

# RHA

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# ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

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Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

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.

We are proud to be early adopters of the new Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing, presenting our third 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 benchmarking information to help us understand our performance and how we can continue to improve and develop. During 2022, RHA secured its first ESG-linked funding with a new revolving credit facility with Barclays Bank, our performance against key ESG metrics is measured annually, 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.

### 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 be the housing provider of choice.

## Our Mission

To provide quality homes, regenerate communities and improve lives.

## 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 triangle is positioned in the lower left, partially overlapping the others.

## Summary of the ESG Themes

ESG Area	Theme	Theme Name	Description
SOCIAL	T1	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.
	T2	Building Safety and Quality	This theme seeks to assess how well the housing provider manages building quality and resident safety.
	T3	Resident Voice	This theme seeks to assess how effective the housing provider is at listening to and empowering residents.
	T4	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.
	T5	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.
ENVIRONMENT	T6	Climate Change	This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider seeks to prevent and mitigate the risk of climate change.
	T7	Ecology	This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider is protecting the local environment and promoting ecological sustainability.
	T8	Resource Management	This theme considers the sustainable management of natural resources.
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.



# 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.

### C1 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 has now embedded in 2022/23. This 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). 32 tenants have successfully completed the scheme to date and 26 tenants are still on the scheme and making regular payments. 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.



82%

In our recent (2021) tenant-wide survey, 82% 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.



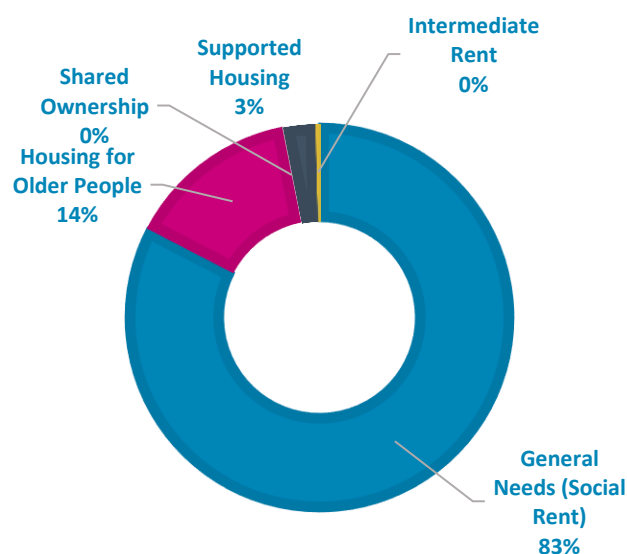
91%

For an average 2 bedroom property, RHA charges £103.34 per week. A 2 bedroom property in the private rented sector (PRS) typically costs £113.58 per week. This means RHA's rent is around 91% of the PRS cost.

**C2** 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 2022, we owned 1817 homes, of which 82.6% (1501 homes) were general needs social housing.

Of our remaining homes; 260 (14.3%) were homes for older people, 49 (2.7%) were supported housing, 6 (0.3%) were for intermediate rent, and 1 was shared ownership.



**C3** 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 2022/23 we completed 48 new build homes, all of which were general needs (social rent).

We also refurbished and brought back into use 8 supported housing flats, located in a previously empty building owned by RHA.

In addition, during 2022/23, we acquired 271 homes from another social landlord. Of these, 245 homes were housing for older persons and the remaining 26 homes were general needs (social housing).

A summary of all homes completed (new and acquired) during the year to March 2023 can be seen below:

Category	Homes	%
General Needs (Social Rent)	74	22.6%
Housing for Older People	245	74.9%
Shared Ownership	0	0.0%
Supported Housing	8	2.4%
Intermediate Rent	0	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 2023/24 we are projected to handover 39 new homes.

#### C4 How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty 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 floor covering vouchers for use with our partner Greenstream as a way of providing greater comfort and helping to reduce heat loss in the home.

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.

#### C5 What % of rental homes have at least a 3 year tenancy agreement?

During the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 100% of our general needs tenants had Assured tenancies which converted to 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.





## T2 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.

### C6 What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?

99.9%

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 99.9% of our homes had an in-date accredited gas safety check. The checks for the remaining three homes were marginally late - two due to repeated property access issues and one due to the tenant having no credit for gas, which RHA assisted with.

