

*at home with...*



# Corporate Social Responsibility Statement

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## 1 Introduction

Fife Housing Group (FHG) is a Registered Social Landlord that manages and maintains around 2,500 homes in the Fife area. As part of this responsibility there is an expectation that we will go further than simple housing and estate management and that we will demonstrate our corporate and social responsibility.

Many of the towns and villages within which we operate in Fife have suffered since the decline of traditional industries such as mining and port-based activities, leading to increased incidence of unemployment and skill shortages. Given that Fife is a major commuter location for Edinburgh we also see disparity between the weaker areas of Fife and those that are growing and more prosperous. .

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is fundamental to how any socially-aware organisation operates. It is a generally-accepted approach within social landlords and prompts us to behave ethically and take responsibility for our various actions; seeking a positive impact for communities, tenants, customers, colleagues, stakeholders, the environment and, as a result, our business.

## 2 Our Vision

At FHG we continue to have the Vision of ‘Your home... our priority’.

FHG is first and foremost a social landlord. We have the potential to be a great social landlord and to develop new services to meet the future needs of tenants and other customers.

‘Your home... our priority’ describes what we want to do; our values describe how we want to go about it:

- We aim to be ‘accountable’ – take personal responsibility for our actions;
- We aim to be ‘firm but fair’ – be effective but treat everyone fairly;
- We aim to be ‘open and honest’ – be transparent in all that we do; and
- We aim to be ‘versatile’ – be flexible and creative in our approach.

We continue to recognise that our role is much more than just ‘renting out properties’ and that we still need to go that extra mile to ensure that we:

- Have a positive impact within our communities;
- Support tenants to achieve their aims of employment or voluntary activity;
- Can provide appropriate advice and guidance on financial and debt management; and
- Do all that we can to be environmentally aware and in so doing, minimise our carbon footprint.

### 3 Stakeholders

To ensure that we maximise opportunities within the various communities within Fife we are working in partnership, formal and informal, with other stakeholders such as:

- Tenants, customers and factored owners;
- Residents' Associations;
- Other social landlords operating within the same communities;
- Fife Council;
- Frontline Fife;
- Scottish Government;
- Scottish Fire and Rescue;
- Police Scotland;
- NHS Scotland;
- Lottery funders; and
- Other third sector and voluntary organisations

### 4 Corporate Social Responsibility: ISO26000

ISO 26000 was introduced in 2010 and provides guidance rather than requirements, so it cannot be certified unlike some other well-known ISO standards. Instead, it helps clarify what 'social responsibility' is, helps organisations translate principles into effective actions and shares best practice relating to social responsibility, globally. It is aimed at all types of organisations regardless of their activity, size or location and is used by many social landlords to help them measure success.

#### Key Principles

The seven key principles, advocated in ISO26000 as the roots of socially responsible behaviour, are:

- Accountability;
- Transparency;
- Ethical behaviour;
- Respect for stakeholder interests;
- Respect for the rule of law;
- Respect for international norms of behaviour; and
- Respect for human rights.

## Core Subjects

The Seven Core Subjects, which FHG, as a follower of ISO26000 should consider, are:

- **Organisational governance** –do we practice accountability, using our leadership to create a culture that fits with CSR?
- **Human rights** – do we treat individuals with respect, providing support to those who are vulnerable and really need it?
- **Employment practices** –do we have a safe and healthy working environment that nurtures development and is open and honest in discussions and actions?
- **Environment** – are we aware of the impact that our actions have on the environment and do we take all necessary steps to minimise the negative effects and promote those that are positive?
- **Fair operating practices** –do we respect the law and commercial fair practice; practising accountability and fairness with others?
- **Consumer issues** – do we provide safe and healthy properties where tenants can make their home, giving accurate information and using sustainable materials?
- **Community involvement and development** – how do we get involved with the communities that we work alongside, what does it mean for Fife Housing Group to be a good neighbour, do we support local voluntary groups and charities?

