

# RHA



## SELF EVALUATION

2023





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# Foreword

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The Regulatory Framework for Housing Associations Registered in Wales required all housing associations to publish an annual self-evaluation which must:

- include an account of how the Board knows the organisation complies with each regulatory standard including reference to key performance data and sources of assurance
- assess compliance with the Code of Governance that the organisation has adopted
- explain the principal evidence which has been relied upon in conducting the evaluation
- demonstrate that the process of evaluation has been robust
- explain how the needs and views of tenants have been understood and considered as part of the self-evaluation
- identify key strategic risks and associated controls or signpost to other documentation where the key risks are articulated
- include a continuous improvement plan which identifies any gaps or areas for improvement and shows how these will be addressed

A copy of the Regulatory Framework is available on the '*Governance and Constitutional Documents*' page on RHA's website.

## RHA's Self Evaluation Process:

RHA commenced work on the self-evaluation in the summer of 2023. At their annual strategic away day, the Board reflected on the past year, considering both the strengths and areas of improvement which should be detailed in the report.

The Executive Team reviewed and updated the compliance statements for both the Regulatory Standards and the Code of Governance, and presented to the Audit and Risk Committee for scrutiny prior to being reviewed by the wider Board. The compliance statements detail how RHA have met all regulatory standards, and all outcomes and recommendations in the Code of Governance, and will be submitted to Welsh Government as supporting evidence as part of the Regulatory Assessment. A high-level overview of the information detailed in the compliance statements has been included in this report.

In addition to this, and as done in 2022, the Governance Officer met with the Tenant Committee to review the Regulatory Standards and discuss how they feel RHA are performing against these, progress made since 2022 and to identify any further improvements that could be made. More information on this is available in '*The Tenant Voice*' section of this report.

## Risk Management:

RHA has a comprehensive risk management process in place, as set out in our Annual Report and Accounts pages 18-20. This enables us to identify and assess key risks, determine how we will manage and mitigate those risks, and includes a clear framework for reporting and communicating our approach to risk management.

An important stage in the process is the identification of RHA's risk appetite. This is the amount of risk we are willing to tolerate in relation to existing activities or accept in relation to new activities. The risk appetite is set by the Board and informs decision making in respect of investment and allocation of resources.

The strategic risks identified by Board and the Executive Management Team will form the key elements of RHA's Risk Register. The Risk Register records a detailed description of each risk, an

identification of the relevant controls and mitigations in place, the risk appetite, and a risk rating, and is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the Executive team.

The Audit & Risk Committee will scrutinise the register at their quarterly meetings. The Board receive a high level overview at all their meetings, however will carry out a more detailed review annually, which includes a review of the risk appetite for all risks.

**In Conclusion:**

RHA fully recognises the importance of meeting the Regulatory Standards to give its tenants, and stakeholders confidence that it is discharging its responsibilities properly, not least given the significant grant funded support provided to it and the wider sector. RHA places a similar store on upholding the CHC Code of Governance to ensure the organisation is well run and has a credible strategy which will enable it to serve its tenants well over both the short and long term.

The last 12 months has continued to present a challenging operating environment with significant inflationary pressures increasing our cost base and volatile economic factors such as rising interest rates. RHA are very committed to ensuring a balance between affordability for our tenants and being able to grow and invest more in our services and operations.

The sector has continued to face significant scrutiny around quality of stock and the proactive management of issues such as damp, mould and condensation. This is an area where RHA have given significant focus in order to ensure that we are providing proactive management of any such issues.

The RHA Board are confident that it can continue to evidence good compliance with the expectations placed on of us but are far from complacent in recognising that there is always more that can be done or aspired to be done. We have made good progress in our objectives to further improve the tenant voice and we look forward to building on these further over the coming 12 months. Examples of these improvements are included in the report and we are pleased to be able to evidence greater engagement and involvement between our board and our tenants.

RHA had an opportunity to review the findings of our governance review and have been focusing on the implementation of these objectives during the past 12 months.

We have continued to work closely with colleagues across the business to hear their views and listen to how we can improve as an employer. Our culture and values remain critical to our work and we are delighted to be accredited as a two star outstanding organisation in our most recent Best Companies survey.

