A EPC rating. All new homes we build achieve EPC A as standard.

## C5 Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions

In 2021, we worked with the Carbon Trust to calculate and measure our organisational carbon footprint across all aspects of our business. For 2020/21 Scope 1 emissions directly emitted by RHA were 2,753.9 (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and Scope 2 emissions indirectly emitted by the consumption of purchased electricity, heat or steam were £1,421.3 (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). Due to other commitments, we have not updated these figures but plan to do so once RHA merges with another organisation in early 2025. These updated figures will also assist us in setting targets in any new decarbonisation strategy for the merged organisation.

We currently do not qualify for SCER reporting as we do not meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Turnover (or gross income) of £36m or more
- Balance sheet assets of £18m or more
- 250 employees or more

## C6 How has the housing provider mapped and assessed the climate risks to its homes and supply chain, such as increased flood, drought and overheating risks? How is the housing provider mitigating these risks?

When considering locations for our new developments flood risk is a key factor in our assessment and determination of suitability of sites for residential purposes. We work closely with our design teams, Natural Resources Wales and other stakeholders to ensure our development sites are located in low risk flood zones. All homes we build at RHA Wales meet high sustainability and energy efficiency standards, a challenge that sits alongside this is overheating due to airtightness of new dwellings. As standard now we employ specialist energy consultants to carry out overheating assessments to ensure from a design stage we mitigate overheating in the homes we build, both of these climate risks are robustly challenged through the planning process and by Welsh Government as part of our funding applications.

Many of our existing homes were also built by RHA and climate risks would have been taken into account at the time of construction. If we experience climate related issues at any of our homes, we ensure that we undertake any necessary remedial action to restore these homes back into use and also look to install measures to prevent future incidents.

As part of decarbonisation planning for each home, we will review potential climate risks. Where practical to do so or within our control, we will look to install preventative measures at the same time as other decarbonisation works. Where the risk is not within our control, we will look to partner with other organisations such as statutory authorities to install preventative measures.

## T2 Ecology

### C7 Does the housing provider have a strategy to enhance green space and promote biodiversity on or near homes?

We do not currently have a strategy to increase our amount of green spaces, but we are planning to develop one. This strategy will likely be written once RHA merges into the new organisation and is required to ensure that we comply with the biodiversity requirements of the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 from 2024/25 onwards. We will consider the feasibility of the 'greening' of our existing

communal open spaces by planting wildflower areas, tree planting and generally ensuring that there is provision for green or natural areas that require less grounds maintenance, promote bio-diversity and encourage and sustain wildlife.

To comply with planning policy in Wales, all our new build proposals must include a Net Biodiversity Benefit plan, policy enforcing that *“strategic planning and individual development proposals must avoid loss in the extent of biodiversity and incorporate measures to appropriately maintain and enlarge existing habitats, especially where extent is small or declining through habitat restoration and creation with adjoining and nearby areas, green infrastructure features and networks”* alongside the biodiversity benefit, our proposals must by law include a Green Infrastructure Plan this provides a more clear-cut focus on maximising the planning system’s contribution to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets. Planning Policy Wales now requires applicants to take *“a proactive and spatial approach to development, which links to wider activities being undertaken by local authorities, to protect and provide green infrastructure”*. This change in legislation sitting beside the still relevantly recent SAB legislation which came into force in Wales in 2019, means that our new developments include more green spaces than ever before which provides a natural habitat for biodiversity as well as a functioning drainage system.



### Our Green Community Projects

We continue to work in partnership with Men’s Sheds Treorchy and Cambrian Lakeside to support tenants in some of our schemes, to create and manage their own communal gardens. We have also supported tenant groups with developing their community gardens or estate spaces that provide opportunity to enhance biodiversity and improve wellbeing.

We also secured funding to deliver a borough wide Climate Action project called Greener RCT. The project aims to:

- To educate local people on the impact of climate change and the importance of climate action
- To research and design a ‘Green Skills’ pathway in the field of maintenance and construction
- To action change locally through testing and trialling a ‘Green High Street’ in Tonypany.

### C8 Does the housing provider have a strategy to identify, manage and reduce pollutants that could cause material harm. If so, how do you target and measure performance?

Our Asset Management Strategy, Reactive Maintenance Policy and Fitness for Human Habitation Policy provide a framework for how we undertake repair and maintenance works in line with best practice and legislation. We prioritise reactive maintenance and planned maintenance programmes where there is an immediate risk to the health, safety and security of any tenants or causing immediate damage to the property.

RHA Wales Group has joined a consortium with other local Housing Associations in South Wales and has met on a number of occasions to plan for The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 including the Renting Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) (Wales) Regulations 2022. Following implementation of a common agreed approach, the consortium still continues to meet regularly at both an operational and strategic levels to discuss any relevant matters.

We undertake a regime of regular estate and block inspections and this enables us to identify repair issues such as damp within common parts and external to buildings. We also actively encourage tenants to alert us to any repair issues in their homes.

Water Hygiene and Asbestos surveys are undertaken by our partner contractors in line with our Health & Safety Compliance Policy. Where compliance issues arise, corrective actions are taken to eliminate the risk and ensure that we comply with legislation and regulatory requirements.

We have completed a postcode assessment of our housing stock using the services of Public Health England who hold the detailed radon mapping data. As a result of this assessment, we have appointed a consultant to complete radon testing at homes identified as requiring on site monitoring. A programme of monitoring is ongoing with a selection of properties included within each phase of surveys.

## T3 Resource Management

### C9 Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building and repairs works? If so, how do you target and measure performance?

Our Development Strategy sets out our commitment to ensuring that building materials are responsibly sourced. This flows through to our new build specification which places an obligation on our appointed contractors to procure responsibly and ethically. We do, however, recognise that there is room for improvement in this area. In the future we will look at introducing measures to monitor procurement of materials and supplies made via our main contractor partners.

