



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

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# Housing Association Inspections

## What we look for Inspection Guide

### Status of this document

#### Consultation Draft

This manual has been prepared for consultation purposes. No responsibility is taken by the Wales Audit Office to any third party.

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## Summary

### Wales Audit Office and Housing Association inspections

1. In order to provide housing associations in Wales with guidance on how inspectors will judge service quality during inspections, we have reviewed the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) and created this series of Inspection Guides that more appropriately reflect the Welsh context. The aim is to provide a framework through which housing associations and their service users can identify and assess service quality.
2. Inspectors will continue to judge the level of compliance by individual housing associations against the Key Expectations of the Regulatory Code, answering two specific questions:
  - How good are services?
  - What are the prospects for improvement?.

### How Good is the Service?

3. This Guide covers service specific areas within housing and deals with aspects of service that inspectors look for before arriving at a judgement on 'How Good is the Service?' The Judgements that can be awarded against specific services were defined by the Welsh Assembly Government following consultation with Housing Associations in Wales and are as follows:
  - Excellent - The Association demonstrates all the positive characteristics of a 'good' association. Over and above that, performance is of a very high standard, strongly influenced by best practice in the sector.
  - Good - The Association demonstrates a strong commitment to and effective delivery of high standard services, given context and resources.
  - Satisfactory - Performance generally meets the standard you would expect of an association working in that context with those resources. Any failures to comply with regulatory guidance are minor.
  - Scope for considerable improvement - Although performance does not breach regulatory code, the Association's performance is unimpressive compared with peer group. Performance may not comply in all respects with regulatory guidance.
  - Fails to comply with the regulatory code - Performance fails to achieve outcomes specified in the regulatory code.
4. The Satisfactory Judgement represents the level of service we would expect to find in a Housing Association providing services in line with the Regulatory Code. To be awarded a good or excellent judgement inspectors must find standards of

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service that exceed what would be expected. This will be balanced with consideration given to context and resources.

## What are the prospects for improvement?

5. The Inspection Guide on Strategic Direction, Performance Management and Continuous Improvement covers the criteria on which we make our inspection judgement 'What are the prospects for improvement?' The range of judgements has been defined by the Welsh Assembly Government following consultation with Housing Associations in Wales and are as follows:
  - Demonstrates strong corporate and strategic capabilities - The Association is working to be a 'learning organisation'. It demonstrates all the positive characteristics of an association which is raising standards in service delivery. In addition, there is a systematic programme of cross-cutting reviews which are not only delivering service improvements but are also informed by the Association's high level strategic goals, with clear monitoring and measurement against these goals.
  - Is raising standards in service delivery - The Association uses formal processes, participation and consultation, training in basic continuous improvement, reward and recognition systems, within a range of service areas. Measurable improvements have happened as a result. However, any cross-functional reviews and resulting improvements have been ad hoc rather than a result of a structured programme of such reviews.
  - Shows weaknesses in processes and performance - While some service improvements are evident, these result from one-off initiatives (such as a new product or process, a training initiative), or an initiative by a particular individual or team, rather than from a structured ongoing programme of reviews. Consultation with service users and their involvement in change is weak. The Association lacks challenging targets for performance improvement and cannot demonstrate a convincing track record.
  - Fails to demonstrate capability - The Association's approach to changes is reactive and unstructured. Improvements (if any) arise from tackling manifest problems, ad hoc suggestions, etc, rather than the systematic approach outlined by Assembly Government guidance on Best Value.

## How we come to Judgements

6. The judgements we reach in the inspection report represent the outcome of an evaluation of the range and quality of these services and are specific to the housing association being inspected. Each Inspection Guide includes broad descriptions of the range of services the Wales Audit Office would expect to see provided by a Housing Association in meeting the Key Expectations of the Regulatory Code. By assessing the specific service areas Inspectors will be able to determine the level of compliance with the Key expectations of the Regulatory Code. In addition, Inspectors will consider the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to enable a determination of the appropriate judgement.