### C7 What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?

100%

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 85 properties required a 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.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, 9 of our properties had an outstanding Fire Risk Assessment.

### C8 What % of homes meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard?

100%

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, all of our homes met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard. This included 810 homes with acceptable fails which are due to the timing of when components have been identified for replacement in our planned maintenance programme.





## T3 Resident Voice

We are fully committed to listening to and hearing the views of our tenants when we are developing and providing services. We know that we might not always get things right and our commitment is to listen and learn from the experiences of our tenants. We have embedded a 'You Said, We Did' approach to ensure that we respond transparently to any ideas or suggestions from our tenants.

### C9 What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?

In 2019 we launched our new Tenant Involvement Commitment, using tenant feedback to design a new structure that would reflect the levels of involvement tenants felt they could offer. We have 3 methods 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.

In summer 2021 we carried out a review of our Commitment and this time tenants felt our Get Involved Groups needed to be more reflective of the diverse services we offer. In response to this, we have designed a new framework based on our service areas which allows tenants to get more involved in the areas of business that are of interest to them and provides time for more detailed reviews and greater scrutiny of service areas.

We have **213 (10.64%)** 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 INVOLVED

We run a Get Involved Facebook group with 62 members, where we promote all engagement opportunities.

In September we took RHA On The Road and visited 25 estates over 5 days. Priority messaging for this event included signposting and feedback on the cost of living crisis; consultation on rent affordability; promotion of the Renting Homes Act; and consultation on our Corporate Plan priorities.

## Get INFORMED

Our Community Hub - 'Little Shed' was launched in October 2022 and is now home to 5 weekly community activities. Three mornings a week we offer our Community Fridge project (surplus stock from local supermarkets made available to those in need). We are seeing regular visitors - over 125 in total between October 2022 and March 2023. We run a Warm Space Coffee Morning, a Health and Wellbeing Drop-In (GP referral service), Yoga sessions, a Repair Café, 'Play It Again' sports clothes pop-up shop and a digital skills class as part of 'Get RCT Online'.

## Get TOGETHER

This year we have worked with our Tenant Committee and Service Review Groups to:

- Meet with our Executive Management Team and team members, receiving updates on all areas of the business, including GDPR, Governance, ED&I and the Regulatory Framework;
- Review the Welsh Government's proposed changes to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS 2023) as part of Welsh Government consultation;
- Gain feedback on associated policy changes required in response to the Physical Adaptation Grant scheme;
- Test and give feedback on our new tenant portal – MyRHA;
- Celebrate 'International Youth Day' and establish a Youth Drop-In, in partnership with two community organisations;
- Take part in 'Tenant Futuring', working with an organisation called Flint - commissioned by Welsh Government, to better understand:
  - the language of decarbonisation and tenant's understanding
  - what encourages people to change their behaviour
  - how this should be communicated to tenants
- Contribute to a tender procurement process with DEVCO when letting a new Gas Contract, ensure a tenant voice during the scoring process;
- Design new surveys to capture tenant satisfaction on our new homes;
- Provide introductory training to the work of our Repairs and Maintenance Teams, followed by a review of Reactive Maintenance Service Standards;
- Visits to other community projects; and
- Deliver Carbon Literacy Training to 5 tenants and 2 community partners.

**C10** How does the housing provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?

In our last tenant-wide perception survey conducted in October 2021, overall satisfaction with the service provided by RHA to our tenants was 78%. The response rate to our survey was 35%, which is significantly higher compared with previous surveys. The 2021 survey resulted in positive responses across the range of questions, particularly in respect of the quality and safety of our homes:



78%

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



81%

said that they were satisfied that RHA are easy to deal with.



81%

were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.



85%

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

The results from this standardised survey were benchmarked against other social landlords in Wales and published online. Whilst our overall satisfaction score was below the mean of 81%, our performance in other areas such as value for money and the quality of our homes was strong.

Our next tenant-wide perception survey is planned for the Autumn of 2023. The results from the next survey will enable us to more fully understand how resident satisfaction has changed and assess our progress towards our target of 85%.

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 2022/23 were as follows:



Transaction or Service	Number of Responses	Number of Tenants Satisfied	Satisfaction Rate
Repair Completed	299	249	83.3%
ASB Reported	3	1	33.3%
New Tenancy Sign Up	41	37	90.2%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>83.7%</b>

Our target for tenant satisfaction is [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.

