

RHA

A thick yellow diagonal line slanting upwards from left to right, positioned to the right of the 'RHA' text.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

A thick yellow diagonal line slanting upwards from left to right, positioned below the main title.

Year ending 31st March 2021

IMPROVING

OPENNESS
SUPPORT
CULTURE
PROPERTIES
COMMUNITIES
OUR TOWN
HOMES

LIVES

HOUSING
HEALTH
SPACES
WHAT WE DO
FUTURES
INTEGRITY
ASPIRATIONS
SERVICES
PEOPLE
VALUES
WELL-BEING
SKILLS
AUTHENTICITY

Contents

Introduction 4

Our Vision & Values 5

Our ESG Report

Summary of ESG Themes 7

Social 8

Environmental 20

Governance 27

Introduction

As a community-based organisation operating from the heart of Rhondda Cynon Taff, 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 want to be ambitious in our plans, working collaboratively to make positive improvements that have a wider impact across Wales.

Environmental, Social and Governance reporting is of growing importance, and RHA have committed to reporting annually on our performance as early adopters of the new Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing. It is our aspiration that ESG reporting 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. It will also provide us with valuable benchmarking information to help us understand our performance and how we can continue to improve and develop.

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

Summary of the ESG Themes

| ESG Area | Theme | Theme Name | Description |
|---------------|-------|---------------------------|---|
| SOCIAL | T1 | Affordability | This theme seeks to assess the extent to which the housing provider provides homes that are genuinely affordable to those on low-incomes. The theme is made up of four criteria, including the tenure mix of new and existing properties and security of tenure. |
| | T2 | Building Safety | This theme seeks to assess how effective the housing provider is at meeting its legal responsibilities to protect residents and keep buildings safe. The theme is made up of two criteria, disclosing gas safety checks and fire risk assessments. |
| | T3 | Resident Voice | This theme seeks to assess how effective the housing provider is at listening to and empowering residents. The theme is made up of three themes that cover board scrutiny, complaint handling and resident satisfaction. |
| | T4 | Resident Support | This theme seeks to assess the effectiveness of the initiatives that the housing provider runs to support individual residents. The theme is made up of two criteria that cover: What support is provided? and How successful is it? |
| | 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. The theme is made up of one criterion, a space for the housing provider to give examples of their placemaking or placeshaping work. |
| | T6 | Staff Wellbeing | This theme seeks to assess the extent to which the housing provider is a good employer to its internal staff. The theme is made up of two criteria, the CEO-worker pay ratio and a disclosure on being a Living Wage employer. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL | T7 | Climate Change | This theme seeks to assess how the activities of the housing provider are impacting on climate change. This theme considers current practice, as well as the changes being made to improve performance in the future. The theme is made up of eight criteria, including the distribution of EPC ratings and heating sources, emissions data, capacity for renewable energy production, and environmental strategy. |
| | T8 | Ecology | This theme seeks to assess how the housing provider is protecting the local environment and ecology. The theme considers both policies and the results of the housing provider. The theme is made up of six criteria that review different elements that impact the local ecology: sourcing materials, waste management, managing pollutants, water management and biodiversity. |
| GOVERNANCE | T9 | Board & Trustees | This theme seeks to assess the quality, suitability and performance of the board of trustees. The theme is made up of twelve criteria including demographics of the board, ownership, experience and independence of the board. |
| | T10 | Systems & Risk Management | This theme seeks to assess how well the housing provider manages risks and ensure it meets its legal obligations as a provider of affordable housing. The theme is made up of five criteria including RSH grading, reporting against the decent homes standard and disclosing any adverse findings. |

SOCIAL

Affordability
Building Safety
Resident Voice
Resident Support
Placemaking
Staff Wellbeing

