

Self- Evaluation Summary 2022 & 2023



In 2022 Taff prepared a Self-Evaluation document setting out our performance against the Regulatory Standards. It was updated in 2023 and assessed by Welsh Government as part of our Regulatory Judgement. In January 2024 Welsh Government published our Regulatory Judgement awarding Taff Green/Compliant in 'Governance and Tenant Services' and 'Financial Viability'. This means Welsh Government are satisfied we meet the regulatory standards and will receive routine regulatory oversight.

This document is a summary of our Self-Evaluation and Improvement Plan, and sets out how we are delivering on the Regulatory Standards as well as the areas where we plan to make improvements.

You can find out more about the Regulatory Standards on the Welsh Government <https://www.gov.wales/housing-associations-registered-wales-regulatory-framework>.

Our Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation summary sets out the regulatory standards and our assessment of our performance against the standard. We use a wide range of information to evidence our self-evaluation, including performance measures, financial reports and forecasts, tenant satisfaction and feedback, and annual reports. The Board reviewed the self-evaluation in Feb 2023 and agreed the contents to be provided to Welsh Government.

At the end of this summary is our Improvement Plan, setting out the areas where we have or plan to make improvements. Many of the actions from our Improvement Plan relating to the 2022/2023 Self-Evaluation have now been implemented whilst some new actions have been added to reflect feedback from the Welsh Government Regulation Team.

Regulatory Standard 1

Strategic Leadership and Governance

In July 2021 we adopted a new strategic plan – Great Homes and Services 2021 – 2024, setting out our ambitions and commitments for the next three years. Progress against the Plan has been

monitored by the Executive team and is reported, reviewed and scrutinised annually by board. Performance is reported to Board quarterly via a suite of key performance indicators with performance trends identified. We are currently in the process of developing our new Plan for 2024 – 2029 working closely with tenants and stakeholders.

We comply with our governing documents which have been reviewed and approved by the Board. We have adopted the CHC Code of Governance and although we have identified areas where we can improve, we are compliant with the Code.

There is a good mix of skills, experience, and diversity on the Board, and we continue our work to ensure the Board reflects the communities we serve. Our tenant profiling data tells us 34% of our tenants are ethnically diverse. When we submitted the Self Evaluation in Feb 2023 22% of our Board identify as Black, Asian, Ethnic minority.

Board Members are appointed following a robust recruitment and selection process. When recruiting new Board members, we have been keen to ensure the Board encompasses a wide range of skills, knowledge, and experience.

We undertake a Board Skills assessment to identify areas of learning and development required, and this is aligned to a programme of mandatory training all Board Members are expected to participate in.

Our Scheme of Delegation is approved and reviewed by Board annually. Strategic risks have been identified by the Board and the risk appetite in each area has been identified.

Our Together at Taff strategy sets out our commitment to ensuring tenants are at the heart of our what we do and the decisions we make.

Regulatory Standard 2

Robust risk management and assurance arrangements

Taff has a comprehensive approach to risk management supported by Decision Time software. Strategic risks are approved by Board and reviewed and scrutinised at each Audit and Risk Committee meeting and quarterly at Board.

Risk appetite is set, approved and reviewed by Board and in turn informs our Internal Audit programme with progress against all audit recommendations reported to and monitored by Board. The Exec Team review risks on a monthly basis.

We have reviewed our approach to safeguarding and rolled out a training programme for all colleagues to build on existing arrangements.

Our Treasury 'golden rules' reviewed and approved by Board ensure we remain financially resilient. We have recently been successful in attracting additional finance to support our strategic ambitions

relating to investment in new and existing homes. We achieved a AA Moody's credit rating.

Health and safety compliance is reported to Board and scrutinised at ARC as well as being subject to regular internal audit 'health checks'.

We continue a focus on improving our Assets and Liabilities Register to drive further assurance in this area.

Our Business Continuity Plan has been reviewed, updated and tested.

Regulatory Standard 3

High quality services are delivered to tenants

We have delivered significant improvements and assurance relating to the integrity of our compliance data, this can be seen in the Key Control and Data Integrity Audits.

We are proactively dealing with cases relating to damp and mould. We have prepared new guidance for tenants and all colleagues on what to do when any cases of damp and mould are identified.

We are not consistently at 100% performance across all aspects of landlord compliance, however, we have demonstrated our ability to quickly identify performance issues and apply appropriate mitigations and strategies to drive improvement.

We continue to place significant value on having community language skills in our teams. All colleagues complete anti-racist training.

We have been a partner in the Get Into Housing Programme to support people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to enter the housing sector and have further diversified our workforce to ensure we can deliver services to meet the diverse needs of tenants.

In our Tenant Race Equality Report we identified that over-crowding disproportionately impacted upon families from black, Asian and multi-ethnic backgrounds and we have made steps to address this.

We have successfully obtained ICF funding to help us deliver a programme of loft and property conversions.

In addition, our Neighbourhood Team has been focussing on tackling over-crowding in our homes.

Our Allotment group have expanded and now operate two large allotments in Cardiff with over 40 families accessing the site to grow fruit, vegetables, and flowers. Many found this a real lifeline and support to tackle mental health challenges during the pandemic.

Working in partnership with tenants we have developed a Customer Service Standard to clearly set out what our tenants can expect from us.

Our overall tenant satisfaction level has fallen over recent years and we are working hard to drive process improvements that will in turn increase tenants' satisfaction with our services.