This Statement offers a review of the work of Fife Housing Group, measured against the seven Core Subjects together with our ambition for CSR over the next few years and further outlines in the risks section the challenges we face as a smaller provider.

Appendix 1 provides a ‘schematic review’ extracted from ISO 26000 illustrating the scope of CSR.

## 5 Our current position – and what we aim to do

### 5.1 Organisational governance

Current position
We have an agreed set of values which guides our operations
We have an agreed Business Plan which is reviewed annually
Our Value for Money Strategy has been approved and is monitored by our Operational Leadership Team
We have adopted the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Conduct
We adopted the new form of rules for Scottish housing providers
We regularly review our Standing Orders and Financial Rules
We have a risk management process and this is regularly under review to ensure it provides assurance to all stakeholders

<b>Current position</b>	
We provide the board with reports that provides the required information in a consistent and agreed format to allow for appropriate decision making	
We have open recruitment for our Board membership using the appropriate advertising channels	
We annually appraise the Board's individual and group performance which incorporates a training needs assessment leading to a Board development plan that strengthens the capacity of the Board to deliver its remit	
We provide the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) with the Annual Assurance Statement which confirms compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements, this is assessed through the review of an evidence bank created to ensure compliance	
We have a very experienced Business Leadership Team leading the organisation	
We have not had any incidence of employment or other tribunals	
We have developed a suite of performance reports to monitor performance and these are regularly reported through to Board and published for tenants	
We have embedded the 'golden thread' of business plan, operational plan, vision and values all linked through to colleague objectives and this has been tested through our achievement of Investors in People Platinum	
We value our customers and the benefits that are realised from meaningful customer engagement, and have established our Resident's Voices committee to provide appropriate scrutiny and challenge	
We routinely review our business processes to ensure they are efficient, effective and compliant with legislation and regulatory guidelines through our internal and external audit programmes.	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will continue to improve the standard of leadership across the organisation through business coaching and personal development	Ongoing
We will continue to be open in how we govern by, for example, publishing of our non-confidential Board meeting agendas on our website	Ongoing
We will continue to produce a Business Plan every three years that reflects the longer term aspirations of our customers and the Board	Ongoing
We will continue to support our Scrutiny Group, 'Resident VOICES' to deliver its remit to bring about improvements	Ongoing
We will continue to work with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR), to further improve our regulatory assessment	Ongoing
We will continue to be proactive in seeking value for money across all of our activities	Ongoing
We will aim to further improve the satisfaction that tenants and factored owner have with our services and their value for money	Ongoing

<b>Ambition</b>	
We will develop our own customer-focussed tenants' portal, improve our website and continue to increase our visibility on social media	June 2022
We will seek to ensure places are available on our Board for tenants who are interested in getting involved and provide training and development as required. Provide coaching where required for Chair/Vice Chair positions	Ongoing

## 5.2 Human rights

<b>Current position</b>	
We ensure that our policies and procedures comply with good practice and EU/UK/Scottish law. All Board reports have a requirement for a statement on the equality impact of the report	
We have developed our values to include the principle of being 'open and honest'	
We have an approach to equality which seeks to ensure fairness and the affording to all of equality of opportunity	
Working in partnership we provide a tailored approach to support tenants through budgeting and other financial management.	
We provide safe and complaint properties that, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and all other regulatory or legislative requirements	
Our employees reflect the local communities within which we work and our vacancies, where permanent, are openly advertised	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will further enhance and formalise our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for all new policies, procedures and initiatives	October 2022
We will continue to use tenant profiling information to provide us with a range of data that aims to improve how we may deliver our services based on individuals' preferences	Ongoing
We will continue to explore grant-funded opportunities which will ensure that more people are supported in their journey to tenancy attainment and sustainment	Ongoing