In the meantime we trust this overview provides a clear and transparent record of our compliance with the standards - we welcome queries / feedback which can be directed to Hannah Davies, Governance Officer ([Hannah.Davies@rhawales.com](mailto:Hannah.Davies@rhawales.com))

**Peter Hughes**      Board Chair, RHA Wales

**Luke Takeuchi**      Chief Executive, RHA Wales

# The Regulatory Standards

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RHA has a Regulatory Standards Compliance Statement to monitor compliance with all requirements set out in the nine Regulatory Standards set by Welsh Government. The Executive Team will update the Regulatory Standards Compliance Statement and submit to the Board for review and scrutiny, highlighting any areas that may require further assurance or improvements.

An improvement plan is incorporated into the Regulatory Compliance Statement to ensure that RHA continuously strive to improve the services we offer and secure the future of the organisation.

This section sets out at a high level, the processes in place to comply with the Regulatory Standards. All improvements identified to enhance compliance with the Standards have been included in the Service Improvement Plan at the end of the report.

A copy of the Regulatory Framework is available on the '*Governance and Constitutional Documents*' page on RHA's website.

## **RS1: The organisation has effective strategic leadership and governance arrangements which enable it to achieve its purpose and objectives**

The Board own and oversee the delivery of the organisation's Corporate Plan. With the current Plan coming to a close in 2023, the Board are working closely with the Executive Team to develop the new Plan which will run from 2024. This is currently in draft format with a view to being discussed in full at our December board meeting 2023.

The work of the Board is underpinned by robust governance processes and documents, and the organisation complies with all legislative and regulatory requirements.

ED&I continues to be a priority for the Board. With Welsh Government introducing the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan, we have been working to deliver these recommendations alongside the recommendations set out in Deeds Not Words and the QED Accreditation Review Report. Whilst significant work has been undertaken, the Board recognise that our communications around the delivery of these actions need to be improved, and this will be an area of focus for the coming year.

The organisation is committed to demonstrating the strongest level of governance. To support this, an independent external governance review is completed every three years. RHA's most recent review was completed by Campbell Tickell in late 2022, and the Board were presented with the findings and recommendations in early 2023. Overall, the findings were very positive, highlighting the strong governance framework, the skills and commitment of Board Members and their willingness to challenge and improve to ensure RHA continues to deliver the best services it can to its tenants. Some recommendations were made which included enhancing the tenant voice in the Boardroom, something that was already being discussed by the Board, and finessing the Committee Structure to allow more time for strategic discussions at Board meetings. Since the recommendations were presented to the Board, significant work has already been made to enhance the tenant voice in the Boardroom, and this has been detailed in the 'Tenant Voice' section of the report.

## **RS2: Robust risk management and assurance arrangements are in place**

Over the past year, the Board have continued to strengthen our risk management processes. The Executive Team regularly review the risk register and consider new and emerging risk. This is scrutinised by the Audit Committee at all meetings. The Board are sighted on the high level risk register at all meetings and are informed of any significant changes to scores or new risks identified.

Annually, the Board will carry out an in-depth review of the risk register which includes considering the risk appetite for all risk identified.

The association has comprehensive business continuity plans which are regularly reviewed.

#### **RS3: High quality services are delivered to tenants**

All RHA Homes are compliant with all regulatory and legislative requirements. Whilst the association has always placed a high emphasis on keeping our tenants safe and have always had an effective programme of monitoring, work has taken place over the past year to further improve the reporting of this information. Recent recruitment has resulted in the appointment of a Senior Compliance Officer to support the work of our Assets Team and Health and Safety Business Partner.

In 2022 in response to the tragic Rochdale case, we have produced and implemented a Damp, Mould and Condensation Action plan and significant progress has been made in delivering the actions agreed. This includes changes in our housing management system, reporting and monitoring mechanisms, staff training and tenant engagement. We have also accelerated our stock condition survey programme in 2023 which will help us to proactively identify any homes with a damp, mould or condensation issue.

RHA has worked in partnership with a consortium of 6 other RSLs to share good practice, jointly commission legal advice and implement the necessary requirements of the New Renting Homes (Wales Legislation). This has ensured greater security of tenure from tenants and improved Health and Safety and Compliance practices.