For our existing homes, we recently re-tendered our framework of contractors in 2021/22 and as part of that process we engaged contractors to make a commitment to working with RHA to reduce their carbon footprint where possible. We also advised that contractors must be willing to give due consideration to the use of environmentally friendly products and sustainable alternatives wherever possible and practical to do so, and must consider the whole life cycle (from the extraction of raw materials until the final disposal) when procuring goods. This should include consideration of sustainability issues such as sustainable raw materials, ethical sourcing and production including reducing raw materials, energy and water etc, how the supply/delivery can contribute to the local economy, and reducing the impact of transportation, and how products will eventually be disposed of. All 'waste' should be traceable by Natural Resources Wales and any recycling undertaken should achieve quality protocol standards.

We have made the decision to continue to use Welsh manufactured Solar PV panels for our work with the Optimised retrofit project to existing homes. The Solar panels are manufactured within Rhondda Cynon Taf by a company who employs many people from the local area.

### C10 Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials? If so, how do you target and measure performance?

The majority of RHA's waste is generated through void property clearances, with repairs, maintenance and upgrades also contributing.

Emissions from waste contributed **89t CO2e** (0.7% of total carbon footprint) in 2019/20 and **54 tCO2e** (0.5% of total carbon footprint) in 2020/21. The volume of waste disposed of was 594 m3 in 2019/20 and 471m3 in 2020/21. Most waste related to the management and maintenance of our homes is thought to go to landfill as general municipal waste, although our waste provider does separate out recyclable material. Due to other commitments, we have not updated emissions for previous years to date but will look to recommence this activity once RHA merges to form the new organisation.

On all new developments and projects funded by Welsh Government, we receive an outcomes report from our contractor partner on environmental performance during the construction programme. Our contractors are contractually obligated to share this information on waste management, including the amount of waste avoided from landfill. Whilst on a scheme-by-scheme basis this information alone does not give RHA much opportunity to measure success, when viewed holistically as a development programme it gives us the opportunity to understand the impact our building contracts are having on the environment. Going forward, we are looking to use this data to set targets that will improve contractor performance and measure success of this.

In 2021/22, as part of our Decarbonisation Strategy, we reviewed our approach to waste management, incorporating the principles of the circular economy wherever possible. Whilst improvement work is still ongoing, we have identified opportunities such as elimination of single use plastic throughout our business, reducing, reusing and recycling our waste as much as possible including food waste, reducing the amount of paper we use and recycling and reusing building components where possible.

- We require all contractors to complete an Environmental Statement as part of their tender returns.
- When we hold events or meetings we consider as part of the planning the most environmentally friendly way of organising the event to minimise energy consumption, travel and waste.
- When purchasing goods and equipment, we consider recycled material options where possible and equipment that uses less energy.

We have established a focus group to better understand how waste is currently being generated, how disposal services are commissioned and the segregation and treatment of waste. This work is ongoing and will further improve the accuracy of our data and the ability to prioritise carbon emission hotspots.

We are compliant with the new workplace recycling Welsh Legislation and have installed recycling bin provision at our Office.

#### C11 Does the housing provider have a strategy for water management? If so, how do you target and measure performance?

RHA recognises that the provision of fresh water and the treatment of wastewater causes carbon emissions and also that there is a financial impact for our tenants if water is wasted. As such, we are committed to better understanding water usage in our homes and other buildings.

Emissions from water contributed 1.6 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, equivalent to <0.1% of the total carbon footprint in FY20/21. This relates to 1,554 m<sup>3</sup> of water use in 20/21 from communal areas in properties managed by RHA, such as cleaner's cupboards, laundry rooms and the main office. We have not updated these figures but plan to in the future once RHA merge to form the new organisation.

As part of RHAs health and safety compliance regime, regular legionella checks are conducted at the relevant sites throughout our portfolio and these checks are recorded on our Risk Management systems.

RHA must comply with the new Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 by 2034 and this includes the following requirements in order to reduce water usage:

- Water butts must be installed in gardens where practical to do so.
- Water efficient fixtures must be installed where applicable as follows:
  - Toilet - 4.5/3 ltrs per flush,
  - Wash basin tap - 4 ltrs per minute with aerated outlets
  - Shower - 8 ltrs per minute with aerated outlets
  - Kitchen/utility tap - 5 ltrs per minute with aerated outlets
  - Bath - 170 ltr capacity
  -

RHA is currently updating its specifications to ensure the fixtures that we install comply with these increased targets.





# SOCIAL

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Affordability and Security  
Building Safety and Quality  
Resident Voice  
Resident Support  
Placemaking



## T1 Affordability & Security

One of the key strategic priorities set out in our Corporate Plan is to ensure that our homes are affordable for our tenants and that we are able to create tenancies that are sustainable.

### C12 Housing Provider Affordability Metric

We have a robust framework in place that considers the affordability of our rents when we are determining our rent charges each year. We have an affordability model, based on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) model, that considers the affordability of our proposed rent charges in the context of the size of the property, the likely average household income and other costs of living. This model determines that the cost of rent should not exceed 28% of net income, or 33% where rent and service charges are combined. Our affordability modelling enables us to identify individual tenants or groups of tenants who are most likely to find any proposed rent uplifts unaffordable.

Our innovative Rent Debt Share Scheme which was launched in October 2020 and is now embedded into service delivery. It offers tenants with rent arrears the opportunity to enter into a payment plan, and if the payment plan is maintained for 12 months, those tenants have an amount of arrears written off by RHA, equivalent to the amount that they have paid off (up to an agreed maximum amount). Over the year, our rent arrears performance has remained consistently strong, which is positive for our tenants and for RHA.

We work in partnership with the Local Authority (LA) to meet housing need and alleviate homelessness in the Borough. We are partners to Rhondda Cynon Taff's Common Housing Register and Joint Housing Allocation Scheme. This means that 100% of our homes are allocated via the housing waiting list that the LA manage and administer. They assess each applicant based on their circumstances and allocate them a priority banding. This ensures that we are housing those applicants who are deemed to be in greatest need. The vast majority of our tenancies are let according to benchmark social rents; however we currently have 31 legacy Secure tenancies where Fair Rents are applicable.



77%

In our recent (2023) tenant-wide survey, 77% of our tenants said that they were satisfied that their rent provides value for money



As part of our broader affordability work, RHA benchmarks its rents against other Housing Associations and those of the private rented sector.