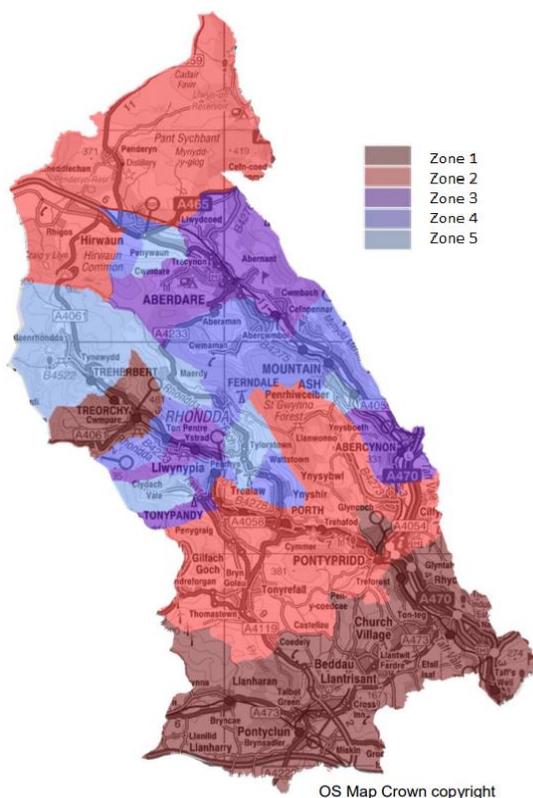
T1 Affordability

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 Specific Affordability Indicator

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 proposed rent charges unaffordable. For example, when setting the rents for 2021/22, we identified that tenants living in one-bedroom houses were likely to breach our affordability criteria. As a result, we chose to freeze the rent charges for these properties rather than apply any increase.

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 32 legacy Secure tenancies where Fair Rents are applicable and 6 Intermediate rent units.



The Local Housing Market Assessment published in 2017/18 by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Council zoned average rent levels for two-bedroom properties across the borough. Shown in the adjacent diagram, RHA properties are located in each zone of the borough. There are significant differentials in rent levels across each zone, and research on the latest average market rents in for each zone is shown in the table below.

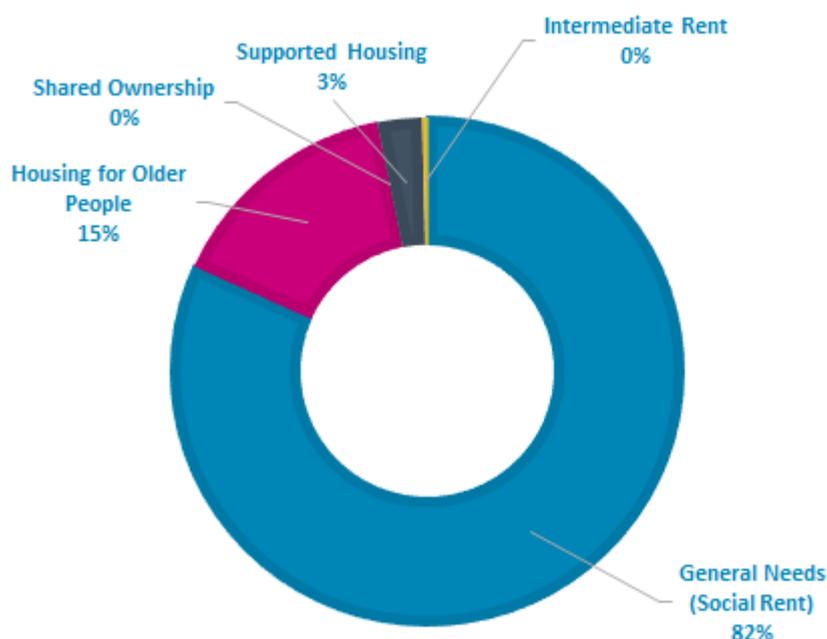
| Zone | Average weekly 2-bed rent | RHA weekly 2-bed rent | Discount |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| 1 | £161.54 | £96.52 | 40% |
| 2 | £147.23 | £96.52 | 34% |
| 3 | £145.38 | £96.52 | 34% |
| 4 | £120.46 | £96.52 | 20% |
| 5 | £103.85 | £96.52 | 7% |

RHA rent discounts maximum average market rent by £65.02 per week, equivalent to approximately £3,400 per annum.

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 31st March 2020, we owned 1730 homes, of which 82% (1415 homes) were general needs social housing.

Of our remaining homes; 260 (15%) were homes for older people, 48 (3%) 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

We have an ambitious development programme and are committed to delivering high quality new social housing for our local communities.

During 2020/21, we completed 95 new homes, all of which were social housing (general needs).

C4 How secure are residents' tenancies?

During the year ended 31st March 2021, 100% of our general needs tenants had Assured tenancies. These are lifelong tenancies which only end if a tenant leaves of their own choice, or if there is a significant breach in the terms of their tenancy agreement. We have the option of using Starter Tenancies (ASTs) for new tenants, however our use of starter tenancies is currently under review in the context of our wider commitment to supporting the ending of evictions into homelessness in Wales.