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7. Evidence is drawn from a range of sources and includes:
    - analysis of key documentation provided by the Housing Association;
    - analysis of performance against published national and local performance indicators;
    - interviews and focus groups with Housing Association staff;
    - focus groups and other contact with tenants;
    - surveys of services users;
    - surveys of and discussion with partners; and
    - reality testing of services.
  8. All information we receive from any aspect of our fieldwork is treated as evidence and will be used to draw conclusions on the quality of services provided. We also treat all evidence derived from interviews or focus groups as confidential and do not share the source of our evidence with anyone else.
  9. After concluding our fieldwork we draw conclusions about the outcomes of our inspection work in a draft evidence report. All our conclusions relate to the evidence collated under the inspection and are considered against the relevant Inspection Guide with reference to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations. This enables us to provide a consistent approach in drawing conclusions.
  10. Whilst comparisons can broadly be made between inspection reports of different housing associations, similar descriptions of services appearing in different reports will not always result in the same inspection judgement being reached. This is because each inspection judgement is also governed by issues of context and resources that relate specifically to each association. Consequently, a similar range of services in different types of organisations could have different judgements.
  11. Not all the evidence agreed during an inspection will necessarily appear in the final report. Because some judgements will inevitably be marginal ones, it will also not always be clear from reading two inspection reports side by side why some judgements differ. The Inspection process is also continually changing as are the definitions of what constitutes a satisfactory service. For example, areas that may have been considered as good practice in earlier inspections may have become standard approaches for all housing associations in delivering services.

## **This Guide**

12. The 'What we look for Inspection Guide' represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services.

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13. The Guide is designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and there are eight service specific guides.
14. The Inspection Guides cover the specific Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales as follows:

### **Relationship to Residents**

15. Regulatory Code Section 2.2:
- Associations should encourage resident involvement.
  - Associations should ask for, listen to, and take account of the views of residents.
  - Associations should provide readily accessible, clear and accurate information and advice for residents.
  - Associations should be answerable to residents for the quality of services provided.

### **Equal Opportunities**

16. Regulatory Code Section 2.3:
- Associations should actively promote:
    - respect for diversity;
    - equality of opportunity;
    - the elimination of discrimination in all their activities; and
    - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
  - Associations should treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.

### **Providing Housing**

17. Regulatory Code Section 1.1:
- Associations should work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to identify and provide for the housing-related needs of the area.

### **Rent and Service Charges**

18. Regulatory Code Section 1.2:
- Associations should keep rent arrears to a minimum.

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## Letting Housing

19. Regulatory Code Section 1.3:
- Does the Association ensure that, as far as possible, people in housing need are aware of and have good access to the Association's housing?
  - Associations should work in partnership with relevant local authorities on the allocation of housing.
  - Associations should have a fair selection policy and seek to achieve a balance in housing allocation between:
    - the needs and preferences of applicants and transferees;
    - the need to maximise social inclusion;
    - the need to build stable communities; and
    - the need to make best use of a publicly funded resource.
  - Does the Association let properties quickly and efficiently?
  - Does the Association ensure that homes are let in good condition?

## Managing Housing

20. Regulatory Code Section 1.4:
- Does the Association ensure that residents are offered the most secure form of occupancy?
  - Does the Association help to safeguard the quality of life of residents and neighbours?

## Maintaining Housing

21. Regulatory Code Section 1.5:
- Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively.

## Housing for People with Support Needs

22. Regulatory Code Section 1.6:
- Associations should make housing available for people who have support needs and ensure they have access to appropriate services.
  - Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs.
23. There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management. This Inspection Guides covers the specific Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales as follows:

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## **Strategic Direction, Performance Management and Continuous Improvement**

24. Regulatory Code Section 2.8:
  - Associations should have a clear strategic direction.
25. Regulatory Code Section 2.9:
  - Associations should ensure that they deliver good quality services.
26. Regulatory Code Section 2.10:
  - Associations should seek to deliver continuous improvement in all their activities and services.

## **Conclusion**

27. While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

## Appendix 1

## Relationship to Residents

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Relationship to Residents is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the Relationship to Residents Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Relationship to Residents Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Associations should encourage resident involvement.
- Associations should ask for, listen to, and take account of the views of residents.
- Associations should provide readily accessible, clear and accurate information and advice for residents.
- Associations should be answerable to residents for the quality of services provided.