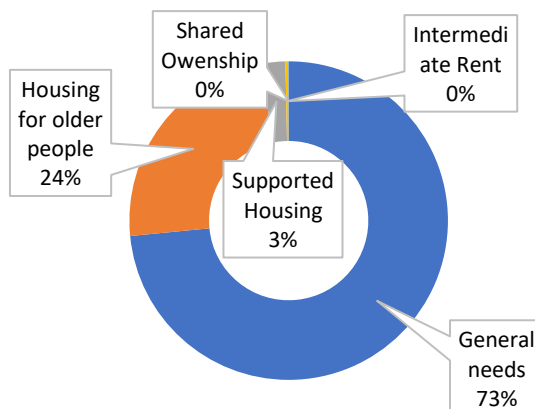
£

For an average 3 bedroom property, RHA charges £127.10 per week. The Local Housing Allowance for a 3 bedroom property in the private rented sector (PRS) is typically between £230 pw and £150 pw. This means RHA's rent is between 15% and 45% more affordable than the private sector.

- C13** Share, and number of existing homes (homes completed before the start of the previous financial year) allocated to: General needs (social rent), intermediate rent, Affordable rent, Supported Housing, Housing for older people, Low-cost home ownership, Care homes, Private Rental Sector.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, we owned 2140 homes.

| Tenure                   | No of Homes | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------|
| General needs            | 1572        | 73%        |
| Housing for older people | 505         | 24%        |
| Supported Housing        | 56          | 3%         |
| Intermediate Rent        | 6           | 0%         |
| Shared Ownership         | 1           | 0%         |
| Total                    | 2140        | 100%       |



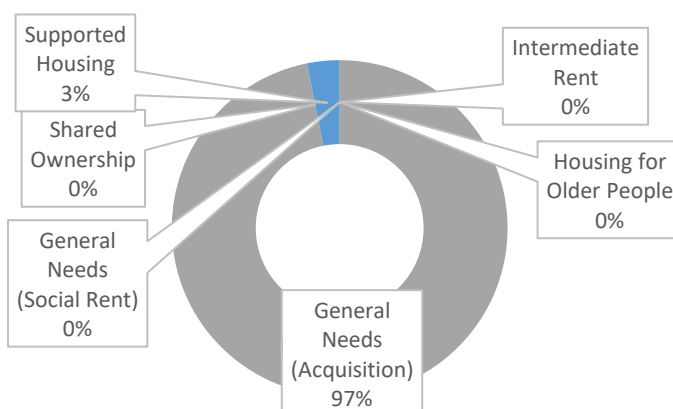
- C14** Share, and number of new homes (homes that were completed in the previous financial year) allocated to: General needs (social rent), intermediate rent, Affordable rent, Supported Housing, Housing for older people, Low cost home ownership, Care homes, Private Rental Sector

During 2023/24 we completed 1 new build home which was supported accommodation.

In addition, during 2023/24, we acquired 31 homes from another social landlord.

A summary of all homes completed (new and acquired) during the year to March 2024 can be seen below:

| Category                    | Homes     |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| General Needs (Social Rent) | 0         |
| Housing for Older People    | 0         |
| General Needs (Acquisition) | 31        |
| Shared Ownership            | 0         |
| Supported Housing           | 1         |
| Intermediate Rent           | 0         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                | <b>32</b> |



In 2024/25 we are projected to handover 32 new homes.

- C15** How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of high energy costs on its residents?

Where Housing Officers or Payment Advisors identify tenancy hardship leading to fuel poverty, they will complete income maximisation assessments with the tenant to ensure that they are in receipt of all benefits that they are entitled to. In addition, where a tenant is unable to put credit on their meter, the officers will make a referral to The Fuel Bank Foundation (a partner of RHA) who will issue an emergency voucher to enable a credit to be added to the meter.

If officers identify a property where there is no floor covering, they will provide financial support from our Sustainability Fund to assist with the purchase of flooring and carpets. All of our homes let from April 2024 will have floor coverings provided as part of our compliance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023.

We have also arranged for professional and independent assessments on our all-electric schemes to ensure that the heaters/timers are working effectively and to ensure that residents know how to maximise efficiency and economy when using the heaters.

Officers have also provided advice at our older persons schemes where there are communal boilers, to explain how they can help to reduce their communal and personal heating costs.

RHA provides food parcels for tenants in hardship in the hope that the cost savings on food will support them in meeting any increases in fuel costs.

RHA has been involved in all phases of the Welsh Government's Optimised Retrofit Programme which aims to decarbonise social housing properties. To date we have installed, solar PV or solar PV and battery storage to 97 homes with current programmes or funding proposals in place to install solar PV at a further 201 homes. Monitoring equipment is installed at all homes to enable us to demonstrate that the installations are having a positive effect on the tenants lifestyles.

#### **C16**    How does the housing provider provide security of tenure for residents?

During the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 100% of our general needs tenants have Secure Occupation Contracts following the implementation of the Renting Homes Wales Act in December 2022. These are lifelong Occupation Contracts which only end if a Contract Holder leaves of their own choice, or if there is a significant breach in the terms of their Occupation Contract.

## T5 Building Safety & Quality

At RHA, we have an absolute commitment to ensuring the health and safety of our homes. We strive to go beyond compliance with legislation and to embed a culture of safety, ensuring that we provide a consistently high standard of homes for our tenants.

C17 Describe the condition of the housing provider's portfolio in respect of compliance checks (gas safety, fire risk assessments, electrical safety checks).



100%

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, 100% of our homes had an in-date accredited gas safety check.



100%

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, none of our properties had an outstanding Fire Risk Assessment. We have no high-rise properties. Where RHA identify a property as requiring a Fire Risk Assessment, we undertake these between 12 and 24 months, based on risk. Inspections are undertaken by appropriately qualified independent fire risk assessors.



99.9%

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, two of our properties had an outstanding electrical safety check. Both were overdue due to issues with accessing the property.