We continue to deliver much needed regeneration and community engagement work in the communities we operate. We take responsibility for leading on a number of initiatives and have successfully leveraged external funding e.g. Green Skills Funding, to enhance and regenerate our communities. We have implemented a range of community initiatives where tenants can directly engage with us e.g. the Little Shed project in Tonypandy town centre which offers wellbeing sessions, community fridge and a meeting space.

Board and Committee receive regular performance information, and high level information is also shared with our tenants in the tenant newsletter.

#### **RS4: Tenants are empowered and supported to influence the design and delivery of services**

Over the past 12 months, the Board have made further improvements to how they engage with tenants. Whilst this has always been important, the pandemic had resulted in a reduction in Board and Tenant Involvement. Positively, during 2022-23 a number of meetings were held where a group of Board Members met with the Tenant Committee to discuss what is important to tenants, and how they wish to work with the Board going forward. In addition to this, the Tenant Committee attended the Strategic Board Away Day to further these discussions. As a result, 'Tenant Voice' has been introduced as the first agenda item at all Board Meetings, and here, members of the Tenant Committee will present case studies and report on the work of the Tenant Working Groups. Tenants will also be able to make recommendations on improvements to services directly to the Board and with the support of the Executive Team. Ensuring these discussions are two-way is also important to the tenants and the Board, and so either a member of the Board or the Executive Team will attend the Tenant Committee Meetings to provide feedback on the work of the Board.

It has also been important to ensure tenants have a voice across all areas of the business, in addition to the role tenants play in our thematic groups which provides them the opportunity to shape and influence policies, procedures and service delivery, this year our involved tenants have worked alongside us on key strategic projects. Good examples of this include involvement in the tendering of a contractor for The Big Shed development in Tonypandy, sitting on panels for the recruitment

of senior RHA employees, shaping the format of MY RHA an online account for our tenants and being involved in design development and formatting of our 2023 Tenant Survey.

Over the coming year, RHA will work with the Tenant Committee to understand and explore new ways of involving even more tenants to ensure we have a greater tenant voice in the work that we do.

#### **RS5: Rents and service charges are affordable for current and future tenants**

RHA ensures we are compliant with all requirements under our rent agreement. We operate an affordability model based on Joseph Rowntree Foundation which considers the affordability of our homes for our tenants. We have a strong commitment to preventing homelessness.

We always ensure that we regularly engage with tenants to gain feedback on the affordability of our rent and service charges.

#### **RS6: The organisation has a strategic approach to value for money which informs all its plans and activities**

RHA has embedded our approach to value for money across the organisation with regular budget management and strong relationships across all departments. The association is an early adopter of the sector scorecard benchmarking report and ESG reporting.

We have a robust approach to any procurement activities. We have regular reporting mechanisms in place to identify any concerns. We regularly monitor and review budget decision making and position.

At our strategic board away day the board and executive spent time considering benchmarking data from across the sector to raise awareness of any areas of improvement required and to better understand challenging areas.

#### **RS7: Financial planning and management is robust and effective**

The organisation ensures it has the appropriate skills within the business to robustly manage, check and challenge the key areas of financial control. Key financial controls are tested regularly as part of the internal audit cycle. The Audit and Risk Committee have regular oversight on the budget position. We have also further strengthened to committee by recruiting for specific accountancy and financial skills.

The association regularly reviews its Treasury Management Strategy to ensure sufficient cash balances to support future growth and committed spend.

The annual 30-year business plan is stress tested on an annual basis and the association demonstrates strong covenant compliance. In light of the economic headwinds facing the UK, the Board have frequently revisited RHA's plan making adjustments to growth plans and development appetite. The Board has spent additional time considering and focusing on golden rules to ensure additional resilience in our financial management.

#### **RS8: Assets and liabilities are well managed**

RHA has a clear Asset Management Strategy and works closely and in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure all available homes are let via the local authorities housing allocation scheme. RHA's Development and Asset Management Committee have oversight of progress against the Asset Management Strategy and we have strong asset management data to plan future investment.

RHA continues to closely manage our void properties to ensure that we maximise available stock.

During the past 12 months we have placed additional focus on our programme of stock condition surveys in order to proactively manage and ensure robust data to inform future investment.