### 5.3 Employment practices

<b>Current position</b>	
All employment is carried out in strict accordance with employment law and best practice in human resources and includes our statement to operate within the Equality Act	
All colleagues, when appointed, receive a formal induction process that includes meeting the Chief Executive, other members of our Business Leadership Team, Operational Leadership Team and other colleagues	
We regularly review and update all colleagues' terms and conditions to ensure they are fit for purpose	
Our office is open Monday to Friday each week during the day, excluding public holidays, to ensure we are accessible to our customers	
We achieved accreditation through Investors in People at their 'Platinum level in 2021. This award represents our commitment to employees' training and development, demonstrating a solid foundation of good practice	
We hold an annual Colleague Conference which successfully blends learning and corporate and organisational development with fun	
All colleagues have a regular one-to-one meeting at which issues can be raised, personal development and progress towards organisational goals discussed	
We provide a fair, safe and healthy working environment for all colleagues with relevant health and safety training provided as required. We have a Health and Safety Committee which meets regularly to gain assurance in this area	
We have established a Colleague Consultation Group and this meets regularly to consult on any proposed changes to policy or other colleague-affecting issues	
We provide a competitive remuneration package that includes a health and wellbeing package, employer pension schemes and other benefits for our colleagues	
We support the local employment economy by offering apprenticeships to the organisation	
We have a Human Resources Strategy which sets out the future ambitions of FHG and this is reviewed every two years	
We enhance skills through more focussed learning and development, making use of in-house expertise where available	
We have developed, through our Engagement Team, a Volunteering Policy which formalises how we may become involved with local community events, charities and other groups	
We have developed a wellbeing strategy and have created a wellbeing working group	
We have developed an Apprenticeship Strategy	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will benchmark our rewards package against the market to ensure that we have a fair and competitive pay system.	September 2022



We will continue to promote wellbeing initiatives to help colleagues feel healthy and supported	Ongoing
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will expand our development and succession opportunities by encouraging managers to identify and promote potential within the colleague group	Ongoing
We will continue to enhance our Apprenticeship Strategy providing opportunities for our local communities	Ongoing
We will apply for Investors in People Wellbeing Award	Dec 2022

## 5.4 Environment

<b>Current position</b>
Within our Maintenance team we continue to recycle a high level of waste materials
We continue to generate around funds through the installation of solar panels on our office roof at Pitreavie, saving on energy use and contributing cash to subsidise the business
We continue to recycle paper in our office and estimate that over a year we anticipate that we recycle around three tonnes of paper which prevents this from going to landfill
We introduced improved recycling within our offices – with the removal of waste-paper bins at each desk in favour of larger recycling-segregated bins at convenient points in the offices and kitchens
We have introduced hybrid working for colleagues which has resulted in fewer commuting journeys lowering the carbon emission from vehicles
We constructed ‘Beattie-Passiv’ homes and also properties with solar heating installations which are high on energy-efficiency and aim to reduce costs for tenants
Properties we build meet, as a minimum, the SHQS standards and the gold standard for energy efficiency and sustainability, as well as all other regulatory or legislative requirements.
We ensure that we better co-ordinate visits across the organisation to minimise the distances travelled and so improve value for money
When we procured vehicles for use within our fleet in 2018, energy-efficiency was a high priority to reduce our carbon effect and provide value for money
We provided land on licence to Rosyth Community Council to support the development of their Centenary Community orchard
We use a mobile working technology solution to enable colleagues within the Housing team to work out onsite to a greater degree, thus improving service for tenants

We have a budget for environmental improvements within our estates	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will continue to meet any changes to the legislative requirements for the Scottish Governments Net Zero ambitions	Ongoing
We will assess our carbon-footprint across the organisation and develop a Carbon Strategy through a targeted working group to see where we feel we can become more energy-efficient	August 2022
We will seek to ensure that any new homes built by FHG meet, and where possible exceed, energy-efficiency standards and best practice	Ongoing
We will work with tenants, community groups, Fife Council and third sector to reduce food waste and find alternative uses for surplus and waste food in our communities.	Ongoing