T2 Building Safety

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.

C5 What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?



As at 31st March 2021, 100% of our homes had an in-date accredited gas safety check.

C6 What % of homes have an outstanding Fire Risk Assessment?

At 31st March 2021, 55 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 on an annual basis. Inspections are undertaken by appropriately qualified independent fire risk assessors.

At 31st March 2021, none of our properties had an outstanding Fire Risk Assessment.



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.

C7 What arrangements are in place to enable the residents to hold management to account for provision of services?

In July 2019 we implemented our Tenant Involvement Commitment. This established a new governance pathway, which outlines how tenants, RHA employees and Board members communicate, ensuring that Board and senior management receive feedback on current services and performance, satisfaction levels and issues that affect our tenants.

We have a Tenant Scrutiny Panel and a Service Improvement Group who meet regularly to scrutinize our policies and procedures. Representatives from Senior Management attend Tenant Scrutiny Group meetings on a regular basis. The Chair of Tenant Scrutiny also attends two Board meetings per year to give an overview of the work of the Tenant Scrutiny Group. At the remaining Board meetings, an update is provided to Board members and Senior Management via an information paper and video. Members of the Tenant Scrutiny Group also take part in senior level recruitment and, going forward, will also be involved in the consultation process to shape new developments.

We are committed to continually improving our approach to tenant involvement and to expanding the range of methods available to our tenants to keep informed and communicate with us.

We have 198 (9.8%) 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 INFORMED

- We asked tenants to review service delivery during lockdown and tell us what their priorities and concerns would be when restrictions began to ease;
- We consulted with tenants on our proposed rent uplift, sharing a survey and running sessions to gain tenant insight and perspective;
- We asked tenants to tell us what they thought of our digital communication throughout lockdown;
- We asked tenants to name our Community Benefits Strategy, ensuring it was meaningful to them – they choose 'RHA/Giving Back'
- We invited tenants to part in our new Tenant Portal demonstration and sought their feedback on its functionality and accessibility;
- We sought tenant views on the development of our co-working space – the Workshed.

Get TOGETHER

Due to Covid restrictions we were unable to deliver our Get Together sessions, however we were able to develop a new project called [Homegrown](#). We worked closely with Men’s Sheds Treorchy to provide shielding tenants with seeds, soil and containers, offering an activity to promote good mental wellbeing during lockdown by planting and growing seeds in the safety of their own home.

Get INVOLVED

We worked closely with our Scrutiny and Service Improvement teams, supporting them to engage with us digitally where possible. The groups have assisted us with:

- Designing our Covid Services survey;
- Reviewing our Decant Policy;
- Reviewing our Volunteering Policy;
- Designing our Rent Consultation and attending a Rent Consultation Focus Group;
- Taking part in our Tenant Portal demonstration and giving feedback on functionality and accessibility;
- Forming a Tenant Panel for our Development Director and Board Chair member interviews;
- Reviewing our Allocations process.

C8 Housing Provider Specific Resident Satisfaction Indicator

In our last tenant-wide perception survey conducted in June 2019, overall satisfaction with the service provided by RHA to our tenants was [82%](#). We conduct these surveys every two years and plan to deliver our next tenant-wide survey in Autumn 2021.

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 2020/21 were as follows:

| Transaction or Service | Number of Responses | Number of Tenants Satisfied | Satisfaction Rate |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Repair Completed | 236 | 212 | 89.8% |
| ASB Reported | 5 | 2 | 40.0% |
| New Tenancy Sign Up | 43 | 42 | 97.7% |
| Tenant Moves into Newly Built Home | 18 | 15 | 83.3% |
| Overall | 302 | 271 | 89.7% |

Our target for tenant satisfaction is [85%](#).

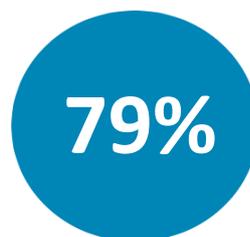
Satisfaction with the management of ASB cases is often lower than in other areas of service provision. This can be for several reasons e.g., expectations of the issues we can realistically resolve, the time that resolutions can take due to legal processes, the inability to solve disputes between neighbours 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.

In 2021/22 we plan to introduce transactional surveys for additional services such as planned maintenance and chargeable services.

