

## HOUSING ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2023

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Council Homeless Services are subject to scrutiny and inspection by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Council must demonstrate that it is meeting the statutory requirements contained in the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Argyll and Bute Council is no longer a social landlord but retains statutory duties to provide services to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Council submits an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC). In 2019 the SHR introduced a requirement for all local authorities to submit an Annual Assurance Statement which will be published on the SHR website. This report details the proposed Statement for 2023.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council approve the Annual Assurance Statement contained in **Appendix 1** of this report.

### 3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The SHR produced a document entitled Regulation of Social Housing in Scotland in February 2019. The regulatory requirements are set out in Section 3 of the document and even though Argyll and Bute Council is no longer a social landlord, there are requirements for the Council to ensuring that statutory duties are met in relation to preventing and alleviating homelessness.
- 3.2 In 2022 the SHR wrote to the Council to state that they would be engaging in general terms about the delivery of homeless services. As a result there continues to be 4 areas in which the SHR can engage with the Council in relation to homelessness services:-
- How people access the service;
  - The assessment of homeless applications;

- Access to and quality of temporary accommodation; and
- Outcomes for people who are homeless.

In 2023 the SHR advised the Council that there will be engagement about the Council's services for people in relation to temporary accommodation specifically the number of times the Council did not offer temporary or emergency accommodation when it should or if the Council has breached the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in relation to temporary accommodation.

- 3.3 In addition to the 4 areas of engagement, an update on the impact of COVID 19 on the homeless service has been included in the 2022 Annual Assurance Statement.
- 3.4 Members are kept informed of the Council's performance in relation to statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to housing in various ways:-
- Through quarterly Housing Performance Reports submitted to Committee;
  - Through the quarterly reporting produced for the Strategic Housing Forum;
  - Through the Annual Updates on the Local Housing Strategy; and
  - Through an Annual Housing Activity report submitted to the 4 Area Committees
- 3.5 The Council has produced an Equalities and Human Rights statement in relation to homelessness. This includes a commitment to analyse data relevant to assessing the impact on services across all groups.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The Development and Economic Growth Service's Housing Team will continue to improve services to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Housing Team will continue to engage with the SHR to report on progress on the housing and homeless services provided in Argyll and Bute.

#### **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Policy – The Council requires to deliver the outcomes within the Local Housing Strategy 2022-27. The content of the Annual Assurance Statement sits within Outcome 4 – Housing Options, Information and Support.
- 5.2 Financial – Sufficient budget is required to deliver statutory services.
- 5.3 Legal – The Council requires to comply with the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 as amended. The Council is also required to comply with the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator.
- 5.4 HR – None.
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:

- 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – access to services across the local authority area provided.
- 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – addressing and preventing homelessness enables households to address other issues such as income maximisation and exploring employment opportunities.
- 5.5.3 Islands – homeless advice and prevention services are provided on the islands.
- 5.6 Climate Change – None.
- 5.7 Risk – the Council will be subject to censure from the SHR and Scottish Government if statutory duties are not fulfilled.
- 5.8 Customer Service – Area teams provided the service across the local authority.

**Kirsty Flanagan**, Executive Director with responsibility for Development and Economic Growth

**Councillor Robin Currie**, Policy Lead for Strategic Development

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1** Housing Annual Assurance Statement 2023

## APPENDIX 1 – HOUSING ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2023

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**Housing Annual Assurance Statement 2023**



Legislative Compliance

We can confirm that Argyll and Bute Council achieves all the standards and outcomes for people who are homeless and others who use our services:-

- All relevant regulatory requirements set out in Chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework
- All relevant standards and outcomes in the Scottish Housing Social Charter
- All relevant legislative duties

Argyll and Bute Council can confirm that there were no health and safety breaches in 2022/23 in relation to homelessness resulting in intervention by the Health and Safety Executive.

In 2023 the Council fulfilled its commitment from the previous Assurance Statement to produce an Equalities and Human Rights Statement with specific reference to Homelessness. This states that the Council will “Ensure that all households approaching the Council for housing advice including making homeless applications are treated fairly with dignity and respect.

Housing Services staff will work to understand the individual needs of service users and deliver services that recognise and meet these needs. Housing Services will assure the Scottish Housing Regulator that Housing Services comply with statutory obligations.

The current Argyll & Bute Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 incorporates a comprehensive equalities statement and is underpinned by a suite of impact assessments which encompass Homelessness amongst other related housing services and functions. As well as a full Equalities and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment, the Council has carried out impact assessments for the LHS in respect of Human Rights, Children’s Rights and Wellbeing, Island and Rural Communities, as well as a Health Impact Assessment.

All materials are available on the council website at: [Local Housing Strategy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment \(argyll-bute.gov.uk\)](https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk).

The LHS also includes a key action point to implement a detailed equalities data monitoring and reporting framework which will be reported annually to Housing Management Team, Area Committees and full Council, the Strategic Housing forum partnership and to the Scottish Government.

In 2022 The Scottish Housing Regulator notified Argyll and Bute Council that they would be engaging with the Council about its services for people who are homeless. The focus of previous engagement has been on :-

- Argyll and Bute's assessment of homeless applications
- Outcomes for people who are homeless

The tables below provide an update on the areas of engagement previously notified by the Regulator.

### Argyll and Bute's Assessment of Homeless Applications

No.	Area of Engagement	Progress Made
1.	The percentage of households assessed as not homeless nor threatened with homelessness is above the Scottish average	<b>Argyll and Bute figures</b> – 3% of cases at the end of 2022/23 compared to 4% of cases at the end of 2021/22. <b>Scottish Average for 2022/23</b> – 3%
2.	The percentage of households assessed as intentionally homeless is the same as the Scottish average	<b>Argyll and Bute figures</b> – 4% of cases in 2022/23 compared to 1% of cases at the end of 2021/22. <b>Scottish Average for 2022/23</b> – 1%
3.	The percentage of households withdrawing their homeless application before decision is the same as the Scottish average	<b>Argyll and Bute figures</b> – 4% of cases in 2022/23 compared to 5% of cases at the end of 2021/22 <b>Scottish Average for 2022/23</b> – 4%

### Outcomes for People who are Homeless

No.	Area of Engagement	Progress Made
1.	The percentage of people in Argyll and Bute assessed as unintentionally homeless which it provided with a Scottish Secure Tenancy is above the Scottish average	<b>Argyll and Bute Figure for 2022/23</b> – <b>75%</b> <b>2021/22</b> – 81% <b>2020/21</b> – 69% <b>Scottish Figure for 2022/23</b> – 77% 84% of all unintentionally homeless cases secured settled accommodation

		in 2022/23 in Argyll and Bute compared to 83% across Scotland
2.	There are a relatively high number of people waiting for more than one year for an outcome	Argyll and Bute Council continues to work with partners to implement a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) which will help to address this situation.

The Regulator contacted the Council in March 2023 to state that there will be engagement about the Council's services for people in relation to temporary accommodation specifically the number of times the Council did not offer temporary or emergency accommodation when it should or if the Council has breached the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in relation to temporary accommodation.

100% of households requiring temporary or emergency accommodation were made an offer of temporary or emergency accommodation in 2022/23.

Argyll and Bute Council can confirm that under Scottish Government reporting requirements there were 11 breaches of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in 2022/23.

I can confirm that the Council has sufficient assurance and scrutiny processes in place to support this statement. This Statement will be considered at Full Council on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Signed

*Kirsty Flanagan*

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**Executive Director**

Signed

*Robin Currie*

Councillor Robin Currie

**Council Leader**

**Policy Lead for Strategic Development**