## 5.5 Fair operating practices

<b>Current position</b>
We have developed our own Contract Management Framework which seeks to ensure a high standard of contract relationship, including an adherence to fairness and openness
We have produced a Procurement Policy which ensures that we operate to a high ethical standard when purchasing goods and services for FHG
We strive to always operate within the law across all of our policies and procedures
We aim to abide by the payment periods as set by suppliers – where they are considered to be unreasonable we will raise this and negotiate an improved position.
Where possible we will support the local supply of goods and services and our Procurement Policy enables us to take this into account, thus benefitting the Fife economy and employment prospects
We continue to operate to a high standard of ethics and expect all colleagues, Board members and partners to uphold this. We operate with an 'Anti-Fraud Policy' and 'Anti-Money Laundering Policy' and will report any incidence of fraud or suspected mis-use of finance to Police Scotland. We have a 'Code of Conduct' and an 'IT Acceptable Use Policy' which all colleagues and Board members sign-up to
We procure our main suppliers through Public Contract Scotland and have developed our own in-house Framework through this facility. This ensures opportunities for inclusion for all

We seek added value in the development of services in communities from our relationship with our partners, including Fife Council	
We abide by the Freedom of Information legislation, which is embedded within our value of Open and Honest	
<b>Current position</b>	
We employ an external independent internal audit service which routinely tests our processes and controls to ensure we comply with all legislation and regulatory requirements, and benchmarks us against other similar organisations	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will embed equality in everything we do by collecting relevant information in order to design and deliver services that are equal to all	March 2023

## 5.6 Consumer issues

<b>Current position</b>	
We have developed our 'Letting Standard' with the guidance and views of tenants to ensure that new tenants know what to expect when they get their new home	
We have in place an Engagement Strategy which aims to improve the participation of tenants and other residents in a range of our activities	
We continue to support our scrutiny group, 'Resident VOICES', to review areas of our operations and make recommendations to improve our services	
Where appropriate, we take on-board feedback from tenants and regulatory expectations in producing and publishing our Policies and leaflets	
We consult with tenants and set our annual rent increases following a full review of feedback	
We issue a Tenant Handbook for each new tenancy and this ensures that tenants are fully aware of all of the services relating to their tenancy and their new home	
We operate an in-house maintenance service which continues to achieve high turnaround times in respect of maintenance calls	
We operate a planned kitchen and bathroom programme internally achieving value for money using our own in-house resource	
We are continuing to develop further our website which makes relevant information easily accessible for tenants and prospective tenants	
FHG is GDPR-compliant and we ensure that all customer data is handled and managed in a confidential and appropriate manner	
We have developed a Disaster Recovery Plan which should ensure that we can retain business continuity and protect the interests of tenants and other customers should a disaster arise	

We use mobile-technology to increase the presence of our Housing Officers out on-site	
We publish an internal digest to ensure that colleagues Group-wide are able to learn from complaints	
<b>Current position</b>	
We have appointed Tenant Inspectors for our maintenance and void property functions. These would be volunteer posts that will help us to further improve how we deliver services and standards for tenants	
Through the activities of our ARC Improvement Group, we will continue to further improve performance across our ARC key performance indicators	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We plan to introduce a factored owners' newsletter which will provide useful information and improve communications between us and our factored owners	March 2023
We will launch a tenant portal which will afford significant improvements in accessibility, information provided and functionality for tenants and factored owners	April 2022
To continue to seek improvements in our reactive repairs and planned kitchen and bathroom programmes seeking to improve on cost and quality	Ongoing
Having signed up to the Dementia Framework, we propose to evaluate the services and advice currently offered to tenants and work with local services to expand and tailor our services to the needs of our tenants.	December 2022