#### **RS9: The organisation provides high quality accommodation**

Our Asset Management Strategy provides a framework for how we undertake repair and maintenance work to our homes in line with best proactive and legislation. Through this we ensure responsible investment in our homes and that they are maintained to the required standards.

In 2022, in response to the tragic Rochdale case, we established a new Damp, Mould and Condensation Action Plan which has driven improvements over the last year in how we identify, monitor and respond to such issues. We encourage our tenants to report any repair concerns they may have and in 2023 we accelerated our stock condition survey work which enables us to proactively identify any stock condition issues and provides a baseline for WHQS compliance and delivery of our Affordable Warmth Plan.

RHA have an active development scheme to help Welsh Government meet the growing demand for social housing. Over the last 3 years we have developed 160 new homes in areas which have been identified by the local authority as being in high demand. This has helped to alleviate pressure on the housing waiting lists.

# The Tenant Voice

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## Influencing RHA's approach to Tenant Involvement

RHA's Tenant Involvement Commitment provides our tenants with the opportunity to get involved and to influence policies, strategies, service delivery standards and approach to communication. Whilst our commitment has been in place since 2019, due to the pandemic it was not until 2022-23 that we have been able to really bring the commitment to life and establish the thematic groups which were designed by our involved tenants, as well as working proactively to encourage more tenants to get involved.

In the design of our Tenant Involvement Commitment our tenants identified 11 thematic groups, that cover all aspects of service delivery, that they felt would merit promoting to all tenants as an opportunity to be involved and shape the service, policy and influence strategic decisions. Throughout 2022-23 we have successfully established 7 of the groups. The work of the thematic groups feeds into the Tenant Committee which is a group with leads from each of the thematic groups.

A significant piece of work in terms of evidencing how we support tenants to influence strategic decision making has been the work we have completed in 2022-23 to bring the tenants voice closer to the Board Room. Throughout the year we have held joint Tenant Committee and Board Member workshops to work out how both groups could work closer together, to discuss expectations, styles of working and methods of communication. As a result of this work a commitment has been made that the first item on all Board meeting agendas will be 'Tenant voice'; bringing tenants into the Board room to provide an update on the work completed by the thematic groups in the quarter, to feedback directly to the Board on their involvement and to share any recommendations arising from thematic group work and track their progress. We are committed to create an environment whereby our tenants can openly raise questions of Board Members and be involved in key decisions.

## Tenants and the Self Evaluation:

Building on the work carried out in 2022, in August 2023 a meeting was had with the Tenant Committee in relation to RHA's compliance with the Regulatory Standards. RHA reported on the progress made against the improvements previously identified by tenants in the 'We Must, We Have, We Will' document. An open discussion was then had with tenants, reviewing the Regulatory Standards and identifying any additional improvements.

The 'We Must, We Have, We Will' document was refreshed as a result of these discussions, and was shared with the Board who were supportive of the new improvements suggested by our tenants.

The Tenant Committee will receive an update on progress against these recommendations in early 2024.

# /We Must, We Have, We Will

We Must	We Have	We Will	
RS1. The organisation has effective strategic leadership and governance arrangements which enable it to achieve its purpose and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Independent Board</li> <li>• Committed to the Board being more visible</li> <li>• Committed to a Chair Blog/Vlog which will be published on our socials.</li> <li>• Committed to aligning the Board with the Tenant Groups</li> <li>• The Tenant Involvement Framework includes updates/feedback on all matters escalated from the groups to the Board.</li> </ul>	Ongoing Action	Board Members to attend parts of refreshed Get Involved RHA on the Road, likely to be held in Summer 2024.
		New Action	To continue to improve the relationship and engagement between the Board and Tenant Committee, every Tenant Committee Meeting will include an update from the Board, either via the Exec, Governance Officer or Board Member, on the work and priorities of the Board.
RS2. Robust risk management and assurance arrangements are in place	Tenants are unaware of the Risk Management Process	Ongoing Action	Tenant Committee to be given an overview of the Strategic Risk Register and Working Groups to be sighted on the operational risks relevant to their areas to have a better understanding of the risk management and mitigations processes. This will then become a standard agenda item at all meetings.
RS3: High quality services are delivered to tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Standards are in place</li> <li>• RHA Values and Behaviours</li> <li>• Contract Framework</li> <li>• Good services around Financial Inclusion</li> <li>• Good reputation with former tenants returning to RHA</li> </ul>	New Action	Complaints/Customer Experience and Communications Tenant Groups to meet to discuss the promotion of the new Complaint Standards once adopted.
		Ongoing Action	Following the establishment of the group in late 2023, the Comms working group to publish/promote when services have changed as a result of a complaint/tenant feedback to ensure tenants are confident in approaching RHA with issues.
		Ongoing Action	'Tell a Tenant' service to be considered to gather feedback from tenants who are not confident in contacting RHA Direct.