100%

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, none of our properties had an outstanding Legionella Risk Assessment. Inspections are undertaken by appropriately qualified independent legionella risk assessors.

C18 What % of homes meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard?



100%

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, all of our homes met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This included 934 homes with acceptable fails which are due to the timing of when components have been identified for replacement in our planned maintenance programme.

## C19 How does the housing provider manage and mitigate the risk of damp and mould for residents?

As part of RHA's compliance with the Renting Homes (Wales) Act, the Fitness for Human Habitation Regulations and the Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023, RHA launched its Damp, Mould and Condensation policy in April 2023. This policy is also accompanied by a detailed procedure explaining how we proactively address, reactively address and subsequently monitor damp, mould and condensation.

Our policy aims to:

- Reinforce our zero complacency to damp, condensation and mould.
- Ensure that contract holders are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Focus on working in partnership with contract holders.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp, including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that contract holders have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice on managing and controlling damp, condensation and mould.
- Comply with statutory and regulatory requirements and good practice.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage, resulting from damp, condensation and mould.




The new Welsh Housing Quality Standard 2023 places increased focus on damp mould and condensation as this standard requires us to be no worse than the national average for that property type rather than being free from category one or two hazards.

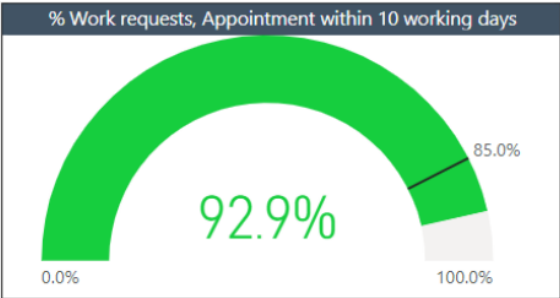
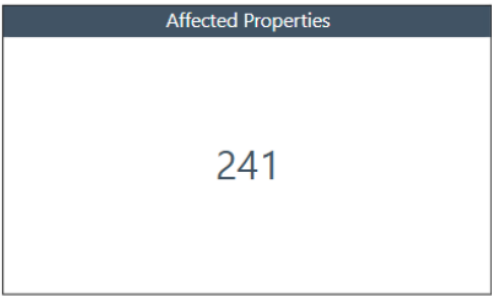
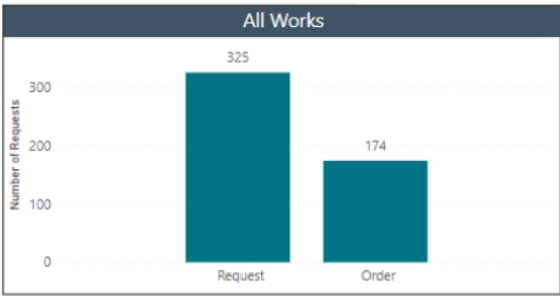
RHA has arranged damp, mould and condensation training for various staff with a specialist training provider. This training included on site practical application of the knowledge learnt to ensure staff understand the theory in a real life situation.

RHA has completed social media campaigns, produced awareness raising videos and leaflets and also works with partner organisations such as NEA to ensure tenants can better understand the differences and how best to manage their home.

As part of optimised retrofit funding from the Welsh Government, we are required to install environmental sensors in homes receiving decarbonisation measures. These environmental sensors monitor temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide. We receive a monthly report from the supplier of these sensors who flag to RHA any properties they feel need investigation based on the data being provided from the sensors. In addition to this, we have also purchased hygrometers that can be placed in properties as required to further monitor environmental conditions where fixed sensors are not in place.

RHA have a monitoring dash board in place to monitor all reported cases of damp, mould and condensation and the data as at the start of May 2024 is as follows:

-   
- Requests
- Orders



| Converted Requests                   |                                 |                                    |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Number of Requests with Linked Order | Number of Requests Completed WO | Number of Suggested Orders Created |
| 92                                   | 140                             | 220                                |

## T3 Resident Voice

We have continued to deliver on our commitment to listen to the views of our tenants when planning and providing our services, we have 200 tenants who take part in consultations, service reviews and policy decisions as part of our Tenant Involvement Framework.

### C20 What are the results of the housing provider's most recent tenant satisfaction survey? How has the housing provider acted on these results?

In our last tenant-wide perception survey conducted in October 2023, overall satisfaction with the service provided by RHA to our tenants was 77%. The response rate to our survey was 37%, which was high enough to conclude that the findings were accurate to within +2.9%. This is well inside the required margin of error and represents a good return. The 2023 survey resulted in positive responses across the range of questions, particularly in respect of the quality and safety of our homes:



77%

of tenants were satisfied overall by the service provided by RHA.



81%

said that they were satisfied that RHA are easy to contact.



81%

were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.



84%

of tenants said that they were satisfied with the safety and security of their home.

In addition to the two-yearly perception surveys, we also carry out short transactional surveys each time a tenant receives certain services from RHA. The results from our transactional survey responses in 2023/24 show that our overall tenant satisfaction was 90% at year end above our target of 85%.

Satisfaction with the management of ASB cases is often lower than in other areas of service provision. This can be for several reasons e.g., expectations of the issues we can realistically resolve, the time

that resolutions can take due to legal processes, the inability to solve disputes between neighbours who are unable to live amicably alongside each other. In addition, the number of respondents was extremely low in this category, having an adverse impact on the overall percentage.

In 2023/24 we have re-introduced our peer-led Satisfaction Survey Work meaning tenants will support us with transactional satisfaction surveys. This approach enables us to reach those who are digitally excluded and would otherwise be unable to provide feedback on the services they have received.

**C21** What arrangements are in place to enable residents to hold management to account for provision of services?

We established a new framework and relaunched our commitment in September 2022, we now have 6 Tenant Review groups who will support us to review areas of service such as Health & Safety, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and Repairs & Maintenance, as well as a Tenant Committee comprising of representatives of all Tenant Review Groups. To make involvement accessible to all we have 3 levels of involvement:

**Get Informed** – where tenants can receive information about our services and important issues or updates, as well as news on events and projects.