We are currently exploring how to reintroduce our peer-led Satisfaction Survey Work meaning tenants will support us with transactional satisfaction surveys. This approach will enable us to reach those who are digitally excluded and would otherwise be unable to provide feedback on the services they have received.





C11 In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman? 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.



8

Complaints received in the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

88%

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

12%

equivalent to 1 complaint, was escalated to Stage 3

16

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

## T4 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.

### C12 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

Our Tenant Involvement Commitment is structured around three types of involvement; 'Get Informed', 'Get Involved' and 'Get Together' and is closely linked to our Community Engagement Development Plan. This means that involved tenants can also take part in our other projects, such as [Get Connected](#) and [BeActive](#). These projects focus on digital skills/training and health and wellbeing. Being involved, through any of the options, can help to build skills and confidence which may lead to involvement in other projects and activities.

Our Community Investment Commitment defines what community investment and social value means to us and provides a structure for RHA and our partners and contractors to 'Give Back' to communities, for example through targeted recruitment and training, supporting community projects and through financial contributions.



We offer a tailored tenancy support service which means that we aim to get to know our tenants so we can offer the right type of support. We offer financial inclusion advice and support for tenants in the first year of their tenancy.

### **Tenant Welfare and Practical Support**

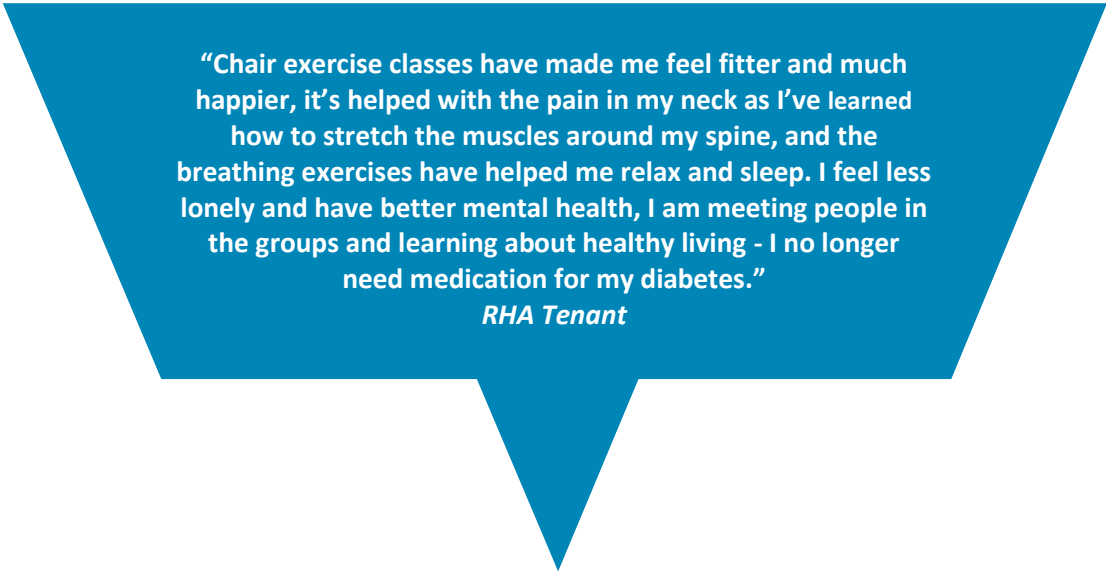
Our Grub Hub project is running in partnership with RCT Healthy Hearts Community Shop and Tonyandy Foodbank, to ensure we reach as many people as possible. We receive regular donations from Lidl, Farmfoods and Coop. In December 2022 we raised over £3,500 to provide Christmas food hampers to tenants and community members in need. We were able to offer 90 hampers for tenants, as well as to 5 partner organisations – Cambrian Village Trust, People and Work, Pobl (Abertonlloyd House), Canolfan Pentre and The Arts Factory.

### **Get Set**

In the last 12 months our Tenancy Coach has supported 74 new tenants to better manage their home, supporting with issues such as establishing household payments, querying fuel bills, applying for benefits and furniture grants and referring to fuel & food banks. Our Coach also maintains contact with a small number of tenants who have more complex needs and require continued support to sustain their tenancy.