We Must	We Have	We Will	
RS4. Tenants are empowered and supported to influence the design and delivery of services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• QED</li> <li>• RHA on the Road</li> <li>• New Tenant Involvement Commitment and Framework</li> <li>• Ongoing dialogue/Contact with the Exec and Board</li> <li>• Training for involved tenants to better understand the business</li> <li>• You Said, We Did published following tenant feedback/surveys</li> <li>• Committed resources to tenant participation</li> </ul>	Ongoing Action	Following the establishment of the group in late 2023, the Comms working group to explore social media platforms and more informal comms (e.g. podcasts) to engage with and involve more tenants.
		Ongoing Action	Following the establishment of the group in late 2023, the Comms working group to carry out targeted, proactive engagement with under-represented communities to increase the number of surveyed tenants in future.
		Ongoing Action	Following the establishment of the group in late 2023, the Comms working group to launch "Question of the Month"
		New Action	'Get Involved' newsletter to be issued which will publicise 'You Said, We Did'
		New Action	Tenant Committee to work with RHA to consider how to survey those tenants who are not digitally included.
		New Action	RHA to explore working with involved tenants from other RSL's to review RHA's Tenant Engagement strategy and services.
RS5. Rents and service charges are affordable for current and future tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Rent Consultation</li> <li>• Reported in the newsletter</li> <li>• A number of initiatives in place to help tenants save money elsewhere</li> </ul>	Ongoing Action	As part of the next Service Charge Review, consideration to be made for exceptions such as reduction of ground maintenance for schemes where tenants maintain the communal gardens.
		New Action	Rent Information Sessions to be arranged for tenants which will provide an overview of the rent and service charge setting process and also an overview of the direction set by Welsh Government

RS7. Financial planning and management is robust and effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Board Members who are financial experts</li> <li>• 30 Year Business Plan</li> <li>• Annual Report and AGM where the external auditors validate the financial robustness</li> </ul>	Ongoing Action	Training to be arranged for involved tenants to understand the financial planning process at a high level
		Ongoing Action	With the support of the involved tenants, comms to be drafted for the wider tenant base to provide an overview of the income and spend breakdown, including how rent is spent and how development is funded. This will also include an overview of 'Profit for Purpose' – explaining why we have other property types in our portfolio
RS8. Assets and liabilities are well managed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>• WHQS Compliance</li> </ul>	Ongoing Action	Following the publication of RHA's new Corporate Plan, all strategies, including the Asset Management Strategy will be revised. Once this has been completed, all Strategies will be published on RHA's website.
RS9. The organisation provides high quality accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan</li> <li>• WHQS and Development Quality Standards</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Optimised Retrofit Programme</li> <li>• H&amp;S Standards (including EICRs, Gas Safety Inspection and PEEPS)</li> <li>• Fitness for Human Habitation</li> </ul>	Ongoing Action	Form a H&S Tenant Group
		Ongoing Action	Once the H&S Group has been established, introduce estate Inspections carried out by tenants.
		New Action	When a large investment programme is being carried out, consider trialing the product / consulting with tenants pre-contract to ensure the product is accessible and usable to all tenants.

# /Our Code of Governance

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RHA adopted the latest Community Housing Cymru (CHC) Code of Governance in September 2021. Similarly to the Regulatory Standards, a Compliance Statement has been created to monitor compliance with all outcomes and recommended practices set out in the Code of Governance. The Executive Team will update the Code of Governance Compliance Statement and submit to the Board for review and scrutiny, highlighting any areas that may require further assurance or improvements.