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Does the Association encourage resident involvement?</p>	<p><u>Framework For Encouraging Resident Involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association can demonstrate a high level commitment to effective resident involvement.</li> <li>• The Association has a local Tenant Participation Strategy in place which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– has been developed with the involvement of tenants;</li> <li>– is based on a sound understanding of the Association's tenants and areas of operation;</li> <li>– is subject to regular review in partnership with tenants; and</li> <li>– is subject to regular evaluation.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association has a Tenant Participation Action Plan which is subject to regular monitoring and evaluation and adequately resourced.</li> </ul> <p><u>Opportunities For Involvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association offers a range of opportunities for residents to get involved in ways which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– encourage residents to drive service improvement and encourage involvement at an early stage in decision making;</li> <li>– meet residents' needs;</li> <li>– take due account of the Association's context and area of operations;</li> <li>– use tailored, creative and/or innovative approaches to encourage involvement by all residents including those with support needs and other traditionally under represented groups such as young people, older people, disabled people, the BME community; and</li> <li>– provides tenants with the support and encouragement they need to promote and sustain involvement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association encourages tenant board membership and provides support to tenant board members.</li> <li>• The Association provides regular and accurate information to all residents on the range of involvement opportunities which are available.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
Does the Association encourage resident involvement?	<p><u>Delivery</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has clear and appropriately resourced arrangements in place for delivery of its resident involvement activity.</li> <li>• The Association is aware of, and bids for, appropriate additional resources to support resident involvement eg, Welsh Assembly Government grants.</li> <li>• The Association has a clear cultural commitment to resident involvement which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– promotes positive staff attitudes to resident involvement that recognise that resident involvement is everyone’s job and not just what is done by a specified, specialist officer;</li> <li>– provides staff with the training and support necessary to deliver resident involvement; and</li> <li>– extends to contractors and others who are in contact with residents on the Association’s behalf.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association equips residents to participate effectively through the provision of support and training.</li> <li>• The Association’s resident involvement activity links appropriate to its community development activities ensuring that opportunities to engage with residents are used effectively and efficiently.</li> </ul> <p><u>Residents Views</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association’s residents have a good awareness and positive views of the Association’s approach to resident involvement and of the range of involvement opportunities which are available to them.</li> <li>• The Association involves residents in the development of its resident involvement activities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association is able to demonstrate clear outcomes from resident involvement activity.</li> <li>• The Association regularly evaluates the successes of different approaches to resident involvement measuring the impact of initiatives and assessing value for money.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Does the Association ask for, listen to, and take account of the views of residents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides a range of opportunities for residents to regularly express their views in ways which meet the needs and circumstances of the Association's tenants.</li> <li>• The Association uses creative and/or innovative methods to encourage residents to express their views and to ensure that a cross section of views is received.</li> <li>• The Association carries out a range of ongoing surveys, eg, repairs satisfaction, new tenants, and periodic surveys in relation to particular current issues.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that it has:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– acted on the views of residents and that change has resulted; and</li> <li>– provided timely and consistent feedback to residents on the action that it has taken.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association effectively coordinates and manages its survey activity ensuring clarity on the aims of survey, quality of surveys and evaluation of the effectiveness of survey processes.</li> <li>• The Association's residents have positive views of the opportunities provided to them to express their views and of the Association's response to their expressed views.</li> <li>• The Association's residents have the opportunity to influence the subject matter and methods of consultation used by the Association.</li> </ul>
<p>Does the Association provide readily accessible, clear and accurate information and advice for residents?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association's customer facing offices are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– accessible;</li> <li>– provide comprehensive, consistent and relevant information;</li> <li>– deal effectively with front line enquiries; and</li> <li>– can deal with most enquiries at first point of contact.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association offers residents a range of ways to contact it for advice and information.</li> <li>• The Association provides an appropriate range of information eg, tenants' handbook, regular newsletters, a website which includes an appropriate level of interactivity eg, rent payment, repairs reporting and information for potential applicants as well as tenants.</li> <li>• The Association's information is available in an appropriate range of different formats.</li> <li>• The Association provides high quality, accessible, jargon free and relevant information on all key service areas of importance to tenants.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
Does the Association provide readily accessible, clear and accurate information and advice for residents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association’s tenants are involved in the production of its information and in deciding on what information is provided to tenants.</li> <li>• The Association’s residents have positive views on the quality, relevance and usefulness of the information provided by the Association.</li> </ul>
Is the Association answerable to residents for the quality of services provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides appropriate, accurate and readily comprehensible information on performance to tenants which includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– information on the Association’s performance over time; and</li> <li>– comparison with the performance of other similar landlords.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association has published comprehensive service standards for all of its key services which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– have been developed in partnership with tenants; and</li> <li>– are regularly monitored and reviewed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association regularly reports to tenants on performance against service standards.</li> <li>• The Association has complaints, compliments and compensation procedures and processes which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– meet Assembly guidelines;</li> <li>– are working effectively eg, meeting target response times;</li> <li>– are known and reported on to residents; and</li> <li>– are analysed by the Association to allow it to learn from complaints.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association’s tenants have a positive view of how answerable the Association is to them.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