**Get Together** – where tenants can help us improve services by sharing feedback and ideas at tenant events, through ‘RHA On The Road’, community meetings or tenant and resident groups.

**Get Involved** – where tenants can review and influence the way we work and share their thoughts on our plans and services through completing the surveys we share, or through our Get Involved groups.

We have **200 (8.5%)** tenants who engage with us on a regular basis and this year we have offered opportunities to review policies, design surveys and direct our service delivery.



**Get Informed**

We run a Get Involved Facebook group with 60 members, where we promote all engagement opportunities

We create an annual newsletter, sharing information on our services, important and useful information on living well and saving money, and promoting opportunities for tenants to get involved or take part in our community projects.

**Get Together**

Our Community Hub - ‘Little Shed’ was launched in October 2022 and is now home to many weekly activities. Our Community Fridge project has expanded to provide food and essentials 5 days a week (surplus stock from local supermarkets made available to those in need). We offer Warm Space sessions, a Health & Wellbeing Drop-In (GP referral service), Yoga sessions, a Repair Café, Library Of Things, a craft session and a digital skills class as part of ‘Get RCT Online’.



We are seeing regular visitors, with 3567 visits last year, including visits for:

- Warm Space – 296
- Community Fridge – 1941
- Craft – 586
- Wellbeing – 148
- Volunteering – 177
- Repair Cafe – 28
- Library Of Things – 40.

### **Get Involved**

This year we have focused on strengthening the work of our core tenant groups.

Our Tenant Committee has:

Reviewed Welsh Government's Service Charge Setting policy.

Reviewed our internal Service Charge Setting policy and made recommendations for improvement.

Worked with our Board Of Management to ensure tenant voice is represented at a strategic level.

We worked with our Tenant Communication Group and Communications Business Partner to ensure all tenant materials are accessible, meaningful and eye-catching. Our Customer Experience Group have supported us in reviewing our refuse and recycling process, our complaints Policy and agreed to the questions and design of our all-tenant Satisfaction Survey.

A review of our Rechargeable Repairs Policy, Lettable Standards, Garden Contract and information provided to tenants in new homes, was completed by our Development Group. Our Community Projects group approved our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Service Standard and Tenant Involvement (Get Involved) Service Standard, as well as reviewing and approving our Tenant Involvement Commitment and Volunteer Policy.

Our Maintenance Group reviewed and approved our Planned And Reactive Maintenance Service Standards, and they supported us in developing key messaging around managing damp, mould and condensation.



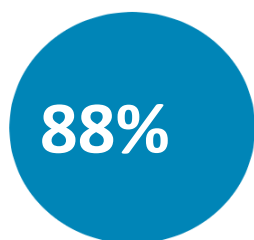
**C22** In the last 12 months, in how many complaints has the national Ombudsman determined that maladministration took place? How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?

In the last 12 months no complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman

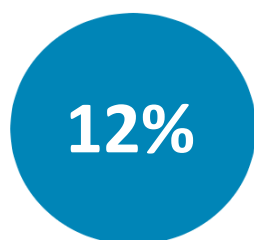
RHA's Complaints Policy and procedure is communicated to tenants via our tenant newsletter. It can be requested via phone, email and information about the policy and ways to make a complaint or provide feedback is included on our website. Complaint management is centrally coordinated and this enables timely escalation and also the identification of trends. In addition, there is a process for concerns to be escalated and dealt with by more senior people in the organisation. Learning from complaints is shared with staff from the relevant service area(s) to reduce or eliminate similar occurrences in future. From April 2024 we will be operating a new Complaints Policy and Procedure which complies with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales model policy which is overseen by the Complaints Standard Authority in Wales.



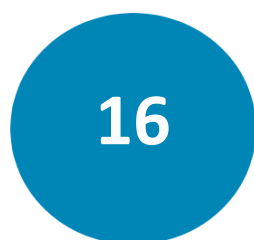
Complaints received in 2023



of these, equivalent to 7 complaints, were dealt with at Stage 1.



equivalent to 1 complaint, was escalated to Stage 3



days average response time at Stage 1 versus target of 17 days.

## T7 Resident Support

Investing in communities is important to RHA because as well as providing affordable homes we want to see our communities prosper and thrive. As such, part of our mission is to improve lives and we are committed to ensuring that our tenants are supported in the right way and at the right time in order to achieve this mission and maximise tenancy sustainability and the prosperity of local communities.

### C23 What support services does the housing provider offer to its residents? How successful are these services in improving outcomes?

We have three strategic documents that provide a framework for our work in this area:

- Tenant Involvement Commitment
- Community Investment Commitment
- Community Engagement Development Plan

#### Tenant Welfare and Practical Support

Our Grub Hub and Community Fridge project continues to run in partnership with RCT Healthy Hearts Community Shop and Tonypandy Foodbank, to ensure we reach as many people as possible. We receive regular donations from Lidl, Farmfoods, Coop and this year Sainsbury's have joined our partnership. Our Community Fridge project has extended to offer support via a smaller satellite provision in Llanharan Community Development Project on Mondays and Tuesdays, meaning access to food support is growing.

We have also continued with our own fund-raising efforts, carrying out a 21-mile sponsored walk from Tonypandy to Cardiff and applying for small grants, which have allowed us to provide:

- 75 Christmas hampers
- 60 winter warm packs.

#### Be Active

Our Healthy Living Officer has worked with 143 individuals and 5 community group, offering one to one support and access to free health sessions such as yoga classes and walking groups.

122 tenants and community members have taken part in online and in person seated yoga, wellbeing drop-in session, health walks, chair exercise and dance classes and menopause support sessions. Tenants have also benefited from personal support such as exercise programmes, health and wellbeing telephone support, home visits and referrals to other support agencies.

Participants have told us that,

‘(I) enjoyed so much and still am happier now thanks to you and your wellbeing help and kindest assistance to us all. Thank you’

‘Having your session, I feel has put a spring in our steps both mentally and physic ally. Thank you’

## RHA/Giving Back

We have chosen the title 'Giving Back' to describe our Community Investment and Social Value work, which falls into four categories: Employment, Skills & Training, Supporting Local, Giving Back and Keen To Be Green.