### **Be Active**

Our Be Active project has worked with 835 people since it launched in 2019. Of those, 603 have been through taster session and events and 232 people have taken part in regular health sessions. We have offered sessions such as health walks, yoga sessions online and in our own community base – Little Shed, mental health support groups, one to one wellbeing support and community events.



**“Chair exercise classes have made me feel fitter and much happier, it’s helped with the pain in my neck as I’ve learned how to stretch the muscles around my spine, and the breathing exercises have helped me relax and sleep. I feel less lonely and have better mental health, I am meeting people in the groups and learning about healthy living - I no longer need medication for my diabetes.”**

***RHA Tenant***

### **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 work we have supported an event at Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit in Aberdare, where 2 RHA team members talked about their employment history in a way that would encourage the students to raise their own ambitions. We have also used our Community Benefits



fund to sponsor The Lighthouse Project, Llanharan Drop In and Pobl (Abertonlloyd House) who were offering Christmas lunch or Christmas activities to those in need.

We continue to play an active role in the Tonypany Chamber Of Trade, chairing meetings, facilitating events and development opportunities for chamber members. We recently sponsored the Tonypany Christmas Event, supplying a town centre treasure map and prizes to encourage visitors to the town, as well as opening the Little Shed to host a warm space with small business pop up shops. We have sponsored the delivery of bespoke Social Media Training for members and will be sponsoring further training delivered by Citizens Cymru, who will equip the chamber with skills to campaign and lobby. These activities are all aimed at equipping the chamber to become more active, more professional and sustainable in the long term.

Under these themes and in collaboration with contractors, we have:

- offered 273 hours of work experience, 327 paid apprentice weeks and 539 mixed weeks (apprentices, new starters, trainees, and graduates) on our development sites;
- demonstrated a commitment to supporting the Foundational Economy, with 92.3% of total contract value being spent in Wales. We have encouraged the employment of Welsh people by supporting the employment of 18 previously unemployed Welsh people on our sites;
- supported community projects through staff volunteer time or purchasing equipment and resources, by donating £1,065 to community benefits initiatives and contractors gifting £1,500 of labour to assist with community projects;
- ensured that social value, community and environmental benefits were achieved as part of our new Repairs and Maintenance Framework contract;
- committed to recycling waste and reducing our carbon footprint, minimising what we send to landfill. We have diverted 100% of our waste from landfills which equates to 3,577 tonnes of waste and 72.7% of eligible recyclable materials.



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 2023, **10.64%** 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.

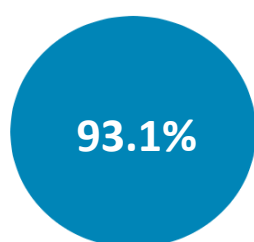
We ensure that tenants are fully informed of the difference their involvement has made through project updates, feedback from the Board and using 'You Said – We Did' style feedback. We actively listen, meaning we 'Ask, Inform, Listen and Act'.

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 the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. Participants complete a pre and post assessment, plus a follow-up assessment if they are still engaged with projects. We also use case studies for more qualitative data.



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



## Be Active

In March 2023 our 4 year partnership project 'Be Active' came to an end.

BeActive took place across Rhondda Cynon Taf, with 7 community partners working together. It was a highly successful programme delivering outdoor activities to a diverse range of people in areas of deprivation, involving people who would not normally participate in outdoor activities. The project was a huge success because it was able to overcome barriers and get people outdoors, active and socialising, as well as recruiting volunteers and developing sustainable plans for activities and groups in the community.

RHA played a key role in running the project and through our work alone our Wellbeing Officer Steph worked with 835 individuals.

As with all of our work and projects we look to have long term outcomes, creating opportunities that are self-sustaining and that provide pathways for individuals and communities to self-manage and lead on in the future.

As a direct result of BeActive:

- \* RHA has now employed a dedicated Wellbeing Officer who will support RHA tenants and staff to improve their health and well-being.
- \* Our sessions such as online Yoga / Relaxation / Seated Exercise/ Nutrition and Fitness classes will continue as participants have access to a library of online videos and tutorials.
- \* RHA are continuing to signpost participants to other services that can meet their health and wellbeing needs.
- \* Self-sustaining mindfulness practices have been created and delivered, participants have the use of a private Mp3 player and supporting resources.
- \* A weekly Health Walk is continuing to be delivered and supported by a volunteer.
- \* We have some fantastic examples of healthy behavioural change that has occurred as a result of the project. Participants are now reaping the benefits of a healthier lifestyle – they are more active, enjoy a healthier social life and have managed to see improvements in their physical health, such as reduced blood pressure and body weight, some participants have even managed to reduce their need for medication.
- \* Some participants have enjoyed the project so much that they have become more involved and have become volunteers, encouraging positive behavioural change through greater engagement, skills building and sense of purpose and belonging.