C9 Housing Provider Specific Complaint Handling Indicator



Complaints received in the year ending 31st March 2021.



of these, equivalent to 11 complaints, were dealt with at Stage 1.



equivalent to 3 complaints, were dealt with at Stage 2 (21%).
None were escalated to Stage 3.



days average response time at Stage 1 or 2 versus target of 17 days.
A further 17 issues were dealt with as Service Requests.

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.

C10 Do you have a Community Investment Strategy? How do you support your Residents?

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 Set', 'Get Skilled' and 'BeActive'. These projects focus on tenancy support, skills and 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. In 2020/21 we introduced an Asset Coach service to support our most vulnerable tenants. This is a strengths-based approach which aims to help tenants who experience significant difficulties to sustain tenancies.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, we undertook several communication exercises, contacting many of our tenants by phone or text. The purpose of these exercises was to provide support and reassurance and to identify any welfare or other needs. In total we made in excess of 2,000 contacts in addition to the contacts made through our day-to-day work. We also worked closely with the local authority in their pandemic response, and we were able to provide practical support to those tenants in need, for example delivery of food parcels and medical prescriptions. We worked in partnership with the Local Authority through the Covid Community Support group and referred to other organisations where appropriate, including Supporting People, Interlink RCT, Grief Cymru, Valleys Counselling Service and Reconnect 50+.

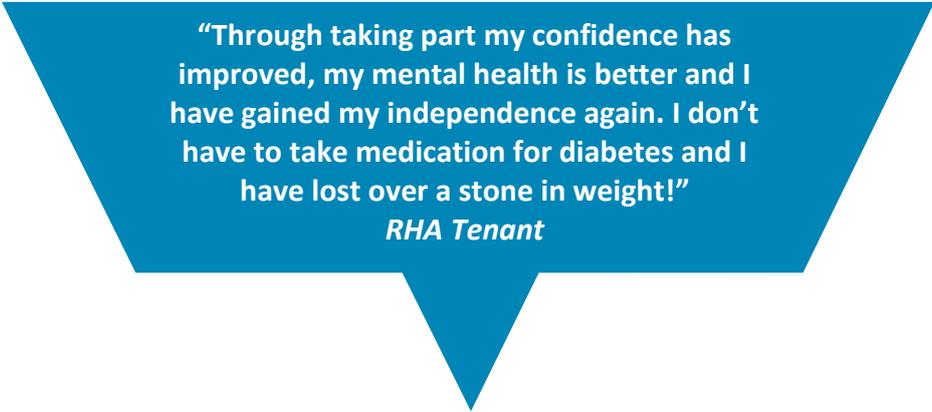
Our teams across the business also worked together to carry out welfare calls, which included contact with tenants who were shielding to identify support needs and regular follow up welfare calls for tenants who were feeling most vulnerable.

In December, we worked in partnership with Canolfan Pentre, Valleys Kids, Age Connect Morgannwg and The Arts Factory to provide Christmas hampers for our tenants in need. We received

contributions from our contractors and supported the initiative ourselves, which allowed us to deliver 50 Christmas hampers to tenants and Christmas gifts for tenant families.

In February 2021 we took part in the national Time to Talk Day, taking time out to call tenants who had requested contact. In total 140 tenants received a telephone calls where conversations and need were varied. The majority of those contacted expressed gratitude for the care RHA had shown in taking the time to connect with them.

We also offer health and wellbeing support through our **Be Active** project, which is now in its second year of delivery, working with 6 partners across RCT. This year we have engaged with 321 participants, offering sessions such as Chair Yoga, Living Room Gym, Mindfulness and Stress Management, Healthy Eating, Cooking and Nutrition, Historic Blue Plaque Walks and a Christmas 'Santa To Your Door' event.



"Through taking part my confidence has improved, my mental health is better and I have gained my independence again. I don't have to take medication for diabetes and I have lost over a stone in weight!"

RHA Tenant

C11 How do you measure success of your resident support? What outputs and outcomes do you measure and what are your targets?

We aim for at least 15% of our tenants to be involved with RHA, through at least one of the options available in our Tenant Involvement Commitment. Currently, **9.8%** of our tenants are actively involved.

Monitoring of our commitment involves internal audits, update reports to both the Board and the Tenant Scrutiny Group, and feedback gained through involved tenants. Members of the Board and our Audit and Risk Committee also meet with the Scrutiny Group, attending 'Question and Answer' style sessions based on subjects important to tenants.

