

Annual Assurance Statement

West Lothian Council complies with the regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Framework. Regular scrutiny of service performance and improvement plan are undertaken via the council's governance structure of committees and tenant scrutiny. This assurance includes that the council:

- Achieves all of the standards and outcomes in the Scottish Social Housing Charter for tenants, people who are homeless and others who use our services.
- Collects data relating to each of the protected characteristics for our existing tenants, new tenants, people on waiting lists and staff. We also collect data on protected characteristics for people who apply to us as homeless.
- Complies with all legal obligations related to housing and homelessness, equality and human rights, and tenant and resident safety.
- Recognises the risks and pressures associated in delivering on the standards and outcomes in relation to homelessness, and improvements in this area of the service is one of the key areas of focus for the service as we deliver the reviewed Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) in 2023/24.
- Builds on the good joint working with all partners and agencies engaged in the RRTP and in private sector landlord focussed teams to improve our reach in terms of utilising the whole sector, across tenures, to mitigate the threat of homelessness.
- Understands the ongoing impacts of UK Government welfare reforms and cost of living increases on our tenants, and in particular, those most vulnerable to social deprivation. The council has made practical support and guidance a cornerstone of our service development programme, in order to help mitigate future impacts and pressures on tenants and our ability to respond.
- Are focussing on improvements in void performance in order to maximise housing stock availability to relieve pressures felt in the service in terms of turnover
- Have an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) improvement plan in place to ensure continuous improvement is a key focus for all service areas.
- In terms of Electrical Installation Condition Reports and Gas Servicing compliance, we had a 100% completion rate for all our properties at the time of submission

Equality & Human Rights Provisions

The council is working towards having appropriate systems and practice in place for the collection and the use of equalities data to inform decision making, policy making, and day to day service delivery. The council provides a diverse range of services to people throughout West Lothian, and the council wants to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to access services and that the services provided meet the needs and value the diversity of all our customers.

This approach to equalities has been developed in accordance with the principles of the council's 'Policy for Equality in Service Provision' and commitments within the accompanying action plan, performance reporting and Equality Impact Assessment conducted on key policy developments.

Housing, Customer and Building Services have a remit and commitment to the collation of key equality and personal data from our customers and service users in order that our strategies and future planning is based on the reality of customers circumstances and lived experiences.

We confirm that we have seen and considered sufficient evidence to give us this assurance.

The council's Annual Assurance Statement was approved at the meeting of our Council Executive on 17 October 2023.

Cllr Lawrence Fitzpatrick
Leader of West Lothian Council

Julie Whitelaw
Interim Head of Housing, Customer & Building Service