## T5 Placemaking

### C13 Provide examples of case studies of where you have been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping 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

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 in order to achieve this. We see ourselves as an anchor organisation in our local communities, helping them to thrive and flourish.

As a Housing Association and anchor organisation, we continue to recognise that we have a key role to play in town centre regeneration, particularly as our communities and local businesses recover from the pandemic. 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. Our aim is also 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.

Outside of our town centre approach to placemaking, we have started work on our largest residential development project in our history, 70 new homes in Tonyrefail. This project has been designed with placemaking at its heart with an abundance of green spaces and properties designed to maximise views and landscapes for our new residents, whilst being suitably located with easy access to transport and local amenities. We have demonstrated our overarching commitment to Placemaking, through our work in communities and through our more typical housing developments.



## Placemaking at the Little Shed, Tonypanydy

During 2022/23, we have seen our community space 'The Little Shed' become recognised in Tonypanydy as an inclusive and accessible place where everyone is welcome.

Every week, our Community Team manage a calendar of social and community activities, coupled with amazing work by our tenants who volunteer their time to run our Community Fridge – a project that provides food parcels to members of our community in need, whilst diverting surplus food from landfill.

On any single week, our café-style space in the heart of Tonypanydy town welcomes tenants and the wider community to participate in craft sessions, coffee mornings, yoga, youth club and our Hot Flash Café – a dedicated support network to chat all things menopause. Our partnerships – a pop-up affordable sports clothing shop and a digital skills project – also make use of the space.

Over the past 12 months, hundreds of people have visited our Little Shed and helped it to become a real asset to the community.

We are really proud to see how the Little Shed has become so popular within the community and look forward to seeing what the future of this space looks like for Tonypanydy.



# 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.

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

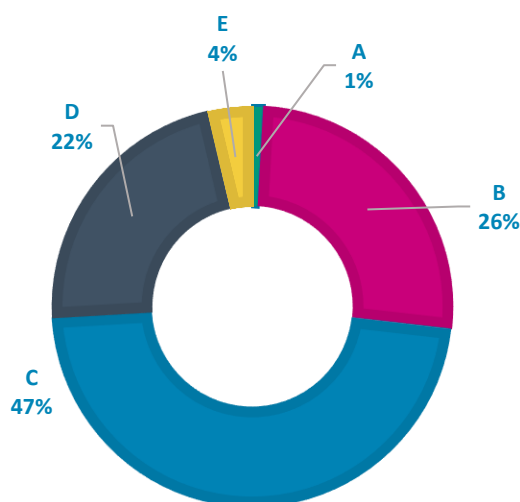
## T6 Climate Change

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.

### C14 Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the start of the previous financial year)

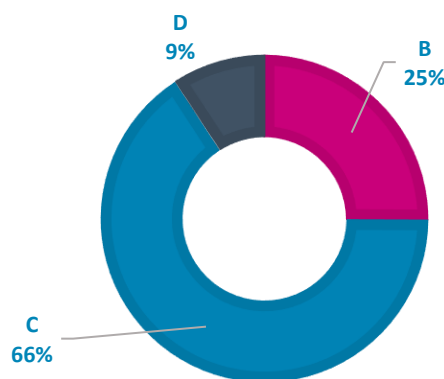
The distribution of EPC ratings for our owned homes as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022:

EPC Band	No of Homes	Percentage
A	16	1%
B	471	26%
C	859	47%
D	405	22%
E	66	4%
F	0	0%
G	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1817</b>	<b>100%</b>



### C15 Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the previous financial year)

EPC Band	No of Homes	Percentage
A	0	0%
B	82	25%
C	215	66%
D	30	9%
E	0	0%
F	0	0%
G	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>100%</b>



48 new homes were completed in the 2022/23 financial year. 30 homes were **EPC rating B** (SAP 81-91) and 18 homes were EPC rating C (SAP 69-80).

