

## **Link Group Ltd - Annual Assurance Statement**

The Link Group Board submits this Assurance Statement on behalf of Link Group Ltd (the registered parent company) and its three registered partners of Horizon Housing Association Ltd (Horizon), Larkfield Housing Association Ltd (Larkfield) and West Highland Housing Association Ltd (West Highland).

We confirm that we have considered appropriate systems, evidence and channels of communication to ensure we comply with:

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

We append an update on equalities and human rights.

This Assurance Statement was reviewed and approved by the Link Group Board at its meeting of 21 September 2021.

Name of signatory: Mr. Ross Martin

Signature:

Position: Chair of Link Group Board

Date: 24 September 2021

## **Equalities and Human Rights Update**

Link Group and its three registered partners of Horizon Housing Association Ltd (Horizon), Larkfield Housing Association Ltd (Larkfield) and West Highland Housing Association Ltd (West Highland) have a long-standing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Our actions include:

- Investors in Diversity achieved in 2018 with re-accreditation this year currently in process.
- Equalities training for all staff, including unconscious bias training completed during 2019.
- Removal of given and surnames from job interviewing shortlisting panels.
- Disability Confident Employer membership.
- Launch of a colleague information video and guidance on gender pronouns during Pride Month.
- Rainbow lanyards provided for colleagues.
- Promotion of Stonewall's No Bystanders campaign.
- Establishment of a Well-being Group and intranet resource.
- Accessibility Summit 2021 hosted by Horizon.
- Consideration of equality and human rights issues when making decisions by including equalities and legal implications in Link Group Board reports.
- Embedding equalities and human rights in Link's policy framework.
- Equalities screening for intra group policies and impact assessment when required.
- Progression towards re-assessment (in August 2021) as an Investor in Young People and the refresh of our Employability Strategy.
- Supporting 38 young people placed within Link as part of our commitment to the Kickstart programme.

Regarding equalities data, current collection includes:

- Link Group, Horizon and Larkfield employee data across protected characteristics (including age, disability, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex, gender reassignment, race and sexual orientation).
- Anonymised sample Link Group tenant data (collected during the 2020 customer satisfaction survey) across protected characteristics (including age, disability, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex, race and sexual orientation). Our RSL partners are proposing a similar approach, pending a review of guidance.

During August 2021, we relaunched our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group with proposals to develop a clear work plan and reporting framework. Our actions include Investors in Diversity re-accreditation from August to November 2021 and the launch of a new equality, diversity and human rights strategy by March 2022. The development of this new strategy will include a review of guidance produced by the SHR on the collection of equalities data, the public sector equality duty in Scotland and the Scottish Human Rights Commission's briefing on the right to housing.