We ensure 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, through Get Informed. 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.

In collaboration with our contractors, we have worked to deliver the following:



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.

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.

We also measure tenancy sustainability and the rate at which our homes become void. In 2020/21 98.5% of our tenancies lasted longer than 12 months, compared to our target of 90%, and our void rate was low at 6.7% against a maximum target of 10%.



T5 Placemaking

C12 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.

On our estates we provide a high-quality estate management service and we always aim to identify and tackle issues of anti-social behaviour promptly.

As a community-based Housing Association and anchor organisation, we have increasingly recognised the role we have to play in town centre regeneration. In early 2021 we signed the Design Commission for Wales (DCFW) Placemaking Charter and we adopt the principles of this charter when designing new housing and regeneration projects. In signing the Placemaking Wales Charter we have committed to supporting placemaking in all relevant areas of our work and promoting the six placemaking principles in the planning, design and management of new and existing places. The spirit of the partnership is one of mutual support, encouragement, and positive action. As a signatory we are expected to promote and uphold the principles of the charter in all of our work.



A great example of our commitment to placemaking is our 'Big Shed' project in Tonypany. This mixed-use development will be the first major investment in town centre regeneration in decades and we appreciated the significance this development would have on the town as a whole. Because of this we have not only adopted the principles of the DCFW Placemaking Charter but also engaged with our communities on what placemaking means to them in a local context, but also sought professional critique and challenge by way of a Design Commission review to ensure good practice and high-quality design.

T6 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 has been a major area of focus this year and we have taken extra steps to support our team during the Covid-19 pandemic and to help them adjust to working from home.

R HAPUS A

We have an award-winning health and wellbeing group called Hapus. During the year, we also launched our Flexible Working Practice and Homeworking Policy with a move to flexible working hours and a compressed nine-day fortnight. Our aim is that this will help to support our people in maintaining their wellbeing and balancing work with other commitments.

In our latest 'RHA Pulse' quarterly staff satisfaction survey in March 2021, 98% of our people said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with RHA as an employer.

We have recently been awarded the Best Companies 2-star accreditation, made possible only through an 'outstanding' commitment to workplace engagement. RHA was also successful in gaining three Best Companies listings, a huge accolade for us first year completing the Best Companies survey.



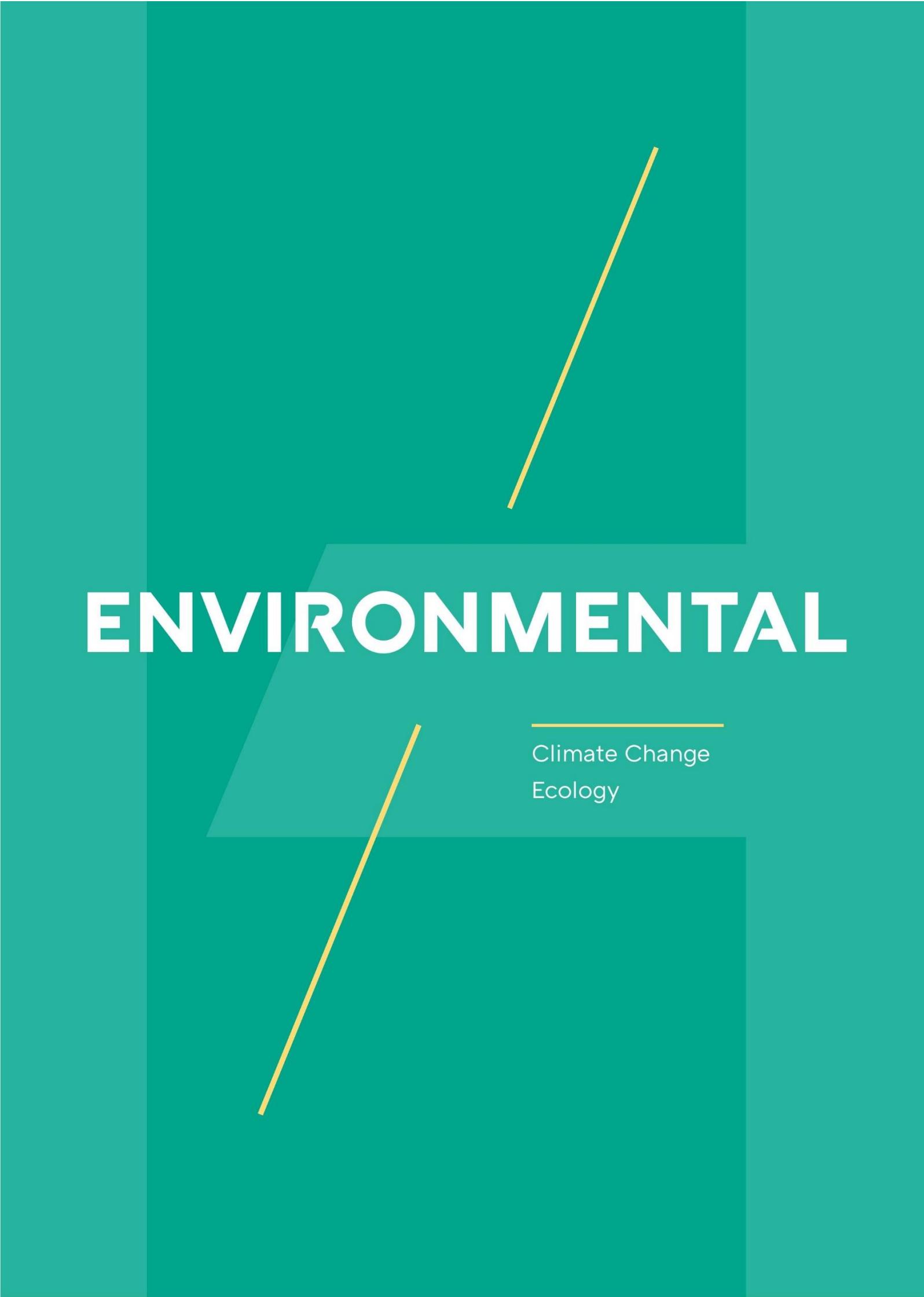
C13 Is RHA Wales an accredited "Living Wage" Employer?