8 refurbished homes were completed in the 2022/23 financial year. 2 homes were EPC rating C (SAP 69-80) and 6 homes were EPC rating D (SAP 55-68).

271 homes were acquired from another social landlord in the 2022/23 financial year. 52 homes were EPC rating B (SAP 81-91), 195 homes were EPC rating C (SAP 69-80) and 24 homes were EPC rating D (SAP 55-68).

All new homes comply with building regulations and the Welsh Governments 'Design Quality Requirements'.

As of August 2021 RHA is required to build homes that achieve EPC rating A. Any contracts for new homes going forward will deliver homes to meet this rating, this is a Welsh Government funding criteria.

#### C16 Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse 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). The outcome of this exercise has provided us with a baseline to enable the setting of realistic targets for reducing our carbon footprint in future years and has identified a number of actions that RHA can undertake which will assist with future reporting and help to reduce our carbon footprint. The data has not been recalculated for 2022/23 however these actions will be incorporated into the second version of our 'RHA Optimise' Decarbonisation Strategy.

#### C17 What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?

##### Retrofitting of the exiting stock

During the 2022/23 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 £124,839 was obtained which along with our contribution of £68,260 enabled us to install Solar PV, battery storage and intelligent energy systems to 14 homes in Treorchy.

All new homes we build achieve EPC A as standard.

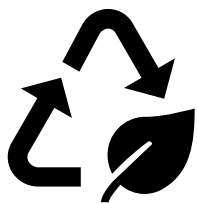
#### C18 How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks:

- Increased flood risk
- Increased risk of homes overheating

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 Resource 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.

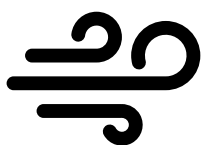


C19 Does the Housing Provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc.



### Recycling and Waste Management

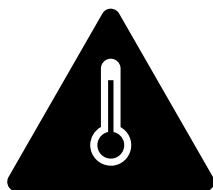
We provide information to new tenants at sign up in respect of recycling and waste collection, which has been supplied by the Local Authority. Where our teams identify a problem with inappropriate recycling or fly tipping, we work with our partners in the LA to carry out visits to schemes and sites to talk with tenants and provide the necessary advice. We are now carrying out a rolling



### Heating

New tenants are shown how to use their heating system by our Gas Safe contractor when the gas is uncapped and the boiler commissioned at the time the tenant moves in to the property.

If, during the course of a tenancy, the tenant raises the issue of heating affordability (fuel poverty), our Building Surveyor will attend to advise the tenant on the efficient use of their heating system (gas or electric) and our Payment Advisors will also provide advice about sourcing the cheapest energy



### Ventilation

In terms of ventilation and heating, we have provided leaflets at various events and our Building Surveyors provide advice to tenants when dealing with condensation issues that are a direct result of the inadequate use of heating/ventilation. RHA also have various leaflets in respect of the management of condensation within the home which the Building Surveyors are able to leave with tenants. These are also provided as part of the tenancy sign up pack



## T7 Ecology

### C20 How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting 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. As part of our **RHA Optimise Strategy**, going forward, we will consider the feasibility of the 'greening' of our 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 and promotes bio-diversity.

All of our new development projects will not only need to comply with planning requirements but also now the SAB legislation which came into force in Wales in 2019. This legislation ensures that all new dwellings are designed to include for sustainable drainage to manage on-site surface water. The legislation deals with water management and by the very nature of looking to implement sustainable urban drainage features, our new developments will include more green space which provides a natural habitat for biodiversity as well as a functioning drainage system.



A brilliant example of how this is being implemented is on our Big Shed project in Tonypany. A town centre project, with limited opportunities for greening due to its location, has seen us introduce a biodiverse green roof top. . We will be able to measure success on this project by calculating the level of 'green space' and 'green infrastructures' installed on the site which will be a direct improvement over the tarmac heavy areas on site pre redevelopment.



### Our Community Gardening Project

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 supported 2 tenant groups to develop their community garden as part of our Homegrown project and another group to take part in a series of learning sessions. One group has turned the green space on their estate into a communal garden which they use to host events and provide a safe space for children to play, the other groups are exploring what approach will best suit their estate.



### Working in Partnership

We are working in partnership with Welcome To Our Woods in Treherbert to reconnect people with place – that means connecting communities with their natural environment, like our beautiful woodlands and mountain tops.