As part of our Giving Back commitment, we have continued to support Tonypandy Chamber of Trade by chairing their monthly meeting and sponsoring their Christmas and Easter events.

We have supported four local school projects, including promotion of the housing sector at two employment events, funding and facilitating a photography project for development site hoarding in Tonypandy town centre and delivering construction safety talks.

Our contractors have supplied in-person and financial support to two community gardens as well as site safety support for a local Boys and Girls Club. We have provided our own Community Benefits support via our social leasing offer; we currently lease at peppercorn rent to:

Welcome To Our Woods (old Tappers Garage Site)

Men's Sheds and Grow Rhondda (old Art Surgery building)

a community gardening and social space for Llanharan Community Development Project.

We aim for at least 15% of our tenants to be actively involved with RHA, through at least one of the options available in our Tenant Involvement Commitment. At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, **8.5%** of our tenants were actively involved.

Monitoring the impact of our commitment involves internal audits, update reports to both the Board and the Tenant Committee, and feedback sought from involved tenants. Members of the Board and our Audit and Risk Committee also meet with the Tenant Committee, attending 'Question and Answer' style sessions based on subjects important to tenants.

We ensure that tenants are fully informed of the difference their involvement has made through project updates, feedback from the Board and using 'You Said – We Did' style feedback. We actively listen, meaning we 'Ask, Inform, Listen and Act'.

Our Community Investment Commitment identifies several measures of success in relation to recruitment and training, work placements, volunteer hours and financial contributions to support community projects.

Our Community Benefits & Engagement Officer is responsible for reporting on the delivery of our Giving Back strategy. They work with our Development and Maintenance Teams, Procurement Business Partner, our Business Improvement Team and contractors to ensure monitoring of agreed Community Benefits criteria is completed and reviewed regularly.

Monitoring is reviewed through contract management meetings and reported back to our internal working group. Reports will be prepared quarterly for our Executive Team and annually for our Board, using the Welsh Government's Community Benefits Measurement Toolkit for Construction and Infrastructure. Our strategic Social Value working group also meet quarterly to identify area of good practice and ensure social value underpins all of our work.

The success of our **Be Active** project is measured using a participant Outcome Star, which allows us to work with participants and map their journey and achievements.



93.1%

of our new tenancies lasted longer than 12 months (target 90%)



## T8 Placemaking

- C24 Describe the housing provider's community investment activities, and how the housing provider is contributing to positive neighbourhood outcomes for the communities in which its homes are located.  
Provide examples of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place shaping activities.



We own a range of homes including individual terraced properties in Valley communities and towns, and homes in small and large estates. We also own a small number of commercial premises and the development and provision of these has often been the catalyst for regeneration in an area. Whilst we recognise that we don't always have complete control over the environment and amenity of

In the areas where our homes are located, we are committed to providing and maintaining high quality developments and working in partnership with the local authority and other partners to achieve this. We see ourselves as an anchor organisation in our local communities, helping them to thrive and flourish.

We continue to recognise that we have a key role to play in town centre regeneration. Over the past year, we have continued to embed our 360 approach to regeneration, specifically in Tonypany, ensuring that our capital works are complimented by social, environmental and economic benefits and commitments. We kick-started our works in 2021/22 to implement these objectives, aligning our capital projects with community needs and developing relationships and opportunities for our tenants and the wider community. But it's been this past year 2023/24 that's seen our hopes for the town and our impact come to life. Working alongside our contractor partner Willis we have embedded our major regeneration project 'The Big Shed' into the town, hosting a new community legacy project called 'The Build Shed'. Our aim is to ensure that our work has a far-reaching impact and a long-term legacy in our community. Our circa £20m capital investment in the town has been designed with community feedback to help shape the plans and create a place our future generations can be proud of. Part of the work we have been completing with this group is a photography project, where students have captured images of the town which will now go on to be displayed in various places including at the 2024 Eisteddfod. In recent months we have actively engaged young people to ensure our work and plans are shaped by our future generations. This sits alongside a strong community-based programme of projects and positions including RHA chairing the local Chamber of Trade. Our commitment to placemaking is now gaining sector recognition as we are asked to share our approach with others in the sector on a regular basis.

# little SHED

Our community space in Tonypany town centre continues to grow and be a real hub for our tenants and community members. We've come to realise that RHA has provided more than a 'building', but instead facilitated creation of a place for people in our communities, with people from our local community, that's the difference with our approach, it's the engagement and involvement that sits above any capital project or works.

We've involved tenants and the community in creating the space, and now many are involved in running The Little Shed through volunteering work! To us, that is testament to our commitment to Placemaking in its truest sense. It's easy to see when walking through the town, that the space has grown into a busy community hub that's contributing massively to regeneration in Tonypany, as well as supporting community wellbeing.

During 2023/24 Little Shed has continued to grow and meet the need of the local people, we offer activities and services that are inclusive and accessible to all. Each week we offer a calendar of social and community activities, including a daily Community Fridge, coffee mornings, a craft session, yoga classes, a Repair café, Library Of Things and Hot Flush Café – a dedicated support network to chat all things menopause. In the last year, we have seen 3455 visitors accessing our services, and since November our Community Fridge has diverted 597.54 stone of food landfill.

We're proud that we've created a space where everyone is welcome, a place with heart and connection with the community. In 2023/24 The Little Shed was recognised by Chartered Institute of Housing and awarded their Positive Placemaking award.





# RHA / SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE

RHA is an anchor organisation in local communities because we:



When we support local, our communities become better places to live and our tenants want to stay. By being a responsible business, we're creating happy, sustainable and thriving communities.

# GOVERNANCE

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Structure & Governance

Board & Trustees

Staff Wellbeing

Supply Chain Management



## T9 Structure & Governance

### C25 Is the housing provider registered with the national Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)?

RHA Wales are registered with the Welsh Government Housing Regulator - Welsh Government Registration L056.