Landlord performance information is published on our website and included in our Tenant Newsletter. We continue to look at new ways to share performance information with tenants and stakeholders.

We are working with our Have Your Say Group to further develop performance information for tenants.

Regulatory Standard 4

Tenants are empowered and supported to influence the design and delivery of services

We have numerous mechanisms in place to ensure we are involving tenants in strategic decision making, building upon their insight, ideas and challenges.

We continue to hold Have Your Say Group meetings with tenants and use this mechanism to consult, seek feedback and discuss issues relating to service improvement.

A strategic delivery plan to further embed tenants into strategic decision making is now in place and progress is being made and reported to Board.

Our data tells us 82% of our tenants are satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in our decision making process.

Board review all complaints annually looking for trends to ensure any areas of repeat underperformance are dealt with.

Regulatory Standard 5

Rents and service charges are affordable for current and future tenants

Our rents have been set in accordance with WG rent settlement requirements and approved by Board.

Our Service Charge review has established a standing Service Charge Working Group that has delivered efficiencies in how we administer service charges, deliver the associated services and communicate this effectively to tenants. We recognise this is an ongoing process and further improvements are obtainable.

The setting of our Rent and Service Charge level is subject to a full tenant consultation exercise and falls within our Living Rent affordability framework. General need properties with charges outside of

this calculation will have their total charge capped to ensure our homes are affordable for tenants.

Regulatory Standard 6

Strategic approach to Value for Money

We listen to tenants and focus on what matters to them. We make the best use of our resources to achieve our objectives.

When we buy any works, goods, or services we get the best deal possible in terms of quality, price, and community benefit. We balance both the social and business aspects of our work and we know how our costs compare to others.

Our most recent data tells us that 77% of tenants are satisfied their rent provides value for money, with 69% satisfied with relation to the value for money provided by service charges.

Regulatory Standard 7

Financial planning and management is robust and effective

We have robust, Board approved and reviewed strategies to support this. 30-yr financial plan approved by Board following scrutiny at ARC. This includes stress testing and examples of mitigation for worst case scenarios.

Board monitors financial performance quarterly via our scrutiny of management accounts. Our approach to treasury management includes a series of 'golden rules' ensuring longer term funds are available and managed appropriately.

Our Treasury Management 'golden rules' set clear parameters for us to monitor each month relating to liquidity. We have enough cash to cover at least 24 months' worth of capital commitments. All covenants are monitored closely in accordance with our Treasury Management Strategy.

Our Treasury Strategy is reviewed by external organisations with reports and recommendations made to Board. The Business Plan is stress tested using a number of Board approved scenarios. Stress testing results are discussed and approved by Board.

Regulatory Standard 8

Assets and liabilities are well managed

We hold a register of assets, liabilities, and contracts. We proactively monitor a number of performance indicator relating to our strategic risk regarding failure to invest adequately in existing

homes. We have recently completed a stock condition survey and have up to date information on our homes.

Although we believe we are compliant in this area we are keen to drive further improvements.

The Board approves the Strategic Plan and budget annually, setting out how we will invest in new homes to meet housing need and invest in existing homes.

Regulatory Standard 9

The organisation provides high quality accommodation

We remain 100% compliant with WHQS with 15 acceptable fails across our homes. Stock condition data has been collected and we now have surveys underway to assess the energy efficiency retrofit work required in our homes. A new Asset Management Strategy will be presented to Board in April 2024 clearly outlining our investment plans for the coming years.

We continue monitor the levels of disrepair claims across all of our homes taking proactive action when any disrepair is reported.

Improvement Plan updated March 2024

	Action	
Regulatory Standard 1: Strategic leadership and governance	More effective monitoring of progress against strategic priorities	Complete
	Implement the Together at Taff Strategy	Gov Review 2024
	Review Board Member induction process	Complete
	Demonstrate a detailed and full understanding of the diversity of the communities we work in	Ongoing
Regulatory Standard 2: Robust risk management and assurance arrangements	Undertake safeguarding review and training	Complete
	Test new Business Continuity Plan	Complete
Regulatory Standard 3: High quality services are delivered to tenants	Continue to drive towards 100% performance consistently across all aspects of landlord compliance	Ongoing
Regulatory Standard 4: Tenants are empowered and supported to influence the design and delivery of services	Demonstrate how tenant involvement is making a difference to services and how those changes/improvements are communicated	Gov Review 2024
	Approve new Complaints Policy and Procedure aligned to Ombudsman requirements & Adopt new Complaints Service Standard	Complete
Regulatory Standard 5: Rents and service charges are affordable for current and future tenants	Implement any findings from Service Charge reviews and undertake Internal Audit of Service Charges	Complete
Regulatory Standard 6: Strategic approach to value for money	Review our progress on and update Procurement Policy	Complete
	Develop and implement Strategic Communications Plan	Complete

	Adopt Sustainability for Housing ESG Reporting Framework	Complete
Regulatory Standard 7: Financial planning and management	In addition to reviewing performance against the EBITDA-only lender covenants, we will monitor future business plans against an EBITDA MRI interest cover metric, to ensure long term financial sustainability.	Ongoing
	Ensure appropriate action is taken to mitigate against unbudgeted costs as a result of ongoing building safety issues	Ongoing
Regulatory Standard 8: Assets and liabilities are well managed	Improve Assets and Liabilities Register	Ongoing
Regulatory Standard 9: Providing high quality accommodation	Continue roll out of stock condition survey programme enabling cost effective active asset management	Complete