## 5.7 Community involvement and development

<b>Current position</b>	
We hold several 'Community Café' events each year, at which residents are given the opportunity to come and meet with a range of organisations and hear, in a café environment, about developments in our services	
Each year we carry out a series of 'Estate Inspections' in our key areas when colleagues across the organisation meet to tour areas, highlight environmental improvements required and record where action needs to be taken - other stakeholders and locally-involved residents are also welcome to attend	
Housing officers are allocated a specific budget for investment they choose in their respective areas	
We will continue to hold an annual 'Gardening Competition' each year where the number and quality of entrants is always very high	
We will continue to issue a minimum of three tenant newsletters each year to inform our tenants about our activities	

We will continue to increase our presence in the community by effective communication in the press and web and increase our visibility on social media	
We have installed terminals within our interview rooms to provide accessibility, for tenants who do not currently have this, to those websites they may require to help them better manage their household, welfare and financial arrangements	
<b>Current position</b>	
Colleagues continue to support a wide range of local charities through various team and personal fund-raising activities and in 2018 we established a number of 'Giving Something Back' teams to deliver charitable and community works	
We support local foodbanks with donations from colleagues	
We provide land via a lease to Fife Council who in turn lease it to Rosyth Community Council and support the development of their Centenary Community orchard	
We provide land to Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Group to enable them to create a community garden area.	
Our tenant newsletter will continue to be used to pass on health-sustainment information, healthy eating recipes and wellbeing tips	
We will continue to consult with colleagues to determine the selection of a 'Charity of the Year' to which various fundraising activities will be directed. The Charity of the Year will also receive promotion within our newsletter for that year	
We have developed, through our Engagement Team, a Volunteering Policy which will formalise how colleagues may become involved with local community groups, charities and other local interest groups	
<b>Ambition</b>	
We will aim, through our Engagement Strategy, to establish new Residents' Associations across our areas of operation, with whom we could then consult on any proposed changes or issues of concern	March 2023
We will develop a tenant portal and continue to develop our website, which will afford significant improvements in accessibility for tenants and other key stakeholders	April 2022
We plan to introduce an annual event for factored owners along similar lines to community cafés, but specifically for owners who receive a service from us	December 2022
We plan to continue to address digital exclusion and engagement to ensure that tenants and other customers are part of what we do	Ongoing

## 6 Risk

Unlike major social landlords who have highly developed CSR strategies, Fife Housing Group does not hold significant budgets or have spare capacity and dedicated engagement teams through which CSR activity may be managed. For this reason we need to ensure that whilst our CSR Strategy does

challenge us to improve it is not so over-ambitious that we cannot deliver. With CSR there will be the passion to deliver that must be appropriately matched to resources to ensure that we do not over-commit.

There is likewise a risk that larger social landlords may gain an advantage in the award of grants and lottery bids to support CSR activity as they are better equipped and resourced to make these applications. It is vital, therefore, that we partner like-minded organisations in community events where we believe that the opportunity to share resources could bring us an advantage.

## **7 Other Relevant Policies and Procedures**

This Statement needs to be read alongside the following documents:

- Engagement Strategy;
- Colleagues' Handbook;
- Tenants' Handbook;
- Value for Money Policy;
- Risk Management Policy;
- Equality and Inclusion Policy;
- Colleague Strategy;
- Wellbeing Strategy; and
- Apprenticeship Strategy.

## **8 Roles and responsibilities**

The Director of Finance, Governance and Assets has overall responsibility and is accountable to the Business Leadership Team and Board, for ethics, probity, propriety, efficiency, procurement and value for money in terms of governance, and the procurement process.

The Business Leadership Team is responsible for ensuring that this Statement is consulted on with colleagues, involved tenants and board members and for its review, implementation and proper application, in accordance with the agreed timetable.

## **9 Performance management**

Any concerns regarding the adherence to this Statement will be reported to the Board.

The Business Leadership Team will, as part of its review of performance management, determine how CSR performance will be collated and reported.

## **10 Review**

This Statement is due to be reviewed every three years - or earlier if a material change requires this.



# Schematic overview of ISO 26000