RHA is an accredited Living Wage employer.

C14 What is the CEO-worker pay ratio?



The CEO-worker pay ratio for the year ending 31 March 2021 was **3.52 : 1**.

The background is a solid teal color. It features several geometric elements: a vertical teal bar on the left, a large teal trapezoidal shape in the center, and two diagonal yellow lines. One yellow line starts near the top right and goes down towards the center. The other yellow line starts near the bottom left and goes up towards the center. The word 'ENVIRONMENTAL' is written in large, white, bold, uppercase letters across the center of the teal trapezoidal shape.

ENVIRONMENTAL

Climate Change
Ecology

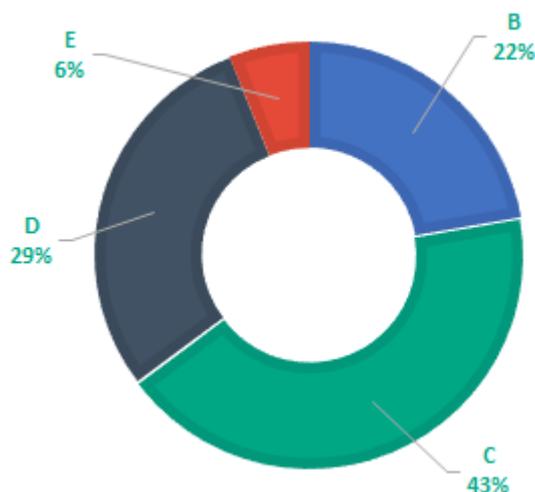
T7 Climate Change

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.

C15 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 31st March 2020:

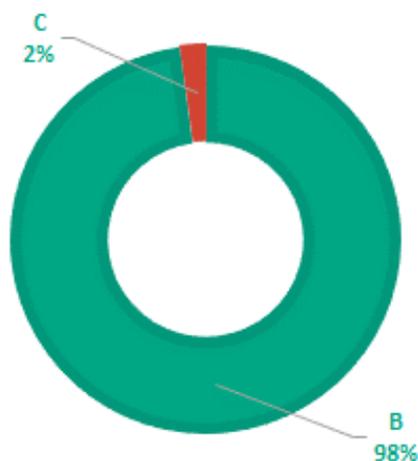
| EPC Band | No of Homes | Percentage |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A | 0 | 0% |
| B | 385 | 22% |
| C | 735 | 43% |
| D | 506 | 29% |
| E | 104 | 6% |
| F | 0 | 0% |
| G | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 1730 | 100% |