### C26 What is the most recent regulatory grading/status?

In 2021, RHA received a Standard Interim Judgement for both *Governance and Services* and *Financial Viability*. RHA complete their Regulatory Self Evaluation Annually, and the 2023-24 Report is available on their website. RHA continue to have regular engagement with their Welsh Government Regulatory Manager.

### C27 Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow?

RHA follows the CHC Code of Governance

### C28 Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?

RHA are a not-for-profit organisation.

### C29 How does the housing provider's Board manage ESG risk?

We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of governance in all our activities at RHA and we work to ensure that effective risk management is embedded in our organisation and culture.

Our Risk Management Framework focuses on the identification and assessment of risk, the measures taken to mitigate or eliminate such risks and the controls in place to manage any risk that is unavoidable. The key elements of our Risk Management Framework are:

- Our Board Assurance Framework
- Our Corporate Risk Register
- Our Risk Management Policy
- Our Internal Audit Programme
- We have a Board Assurance Framework in place, the purpose of which is to identify and map the main sources of assurance in respect of identified risks.

Our Corporate Risk Register identifies areas of strategic risk for RHA. The Risk Register is reviewed by the Executive Management Team on a quarterly basis and reported to the Audit & Risk Committee. It provides a numerical rating for each risk based on impact and probability and compares this to a target score, based on our risk appetite for each area. The Risk Register establishes clear ownership and responsibility for each area of strategic risk.

We have a comprehensive internal audit programme in place to provide assurance that our identified controls are in place and working effectively.

C30 Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices) – that resulted in enforcement or equivalent action?

We have not been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last twelve months.

## T10 Board & Trustees

### C31 How does the housing provider ensure it gets input from a diverse range of people, into the governance processes?

- 69% of our Board are male and 31% are female.  
Our tenant base is made up of 59% male, 41% female and a small minority identifying as other categories.
- 15% of Board Members are in minority ethnic groups.  
This compares to 3.8% of our tenant base, although we hold no data for 4.5% of tenants, meaning it could be as high as 8.3%.
- 0% of Board Members identify as having a disability.  
We have considerable gaps in our tenant data that we are working to address, although we know that at least 29% of our tenants have a disability. We suspect this number could be as high as 60%.
- At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, the average age of Board Members was 51.  
The average age of our tenants is 55 years.
- No Board Members are tenants of the association. In recognition of this gap, the Board of the association ensure members of the Tenant Committee are able to attend Board Meetings to update on the work of the Committee and provide feedback on key strategic matters the Board will be considering.
- The average tenure is 4 years.

The Remuneration and People Committee review Board Membership on an annual basis, taking into account not only the skills of the Board Members, but the diversity. The Remuneration Committee and Board understands the importance of diversity in the governance process and will proactively work to address any gaps that may be identified as part of the Board Membership Review process. This can be demonstrated by our 2022 Board recruitment campaign where they acknowledged that there was under-representation of black, Asian and ethnic minority members, as well as members under the age of 40. This, along with the requirement to meet the required skills, was incorporated into the recruitment, and the diversity and skills gaps identified were address.

RHA will continue to actively review diversity as part for of the annual board membership review.

#### Does the housing provider consider resident voice at the board and senior management level?

To ensure the tenant voice is at the forefront of Board discussions, it is the first item on every Board agenda. This will include a written report on the work of the tenant involvement committee and tenant engagement team, but will also include a verbal update form the involved tenants, either in person or virtually

In 2023 the Board invited the Tenant Committee to attend part of their strategic away day, and spend significant time understanding what is important to them, what they feel the Boards priorities should be and how they feel the Board can better hear and consider the tenant voice.

Tenants also form a crucial part of RHA's annual self evaluation process. The Governance Officer meeting with the Tenant Committee on an annual basis and reviews the Regulatory Standards, considering how they feel the organisation meet each of the standards and what more they could be doing. This is shared with the Board, included in the Governance Improvement Plan and published in the Self Evaluation Report itself.

Does the housing provider have policies that incorporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into the recruitment and selection of board members and senior management?

The Board Recruitment and Succession Policy was updated in 2022 to following the decision to roll out the Rooney Rule to include Board recruitment; to offer guaranteed interviews to applicants identifying as disabled or from a BAME background, where the organisation has identified under-representation at Board level, that meet the minimum criteria set out in the Board Member Role Profile.

The Policy makes a clear commitment to tackling any potential discriminatory practices in Board member recruitment and aims to ensure that the recruitment process is fair and transparent. The policy states that RHA is committed to achieving a diverse and inclusive Board and may take positive measures to achieve this.

C32 What % of the Board AND senior management team have turned over in the last two years?

13%

Board turnover in the last two years was 13%, with one Board Member who retired in 2022 and another in 2023.

0%

During the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2024, there was no turnover in the Executive Team.

C33 Number of Board Members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.

Our Audit & Risk Committee has four members. The Chair of Audit & Risk Committee is a Chartered Accountant, as well as one other co-opted member. All other members have experience of budget management and financial governance gained in their roles as professionals, including those operating as Company Directors, Housing professionals and non-executive roles.

The Board Chair has financial qualifications having worked in the banking sector for over 40 years.

Two additional members of the Board of Management are also qualified finance professionals, those members sit on our Development and Asset Management Committee, and the Remuneration Committee.

C34 What % of the Board are non-executive directors?

All RHA Board Members are non-executive directors. Executive directors attend Board meetings, however they are not members of the Board.

**C35 Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?**

The Board last approved a revised Board Recruitment and Succession Policy in December 2021. The Remuneration and People Committee review Board Membership, taking into account succession planning, on an annual basis.

**C36 For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?**

Our current external auditor, Bevan Buckland LLP have audited our accounts for the last 4 financial years, including the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Prior to this our auditors were Haines Watts. Bevan Buckland were initially appointed as external auditors at the 2019 Annual General Meeting, and re-appointed at subsequent AGMs. During the year to 31 March 2023 there was a change in Audit partner appointed to our audit by Bevan Buckland LLP to ensure scrutiny and review.

**C37 When was the last independently-run Board-effectiveness review?**

An independent Board-effectiveness review commenced in September 2022 and completed in December 2022. The review was led by Campbell Tickell who presented their findings and recommendations to the Board in January 2023. RHA has made good progress in delivering against the findings.