An improvement plan is incorporated into the Code of Governance Compliance Statement to ensure that RHA continuously strive to improve and strengthen our governance arrangements.

In this section, we set out at a high level, the processes in place to comply with the Code of Governance.

A copy of the Code of Governance is available on the '*Governance and Constitutional Documents*' page on RHA's website.

## **Principle 1: Organisational Purpose**

The Board has final approval of RHA's Corporate Plan, Vision, Values and Behaviours and these are regularly reviewed at Board Strategic Away Days. The current Corporate Plan comes to an end in 2023, and so the Board and Executive Team are working to develop the new Corporate Plan which will commence in 2024.

The Board is fully committed to providing the best use of resources for its tenants and communities. The Board will regularly challenge itself on what more can be done to improve its services and will proactively work in partnership with stakeholders and RSL's to deliver better outcomes.

## **Principle 2: Leadership**

The Board accept collective responsibility for ensuring that the organisation has a clear and relevant set of aims and an appropriate strategy for achieving them. The board collectively sets the organisation's vision and values, and leads by example, requiring that anyone representing the organisation reflects its values positively.

The Remuneration and People Committee are sighted on the results of the quarterly staff survey and progress against the People Strategy Action Plan. The Committee and the wider Board strive to ensure RHA is a great place to work and ensure all members of staff are happy in their roles and are able to deliver the best services to our tenants.

Ensuring the tenants voice is considered in the Boardroom and as part of all strategic decisions has been a priority for the Board over the past year. As outlined above, significant work has taken place to ensure that this achieved and the Board will continue to work closely with the Tenant Committee to ensure that tenants really are at the heart of all decisions made at RHA.

## **Principle 3: Integrity**

The Board seeks to uphold the highest levels of conduct, regularly challenging its performance and approach from an internal and external perspective. The Board were recently subject to their three yearly external governance review, and as a result of the review, changes have already been made to further increase challenge from the Board to both themselves and the Executive Team.

## **Principle 4: Decision-making, risk and control**

The Board has clear and regularly updated articles which include the constitutional Rules, Scheme of RHA Self Evaluation 2023

Delegated Authority and Terms of reference. The Board reviews and considers risk and has a clear set of business activities within its risk appetite parameters

The Board has a diverse mix of skills and experience to enable it to scrutinise, challenge and support decisions made by the Executive Team.

#### **Principle 5: Board effectiveness**

The Board adopts a culture of constructive challenge of each other and the decisions made, to ensure the highest standards are achieved. The Board take collective responsibility and has a range of skills to achieve this effectively. Board Members have clear role profiles and a schedule of business activities to ensure they can dedicate the appropriate time to the organisation.

As outlined above, the Board undertook an external Governance review in 2022-23 which reviewed the governance structure and documentation as well as observing a number of Board and Committee Meetings to ensure that the Board are challenging appropriately and that decisions are being made based on sound evidence. The review was extremely positive and provide significant assurance on RHA's governance procedures. A number of recommendations were made, a number of which have already been implemented.

#### **Principle 6: Equality, diversity and inclusion**

The Board is fully committed to ensuring the organisation is open and inclusive for its tenants, employees and stakeholders. The Board has adopted a clear ED&I strategy and an action plan for its delivery is regularly reviewed at the Remuneration and People Committee Meetings.

Whilst significant work has already taken place to improve Board diversity and ensure the Board is fully inclusive, RHA recognise there is still more that can be done. RHA have achieved Tai Pawb's QED accreditation and the Board and Executive Team are progressing the recommendations from this, alongside the recommendations set out in the Deeds Not Words Commitment and Welsh Governments Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. A focus for the Board and Executive over the coming year is to improve the communication on this work, and introduce regular reporting on progress against the three commitments.

Annual ED&I and Unconscious Bias training is mandatory for all Board Members, and RHA regularly take expert advice from Tai Pawb to ensure that we have the right culture and commitment.

#### **Principle 7. Openness and accountability**

The Board oversees the organisations communications strategy to ensure that consistent and timely information is provided for stakeholders and partners. As detailed above, significant work has been completed, and will continue, around hearing the tenant voice in the Boardroom.