C16 Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the previous financial year)

The distribution of EPC ratings for new homes completed in the 2020/21 financial year:

| EPC Band | SAP rating | No of Homes |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| A + | 101 + | 0 |
| A | 92 - 100 | 0 |
| B | 81 - 91 | 93 |
| C | 69 - 80 | 2 |
| D | 55 - 68 | 0 |
| E | 39 - 54 | 0 |
| F | 21 - 38 | 0 |
| G | 1 - 20 | 0 |
| Total | | 95 |



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

The two homes within the C category are part of a part refurbishment/part new build scheme.

C17 Distribution of home by heating source for all new homes (those completed in the previous year)

100% of the new homes completed in the 2020/21 financial year were heated by mains gas.

C18 Scope 1 and Scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions

In 2021, we will be working in partnership with consultants who can support us to calculate and measure our carbon footprint across all aspects of our business.

This initial assessment of our carbon footprint will give us a baseline to enable us to set realistic targets for reducing our carbon footprint in future years.

C19 Total capacity of renewable energy production

We have 109.25kW of renewable energy generation from solar PV panels across 93 of our homes.

We do not have any wind turbines, biomass boilers, combined heat and power boilers, air or ground source heat pumps.

C20 The Housing Provider has formulated an environmental strategy with objectives aimed at meeting government targets within prescribed timeframes

In early 2021, we launched **RHA Optimise** – our decarbonisation strategy for a greener future. The first year of our strategy in 2021/22 will form our ‘Discovery Phase’ where we will be establishing and reviewing our data across the business in order to have a strong foundation from which we will deliver our commitments at scale in future years. This will also enable us to establish realistic targets and timescales for becoming a net zero carbon business in the future.

For our homes, we will be taking an optimised retrofit approach where we will develop an individual plan for each of our homes, with the aim of as many of our homes as possible reaching EPC A by 2030, in line with the recommendations of ‘Better Homes, Better Wales, Better World’ and WG targets.

C21 The Housing Provider reports on sustainability on an annual basis

We do not currently produce an annual sustainability report.

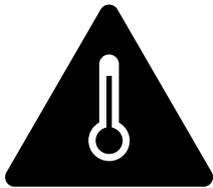
C22 Does the Housing Provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc. Please describe how this is done.



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.

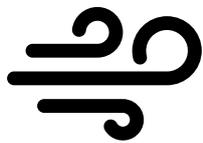
We are committed to recycling waste and reducing our carbon footprint, minimising what we send to landfill. We have diverted 100% of our waste from landfills which equates to 3,577 tonnes of waste and 72.7% of eligible recyclable materials.



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 provider.



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.



T8 Ecology

C23 Housing Provider Specific Ecology & Environment Indicator

We do not currently have a specific Ecology and Environment indicator.

C24 The Housing Provider has a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for building works. If so, how do you measure success?

Our Development Strategy sets out our commitment to ensure that building materials are responsibly sourced. This obligation flows through to our new build specification which places an obligation on our appointed contractors to procure responsibly and ethically. We do, however, recognise that there is room for improvement in this area, and in 2022 we will look at introducing measures to monitor procurement of materials and supplies made via our main contractor partners.

C25 The Housing Provider has a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials. If so, how do you measure success?

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 committed to reviewing our approach to waste management, incorporating the principles of the circular economy wherever possible. This will include revising options for the 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 will require all contractors to complete an Environmental Statement as part of their tender return.
- 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 will also investigate the option to work towards the 'Green Dragon Environmental Standard'. This is a standard that is awarded to organisations that can demonstrate effective environmental management and that are taking action to understand, monitor and control their impacts on the environment.

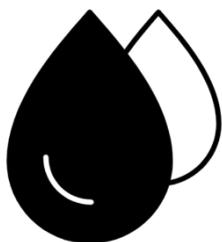
C26 The Housing Provider has a strategy to actively manage and reduce pollutants (e.g. mould, water pipes containing lead). If so, how do you measure success?

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 within their homes.

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.

C27 The Housing Provider has a strategy for good water management. If so, how do you measure success?



