



Department for
Communities

An Roinn
Pobal

Department fur
Commonities

Regulatory Framework

**Grove 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 RHA's. 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

Grove Community Housing Association (GCHA), was first registered with the Industrial and Provident Society in 1976 and with the Department of the Environment the following year. The association was established to address poor housing and environmental conditions in the area and has worked to improve these through renovating old dwellings and building new homes. It has approximately 218 properties in and around the Shore Road area in North Belfast.

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 talking about the 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

Regulatory Judgement:

**Grove Community
Housing Association**

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Meets the requirements but needs to improve in some areas in order to ensure continued compliance.

Based on a review of the evidence submitted, Housing Regulation Branch (HRB) has determined that GCHA has demonstrated that it meets the Regulatory Standards for Governance, Finance and Consumer in respect of the 2020/2021 year. Further information on our Regulatory Standards can be obtained within the following Advice Note: [How we Regulate](#)

Assessment Findings

Outcome of Governance Standard - MET

Governance Standard 1:

Grove Community HA has demonstrated that it has adequate governance arrangements in place that deliver its aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants and potential tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner.

A number of best practice recommendations have, however, been made aimed at enhancing governance arrangements. These include a review of remaining policies and procedures, the requirement for annual appraisal of senior members of staff, and the provision of timely returns to ad-hoc requests from the Regulator.

Governance Standard 2:

GCHA has made good progress in its approach to the assessment and management of risk. It has also developed procedures to ensure it has an effective decision-making process in place, which allows informed and transparent decisions to be made.

Following a period of embedding HRB will review the effectiveness of the newly implemented risk policies and processes during the 2021/22 reporting period

Outcome of Finance Standard - MET

Finance Standard 1:

GCHA has demonstrated that it manages its resources effectively to ensure financial viability is maintained in the short, medium and longer term.

Finance Standard 2:

GCHA has articulated and delivered a comprehensive and strategic approach to achieving value for money in meeting the organisation's objectives.

The Value for Money (VfM) Statement could be enhanced by the inclusion of specific targets and/or KPIs, thereby enabling users to assess GCHA's performance, progress achieved, and benchmark against other organisations. A sector-wide scorecard has been developed which could be incorporated into the VfM Statement in the future and form one part of a broader assessment of performance.

Outcome of Consumer Standard – MET

Consumer Standard 1:

GCHA has managed 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.

One recommendation has been made that GCHA should continue to work on its tenant participation strategy and provide regular updates to the Department on the progress of this.

Consumer Standard 2:

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

Consumer Standard 3:

GCHA has demonstrated how it contributes to supporting vibrant communities, encouraging tenant opportunities and promoting well-being.

Anticipated Level of Engagement for 2021/22:

Level 2 – Targeted engagement to be carried out where there is additional assurance required which is not covered in the standard information.

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

GCHA role

- GCHA will implement the recommendations outlined by HRB.

Housing Regulation Branch role:

- Regularly engage with GCHA to ensure recommendations are implemented on a timely basis.

Engagement Plan 2021/22 Review

GCHA'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](#)