Over the past year, the Board have focused on RHA's complaint procedures. The Board have given more focus to complaints over the past 12 months, this included a deeper dive into one stage three complaint, considering both the complaint itself and the actions taken by RHA to respond and resolve the issues. RHA have committed to adopting the Complaints Standards introduced by The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) which was created under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act. RHA will work closely with CSA in 2023-24 to implement, and this will be overseen by the Board.

The organisations website and social media channels provides regular information on business activities and both the Executive and Non-Executive regularly engage with sector networks and partners including other Registered Social Landlord's, Welsh Government and the Local Authority.

# / Our Continuous Improvement

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RHA Wales strive to continuously improve the services we offer our tenants and to further secure the future of the organisation. The below table sets out all improvements identified through RHA's Regulatory Standards Compliance Statement and the Code of Governance Compliance Statement.

In addition to the actions detailed below, which specifically relate to improving our compliance against the regulatory standards, through reflection on the past year and through engagement with tenants, the Board have identified that Communications and Complaints are areas they would like to prioritise for review and improvement in the coming year.

Regulatory Standard / Code of Governance Recommended Practice	Improvement Identified	Executive Lead	Timescale / Status
RS1: The social landlord sets and delivers measurable, evidence-based commitments across all areas of its business in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (including anti-racism and tackling hate crime) reflecting the diversity of the communities it works in and with	RHA will publish an annual report on progress against the Deeds Not Words Commitment which was signed in 2020.	CEO	Jan-24 (Extended owing to further work required)
	Following the receipt of the Stage 1 Report of the QED Accreditation, the recommended actions will be delivered and reported on.	Executive Team	
	RHA are in the process of improving diversity data held on our tenants, and this will continue over the coming year.	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24
RS1: The social landlords has a diverse Board, reflecting the communities the RSL works in and with, and has the skills and knowledge required to be effective	A formal recruitment process document will be created for future Board recruitment, detailing the agencies used to support the advertising of the roles (e.g. Race Council Wales and the Young Trustee Movement)	Governance Officer	Sep-24

RS1: Enables and supports tenants to influence strategic decision making	Opportunities to be explored to increase the number of involved tenants to ensure Board are hearing the views of a wider range of tenants and allowing more tenants to have an opportunity to influence the direction of the organisation.	Director of Development and Regeneration	Sep-24
RS3: The social landlord Keeps tenants safe in their homes and promptly identifies and corrects any under-performance or non-compliance on landlord health and safety matters	Continue to deliver the actions contained within our Damp, Mould and Condensation Action Plan	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24
	Deliver our stock condition survey programme and use the findings of the surveys inform our Asset Management Strategy and targeting of investment.	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-25
	Develop a WHQS 2023 compliance policy and decarbonisation plan for our homes in 2023/24.	Director of Homes and Communities	TBC
	Complete the 'Compliance all in one Place' project by transferring the remaining compliance programmes into our Housing Management system	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24
	Review and refresh our compliance appointment and notification suite of letters and ask the tenants involved in our Health and Safety Group to provide feedback on them to ensure they are effective and use appropriate language and tone.	Director of Homes and Communities	Apr-24
RS3: The social landlord delivers services which meet the diverse needs of tenants	We currently have 79.7% of required data about our tenants. Whilst we have data relating to age and gender for over 99% of our tenants, we do still have some areas where we have less data. Our main gaps relate to gender identity, disability and preferred language. We will continue focus on this project and maximise every opportunity to engage with tenants to collect the data. We will also highlight to our tenants what difference providing this data to RHA makes via case studies in order to encourage more tenants to share all of their data with us.	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24