Welcome To Our Woods aims to improve health and wellbeing through offering activities in our outdoor spaces and assisting people with gaining skills for work – such as food growing and forestry management.

Our partnership had continued to grow, and we were recently successful in securing over £238k through the National Lottery Climate Action Fund. Part of this funding will be used to explore ways of building experimental, zero-emission building using local timber from local forests. In year we have developed designs for new homes and presented them to Welsh Government for approval, we will be submitting a planning application and in 2022 subject to funding we are targeting building these first of its kind homes, using timber from the Rhondda. This partnership will not only deliver highly sustainable homes, but the method of delivery is also truly innovative, working with partners Down to Earth, new homes will be constructed using a team of volunteers looking to rehabilitate and learn new skills. This partnership will be a pilot for delivery of new homes and doing so in a non-traditional, contracting method ensuring the money we spend building new homes has maximum impact and creates opportunities for our community to retrain, build new industries and build a strong and prosperous future.



**C21 Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants (e.g. mould, water pipes containing lead). If so, how do you target and measure performance?**

Our Asset Management Strategy and Reactive Maintenance Policy provide a framework for how we undertake repair and maintenance works in line with best practice and legislation. In accordance with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System, 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.

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. Where damp or mould is identified, a specialist survey is arranged and cleaning and treating of mould to walls and ceilings undertaken. From 2022/23, as part of our new strategic approach to the management of damp, mould and condensation, we will also be undertaking a risk based approach to proactively identify any homes that may be more at risk from mould, so that we can provide advice and take preventative action. We have also implemented a new framework for monitoring reports and cases of damp and mould to ensure we are effectively managing performance in this area.

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.

As part of the forthcoming Renting Homes Wales Act and compliance with the Fitness for Human Habitation Regulations, we have undertaken a postcode assessment to establish the radon levels at our properties and take any action required and we are also analysing our water pipes to identify any that may contain lead. This work will complete in early 2022/23.



## T8 Resource Management

### C22 Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building 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, recognised last year that there is room for improvement in this area. In the future and in 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 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.

### C23 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.

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 have reviewed our approach to waste management, incorporating the principles of the circular economy wherever possible. Whilst this 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 will 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 will 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 also planning to set targets for recycling rates.

**C24 Does the housing provider have a strategy for good 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.

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.



# GOVERNANCE

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Structure & Governance

Board & Trustees

Staff Wellbeing

Supply Chain Management

## T9 Structure & Governance

### C25 Is the organisation 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*.

### 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 organisational 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, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices) – that resulted in enforcements or equivalent action?

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



## T10 Board & Trustees

### C31 What are the demographics of the Board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing provider's residents?

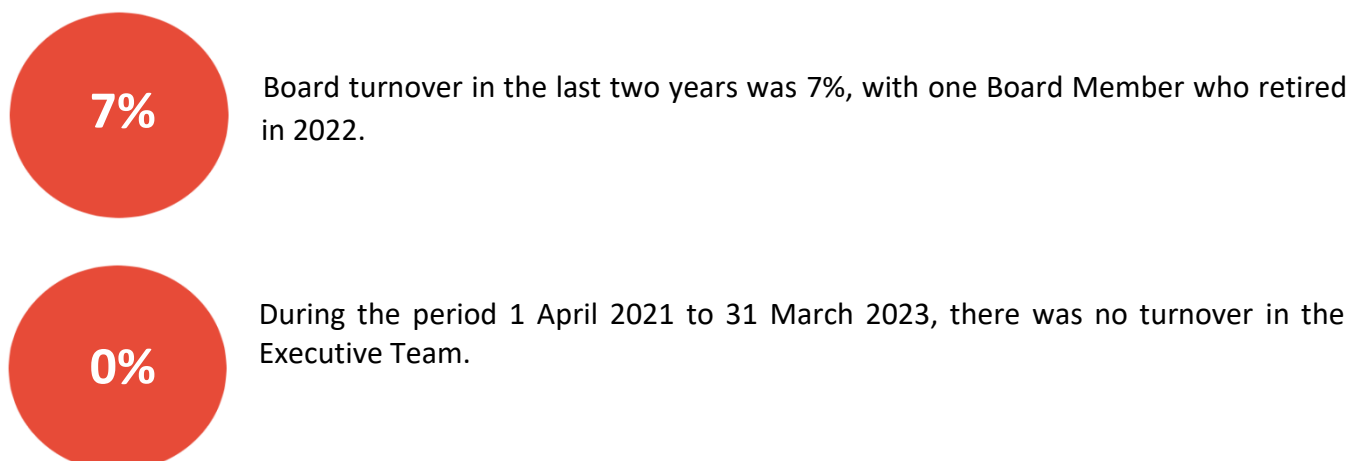
- 64% of our Board are male and 36% are female.  
Our tenant base is made up of 59% male, 41% female and a small minority identifying as other categories.