**C38 How do you handle conflicts of interest at the Board?**

Board Members are required to complete an Annual Declaration of Interests form and all declarations are recorded on a central register. Board Members are also expected to complete this form during the year, should their interests change. The Register of Interests is reviewed by the Remuneration and People Committee on an annual basis.

At the start of all Board and Committee Meetings, Board Members are asked to declare whether they have any interest – personally, financially or in any other way – in any item on the Agenda. If a declaration is made, the Board Member will be asked not to contribute/vote on the recommendation or will be asked to leave the room during the discussion of item in question.

## T11 Staff Wellbeing

We place the highest priority on the health and wellbeing of our people and one of the key aims in our Corporate Plan is to ensure that RHA is regarded as a great place to work. Staff wellbeing continues to be a major area of focus and we have supported our staff to adjust to a hybrid working model, offering flexible working and a nine-day fortnight.

Our Best Companies 2 star accreditation, which demonstrates outstanding levels of employee engagement was achieved again in 2023, testament to the wellbeing support and the importance and emphasis we place on our people. We were proud to be listed as second in the Best Companies Top 50 Housing Associations to work for, and twelfth in the Top 50 Welsh Companies to work for.

### C39 Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

RHA is an accredited Living Wage employer.

### C40 What is the median gender pay gap?



The median gender pay gap for the year ending 31 March 2024 was 5.4%

### C41 What is the CEO-median-worker pay ratio?



The CEO-worker pay ratio for the year ending 31 March 2024 was **3.4 : 1**.

### C42 How is the housing provider ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is promoted across its staff?

RHA published its 5 year EDI strategy in March 2020, the strategy sets out our commitment to providing an inclusive and diverse workforce. The strategy underpins RHA's culture and sets the tone for our working practices.

Our work with Tai Pawb in relation to the QED accreditation is continuing. Having achieved the Quality in Equality & Diversity (QED) award in December 2022. We are continuing our work against their comprehensive framework for improving the equality and diversity impact of an organisation. This work ensures we are continually evaluating and developing strategic areas such as governance, leadership and culture as well as customer-facing service provision, including access and tenant involvement.



RHA has a team of EDI champions who help support staff and raise awareness of our EDI strategy by running induction sessions with all new starters as well as holding safe space sessions across the year on specific areas of EDI.

#### C43 How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?

## R HAPUS A

We have an award-winning health and wellbeing group called Hapus. It is employee-led and focusses on arranging regular events, campaigns and activities to raise awareness and promote inclusion and wellbeing. We have Champions for:

- Wellbeing
- Mental Health
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Since April 2023, we have offered a variety of mental health, wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion activities, such as:

- 'Pause 4 Thought' sessions – for our menopause support group
- 'Ask Twice' - wellbeing breakfast sessions to support men's mental health
- Wellbeing walks
- Social Brunch & Babbles
- Pride Month information posts and videos, with a focus on understanding language and terminology.
- Watch & Share sessions, sharing short documentaries with an LGBTQ+ theme, followed by a discussion session
- Yoga sessions
- Black History Month information posts, videos and guest speakers
- Fun activities such as Festive Bingo and Christmas Jumper Day

The impact of our work on wellbeing is evidence through our recent (2023) Best Companies employer ranking of 7<sup>th</sup> best Housing Association to work for in the UK, and second in Wales. We have also been once again awarded the Best Companies 2-star accreditation, which is recognised by Best Companies as an 'outstanding' commitment to workplace engagement.

Our wellbeing programme commitment was recognised with a Welsh Housing award /CIH Cymru for Excellence in Health and Wellbeing at the end of 2023.



**C44**    How does the housing provider support the professional development of its staff?

In 2019 we developed and implemented our MyPlan performance development framework. The framework sets out the levels of competencies and behaviours to be evidenced at the varying technical and leadership levels of the organisation. Regular performance reviews are undertaken where training requirements are discussed and appropriate provision made.

In 2023/24 31 RHA staff undertook training in relation to their professional development at a total cost of over £22,000.

We also look at funded opportunities for staff development and in the same period 2 RHA staff undertook leadership training courses via Government funded schemes.

## T12 Supply Chain

### C45 How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services? What measures are in place to monitor the delivery of this Social Value?

As an anchor organisation, social value forms a key part of RHA's procurement strategy. 15-20% of available evaluation scoring on every tender is ringfenced for social value factors. This includes consideration of community investment and foundational economy, sustainability and environmental factors, equality, diversity and inclusion, and modern slavery, proportionate to the value of the contract and the type of goods, services or works being procured.

Referencing RHA's Corporate Plan and supporting strategies, such as Optimise, Community Investment, Equality Diversity and Inclusion, a specification is developed that ensures RHA's aims and objectives are being met.

Evaluation criteria are then developed to ensure that the organisations we partner with shares our vision and values and are able to support our core aim of giving back to our communities.

We consult with key partners with expertise in the relevant areas, for example Tai Pawb, and develop standards based on their advice.

Tenant input is sought throughout the procurement cycle, from the development of contract specifications to evaluation and award, where technical expertise is not required.

Once contractors are appointed, the social value commitments form part of the ongoing contract monitoring arrangements and are monitored throughout the term of the contract.

### C46 How is sustainability considered when procuring goods and services? What measures are in place to monitor the sustainability of your supply chain when procuring goods and services?

All prospective tenders are developed with reference to RHA's Corporate Plan and Optimise strategy. We also look to industry best practice to inform the requirements and seek independent advice where appropriate.

RHA includes environmental and sustainability factors in all procurement processes and allocates a proportion of the evaluation criteria accordingly, to ensure that the procured good and services, and partners meet our standards as set out in our Corporate Plan, as well as any specific criteria that may be appropriate for the procurement.

A significant proportions of RHA's suppliers are SMEs. We recognise that they may not have the developed policies and systems that we would encounter with larger organisations with more resources, but we ask that organisations without developed systems be open to collaborating with us to improve those systems to meet our requirements over the lifetime of the contract to drive and embed improvement

RHIA