



Department for  
**Communities**

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department fur  
**Commonities**

# Regulatory Framework

**Woodvale & Shankill Community Housing  
Association**

**Regulatory Judgement**

**Report 2020/21**



## Introduction

The Department for Communities (DfC) is the Regulatory Authority for Registered Housing Associations (RHAs) in Northern Ireland. The Housing Regulation Branch within DfC undertakes this Regulation activity on behalf of the Department and we seek to protect the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use the services provided by RHAs. To ensure this is achieved, RHAs must provide us with the necessary information on a regular basis to demonstrate how the Regulatory Framework Standards are being achieved.

## RHA Background

Woodvale & Shankill Community Housing Association (WSCHA) provides general family housing, sheltered accommodation for the elderly and disabled and special needs accommodation in response to defined and approved complex needs requirements. It has a total stock of 443 properties with operations focused in the Woodvale area of Belfast.

## Regulatory Context

Woodvale & Shankill Community Housing Association (WSCHA) has not previously been subject to an assessment under the 2017 Regulatory Framework.

## Regulatory Approach

Through our risk-based and proportionate approach to regulating RHAs, we focus our attention on the important risks and key aspects of the RHA's performance. This includes having different levels of engagement depending on the RHA's risk and performance profile.

When we refer to risk, we are referring to risk to the interests of tenants and other service users. This may not always be the same as an RHA's own detailed assessment

of the operational risks it faces. This judgement is completed in accordance with the risk-based approach to Regulation introduced in April 2017.

## Overall Opinion

<b>Regulatory Judgement:</b>  <b>Woodvale &amp; Shankill Community Housing Association</b>	<b>3</b>  Does not meet the requirements, but is working to improve their position
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Based on a review of the evidence submitted by the RHA, Housing Regulation Branch has determined that WSCHA has not met the Governance Standard and has partially met the Finance and Consumer Standards. Further information on how we reached our Regulatory Judgement decision and the different levels of engagement can be found in the following advice note - [Regulatory Judgements and Engagements](#)

## Assessment Findings

### Outcome of Governance Standard – NOT MET

#### Governance Standard 1:

WSCHA has provided some evidence of compliance with aspects of Governance Standard 1. A number of recommendations have, however, been made to ensure the delivery of its aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants and potential tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. These include prioritisation of recruitment and board succession planning, conducting individual board member appraisals and board effectiveness reviews, ensuring regular meetings

of the association's committees, provision of timely responses to the Regulator and undertaking a review of all the association's policies and procedures.

### **Governance Standard 2:**

WSCHA has not provided evidence it has adopted a robust approach to the assessment and management of risk or demonstrated that risk management is adequately embedded in the organisation. A number of recommendations have been made. These include ensuring key risk policies and risk registers are regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring regular meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee take place, that the Committee oversees the work of the internal and external audit functions and that a comprehensive audit plan is delivered.

## **Outcome of Finance Standard – PARTIALLY MET**

### **Finance Standard 1:**

WSCHA has not demonstrated that it manages its resources effectively to ensure financial viability is maintained in the short, medium and longer term.

Recommendations have been made aimed at enhancing compliance with this standard. These relate to disclosures in the financial statements, the naming of bank accounts, the timely submission of financial returns on a consistent basis, and enhancing the effectiveness of risk management.

### **Finance Standard 2:**

WSCHA has provided an assessment of its approach to achieving value for money in meeting the organisation's objectives.

A best practice recommendation has been provided for improving WSCHA's Value for Money Statement

## Outcome of Consumer Standard – PARTIALLY MET

### **Consumer Standard 1:**

WSCHA has provided some evidence that it manages its business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. A number of recommendations have been made. These include, reviewing and updating its tenant participation strategy, recommencing tenant publications, consideration of training for board members, staff and tenants on tenant participation, considering a review of the association's tenant handbook and undertaking a review of the association website.

### **Consumer Standard 2:**

WSCHA has demonstrated that it provides 'Decent Homes' standard accommodation with good service quality choices appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants.

### **Consumer Standard 3:**

WSCHA has illustrated that it contributes to supporting vibrant communities, encouraging tenant opportunities and promoting well-being. One recommendation has been made. This relates to formalising partnerships via joint management agreements in order to enhance services and protect tenants.

### **Anticipated Level of Engagement for 2021/22:**

**Level 3 – Where we require comprehensive or regular engagement to understand the Registered Housing Association's (RHAs) approach to managing these risks.**

Further information on how we reach our Regulatory Judgment decision and the different levels of engagement can be found in the following advice note: [Regulatory Judgements and Engagements](#)

## Engagement Plan 2021/22

### WSCHA role:

- WSCHA will implement the recommendations outlined by HRB.

### Housing Regulation Branch role:

- Meet with WSCHA's Board to discuss its progress; and
- Regularly engage with WSCHA to ensure recommendations are implemented on a timely basis.

## Engagement Plan 2021/22 Review:

WSCHA's action plan will be kept under review and may be amended subject to changes or addition of events. If we are required to use alternative regulatory engagement to seek additional assurance, we may do so.

Our level of regulatory engagement has been decided from the information supplied to us as part of the Regulatory Standards Annual Return. We rely on the information supplied being accurate and complete. We do not accept liability if this is not the case. Liability will also not be accepted by us for actions arising from a third party's use of the information or views contained in the action plan.

Further information on how we reach our Regulatory Judgment decision and the different levels of engagement can be found in the following advice note; [Regulatory Judgements and Engagements](#)