We are currently working with Dwr Cymru as part of their pilot Cartref programme of works to reduce water usage, improving water efficiency, which in turn will lower bills for both water and energy. As part of this programme Dwr Cymru will provide RHA with free water efficiency products for us to install in our homes when a property becomes empty. These products include low flow shower heads, tap aerators and cistern bags. We will record the property address at which the installations have taken place and share this information with Dwr Cymru.

They will have the ability to measure the effectiveness of the modifications over a period of time. A welcome pack is also under development that can be left at the property or included in our sign-up pack and will provide guidance on some of their other services, such as our social tariff and who may be entitled to it.

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.

C28 The Housing Provider has a strategy to increase the amount of 'green space' and biodiversity on or near homes e.g. gardens, parks. If so, how do you measure success?

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 2019. This legislation ensures that all new dwellings are designed to include for sustainable drainage to manage on-site surface water, whilst the legislation deals with water management by the very nature of looking to implement sustainable urban drainage features, our new developments do include for more green space which provides a natural habitat for biodiversity as well as a functioning drainage system.



Our Community Gardening Project

We are currently working 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. Following on from this, we plan to run more formal sessions with the intention of assisting tenants to gain a horticultural qualification.



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.

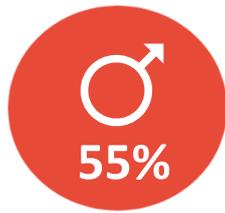
Our partnership had continued to grow, and we were recently successful in securing over £238k through the National Lottery Climate Action Fund. Part of this funding will be used to explore ways of building experimental, zero-emission building using local timber from local forests. We plan to use these buildings to showcase the need and potential for modern, energy-efficient spaces, as well as the opportunity this can offer for local employment and skills development.

GOVERNANCE

Board & Trustees
Systems & Risk Management

T9 Board & Trustees

C29 What are the demographics of the Board?



55% of our Board are male and 45% are female. At 31st March 2021, the average age of Board Members was 52. The average tenure is 2.25 years. RHA currently has one Board Member who identifies as having a disability. We do not currently have any Board Members from a BAME background.

C30 Is the housing provider a registered charity?

RHA Wales are registered as a charitable Housing Association under the Co-Operative and Communities Benefit Act 2014, registration number 22527R.

C31 What % of the Board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?



Board turnover in the last two years was 31%. This is as a result of four tenant Board Members resigning when RHA moved to a skills-based Board in 2019. Five new Board Members were recruited in 2019. One Board Member retired in 2020.



During the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2021 the Executive team turnover was 20%, equivalent to one leaver, our Director of Development and Regeneration. Executive team turnover as a percentage of the whole workforce was 1.34%, based on an average staff number of 74.5.

C32 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.

C33 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.

C34 Number of Board Members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.

Our Audit & Risk Committee has five members. 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.

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.

C35 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.

C36 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 March 2021.

C37 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 years ending 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021. Prior to this our auditors were Haines Watts. Bevan Buckland were initially appointed as external auditors at the 2019 Annual General Meeting, and subsequently re-appointed at the 2020 Annual General Meeting.

C38 When was the last independently-run Board-effectiveness review?

The last independently-run Board-effectiveness review was in 2019 and led by Central Consultancy. This review led to the decision for RHA Wales to move to a skills-based Board.

C39 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.

C40 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.

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.

T10 Systems & Risk Management

C41 Is the organisation registered with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)?

RHA Wales are registered with the Welsh Government Housing Regulator - Welsh Government Registration L056.

C42 What is the most recent viability and governance RSH grading?

In 2019, RHA received a Standard Judgement for both *Governance and Services* and *Financial Viability*. No judgement took place in 2020/21 as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic and Welsh Government pausing all regulatory judgements.

C43 How does the housing provider 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. It groups mitigations into three Lines of Defence:

- 1st Line – Operational Management
- 2nd Line – Internal Compliance Functions
- 3rd Line – External & Independent Challenge

Our Corporate Risk Register identifies key 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 identifies the relevant 1st, 2nd and 3rd line controls that we have in place to address each area of risk. 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.

C44 What % of homes meet the Welsh Housing Quality Standard?

100%

At 31st March 2021, all of our homes met the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

C45 Have you been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (e.g. data protection breaches, money laundering, HSE breaches or notices)?

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



RHA

📍 RHA, 9 Compton Road, Tonypany, CF40 1BE

✉ enquiries@rhawales.com

☎ 01443 424200

📱📺📷 @RHAWales

🌐 rhawales.com