- 14% 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%.
- 7% 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 50.  
The average age of our tenants is 55 years.
- The average tenure is 3 years.

RHA has made progress in ensuring that its Board is representative of the demographics of our tenants, we will continue to do so through proactive recruitment, and exploring Board trainee roles and shadowing opportunities.

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



**C33 Is there a maximum tenure for a Board member? If so, what is it?**

The term of office for our Board Members is three years, plus renewal of up to a further two three-year term. The maximum tenure for Board Members is nine years.

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

Our Audit & Risk Committee has five members. The Chair of Audit & Risk Committee is a Chartered Accountant, and two members of our audit committee have financial qualifications. 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.

**C36 Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?**

The Remuneration Committee consists of 4 non-executive Board Members. The CEO and Director of Resources attend the meetings but are not formal Committee Members.

**C37 Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?**

The Board 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.

**C38 How many years has your current external auditor been responsible for auditing your 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.

**C39 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. The Board and Executive Team will implement the recommendations during the 2023-24 financial year.

**C40 Are the roles of the Chair of the Board and CEO held by two different people?**

Yes, the roles of Chair of the Board and CEO are held by two different people.

**C41 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 2022, testament to the wellbeing support and the importance and emphasis we place on our people. We were proud to be listed as eighth in the Best Companies Top 50 Housing Associations to work for, and twenty third in the Top 50 Welsh Companies to work for.

RHA successfully achieved the Quality in Equality & Diversity (QED) award in December 2022. The QED Award, developed by Welsh housing charity, Tai Pawb, provides a comprehensive framework for improving the equality and diversity impact of an organisation. Awarded by an independent panel, it considers strategic areas such as governance, leadership and culture as well as customer-facing service provision, including access and tenant involvement. Colleagues, tenants and board members from across the organisation, as well as our contractors and partner organisations engaged in the twelve-month accreditation process which included staff surveys, engagement with tenants, interviews, a review of policies and procedures and the production of an action plan.

### C42 Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

RHA is an accredited Living Wage employer.

### C43 What is the median gender pay gap?



The median gender pay gap for the year ending 31 March 2023 was 2.4%

### C44 What is the CEO-median-worker pay ratio?



The CEO-worker pay ratio for the year ending 31 March 2023 was **3.44 : 1**.

**C45** How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?



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 2022, 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
- 'Talk to Us' – Safe Space Sessions, providing a safe space for staff with caring responsibilities to have open and honest conversations their experiences
- Yoga sessions
- Black History Month information posts, videos and guest speakers
- A 'Walk In My Shoes' session on the personal experience of a tenant refugee
- Fun activities such as Festive Bingo and Christmas Jumper Day

In 2021, RHA also signed the Mental Health at Work Commitment which helps to provide us with a simple framework of best practice to promote wellbeing and resilience. We have created and shared an action plan which will help to support us in ensuring that our culture at RHA supports positive mental health.

For the past two years, we have also been awarded the Best Companies 2-star accreditation, made possible only through an 'outstanding' commitment to workplace engagement. RHA was also successful in gaining a place in the top 10 best Housing Associations to work for in the UK as part of our most recent Best Companies listing.

RHA have now employed a dedicated Wellbeing Officer whose focus will be to support our tenants and staff to improve their health and wellbeing.

**C46** What is the average number of sick days (both long and short term) taken per employee?

The average number of sick days per employee was 14.3 days in the year ended 31 March 2023. This was due to a small number of ongoing long term sick cases under management. Where these extreme cases are excluded, the average drops to 1.8 days per employee.

## T12 Supply Chain

### C47 How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

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.

### C48 How is Environmental impact considered 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 factors in all procurements and allocate 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 SME's. 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

RIHA