	<p>Our bi-ennial tenant STAR survey undertaken in Autumn 2021 highlighted that 36% of those who responded said that their home would be unsuitable for them in five years' time, including 18% because of health or disability. We have developed an action plan to respond to the issues and recommendations highlighted as an outcome of the survey and in 2023/24 we will investigate further the suitability of our homes and ability to meet this need within our existing stock portfolio.</p>	Director of Homes and Communities	Ongoing
	<p>In 2023 we plan to make further changes to our housing management service and move to a generic service where each housing officer manages a much smaller patch but is responsible for all aspects of housing management including rent arrears. The aim of this is to further improve relationships with our tenants, gain a greater understanding of their individual circumstances and provide a holistic response.</p>	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24
RS3: The social landlord achieves and maintains high levels of tenant satisfaction with services	<p>As part of our new Tenant Involvement Commitment and framework, we have established a thematic group where tenants can scrutinise our survey responses and also analyse our data in relation to complaints. This group was established in Autumn 2022 and is continuing to embed in 2023.</p>	Director of Development and Regeneration	Mar-24
	<p>A cross cutting theme that was identified in the findings from our Tenant STAR survey was that of communication. In order to ensure that we are communicating effectively with our tenants and enabling them to be heard and listened to at all points of interaction and service delivery, we have planned to undertake a review of our 'Customer Journey' in 2023 to identify where there may be barriers to effective communication or areas where we can improve.</p>	Director of Homes and Communities	Sep-24
	<p>In order to ensure that our complaints policy and process is effective and meeting the highest standards of good practice, in 2023 we will be voluntarily implementing the complaints standard introduced by the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) which was created under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act.</p>	Director of Homes and Communities	Apr-24

RS3: The social landlord makes landlord performance information available to tenants	Performance Information will more regularly be shared on RHA's social media channels, website and via our new Tenant Portal 'My RHA' which launched in January 2023.	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24
RS4: The social landlord creates a culture which values and promotes tenant involvement	In 2023 feedback from meetings held with tenants and Board members identified a desire for tenants to get to know Board Members in a more informal setting, for communications to be more relaxed and less scripted and for Board Members to drop into community sessions or meetings.	Director of Development and Regeneration	Sep-24
RS4: Enables tenants to understand the organisation's approach to tenant involvement, how they can get involved and how the organisation will listen to and act on tenants' feedback and learns from complaints.	RHA will continue to advertise opportunities for tenants to be involved and highlight the difference that this is made.  Consider improvements to the recommendation tracker to ensure clearer monitoring and reporting.  Consider improvements to communicating the difference involvement has made with involved tenants and wider tenant base.	Director of Development and Regeneration	Apr-24
RS4: The social landlord can demonstrate diverse tenant views and expectations inform the development and review of housing and related services, and the response to any under-performance	Continue to promote our involvement opportunities and consider other ways to involve a more diverse group of tenants.  Complete Actions in Tenant Star Survey ED&I Action Plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake more tailored research with over 55 housing schemes</li> <li>Work with ED&amp;I Tenant group to address underrepresentation from certain groups in tenant involvement activities e.g males</li> <li>Raise awareness with tenants around options and support available if their home is no longer suitable for their needs</li> <li>Build partnerships and professional networks to better support tenants from Black and Minority Ethnic Backgrounds</li> </ul>	Director of Development and Regeneration  Director of Homes and Communities and Director of Development and Regeneration	Apr-24  Sep-24

RS5: Ensures all applicable rules and statutory guidance (including the current rent agreement) are complied with	In 2023/24 we will review service charges to ensure that they are offering value for money, are affordable and that we are prioritising the services that our tenants most value. We will include our involved tenants in this review and undertake wider consultation also. We will also benchmark against other housing associations.	Director of Homes and Communities	Dec-23
RS6: Determines its strategic approach to value for money, ensuring the approach relates to its social purpose, and makes strategic and operational decisions in line with it.	RHA has a new VFM strategy. Our existing VFM statement has been expanded to include indicators, objectives and examples, and a new log will be produced to capture VFM activities and outcomes and provide supporting evidence of VFM delivery at each year end. VFM Awareness training sessions will also take place for relevant staff. Budget holders have already received VFM training.	Director of Resources	Oct-24
RS9: The social landlord ensures publicly funded homes meet all applicable standards, rules and statutory guidance issued in connection with quality of accommodation, including the current Welsh Housing Quality Standard	In 2023 we have accelerated our stock condition survey programme. We are aiming to complete surveys on 80% of our homes within the next two years. The data from the surveys will inform our Asset Management Strategy, decarbonisation plans and our targeted approach to damp, WHQS 2023 and a targeted approach to damp, mould and condensation.	Director of Homes and Communities	Apr-25
	Develop a WHQS 2023 compliance policy and decarbonisation plan for our homes in 2023/24. This will involve consultation and engagement with our tenants to discuss the new standard, implications for RHA and our intended approach.	Director of Homes and Communities	Mar-24