## Equal Opportunities

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Equal opportunities is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the Equal opportunities Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Equal opportunities Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Associations should actively promote:
  - respect for diversity;
  - equality of opportunity;
  - the elimination of discrimination in all their activities; and
  - promote good relations between people of different racial groups.
- Associations should treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality.

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Does the Association actively promote respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, the elimination of discrimination in all their activities and promote good relations between people of different racial groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association is aware of its own context and has made an assessment of the scale of equalities issues within its areas of operation and among its tenants including an understanding of its local community demographics such as age, disability, ethnicity, communication needs and any other relevant factors.</li> <li>• The Association works with relevant community and interest groups to ensure that it is aware of how best to meet the needs of tenants and applicants.</li> <li>• The Association promotes its approach to equalities to staff, tenants, contractors and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Association has set equalities targets and records, monitors and analyses information about the ethnicity, vulnerability and disability of its tenants using that information to measure access to and tailor services.</li> <li>• The Association’s equalities monitoring meets the requirements of the CRE Rented Housing Code of Practice and covers access to housing, employment and services.</li> <li>• The Association promotes and demonstrates an equalities culture at all levels.</li> <li>• The Association has in place an Equal Opportunities strategy/policy and a related action plan which is up to date, effective, appropriate and regularly evaluated.</li> <li>• The Association has in place a BME Housing Strategy and related action plan which is up to date, effective, appropriate and regularly evaluated.</li> <li>• The Association’s services and publications are readily available in a range of appropriate formats through, for example, the provision of translation services, use of hearing loops, provision of information in community languages and other formats such as large print.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that its staff are readily aware of and have access to essential information on how to respond to the particular communication or cultural needs of customers.</li> <li>• The Association’s residents are made aware that they can obtain information in their language or format of choice.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that all of its services, including those available from its offices, are readily accessible to everyone.</li> <li>• The Association’s staff and board members have a good awareness of the Association’s Equal Opportunities strategy and related issues.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Does the Association actively promote respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, the elimination of discrimination in all their activities and promote good relations between people of different racial groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides appropriate training to all staff, board members and relevant residents.</li> <li>• The Association has effective partnerships with appropriate external organisations.</li> <li>• The Association has a racial harassment policy in place which conforms to good practice, is appropriate and is operating effectively.</li> <li>• The Association publicises its approach to racial harassment as a deterrent and to encourage reporting.</li> <li>• The Association’s residents and partners have a positive view of the Association’s approach to equalities.</li> </ul>
<p>Does the Association treat the Welsh and English languages on the basis of equality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the Association been notified of the requirement for a Welsh Language Scheme by the Welsh Language Board, the Association has a Welsh Language Scheme in place.</li> <li>• If a Welsh Language Scheme is in place, the related action plan is up to date and can demonstrate that targets are being delivered.</li> <li>• The Association has appropriate and effective arrangements in place to provide access to its services through the medium of Welsh.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 3

## Providing Housing

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Providing Housing is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the providing housing Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Providing Housing Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Associations should work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to identify and provide for the housing-related needs of the area.

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to identify and provide for the housing-related needs of the area.</p>	<p><u>Working in partnership</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association can demonstrate that it is involved with relevant local authorities and other agencies in the development of key strategies and plans such as the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local Housing Strategy;</li> <li>– Supporting People Operational Plan;</li> <li>– BME Housing Strategy;</li> <li>– Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy;</li> <li>– local homelessness strategies and reviews;</li> <li>– Other Strategies appropriate to the context in which the Association operates eg, Community Plans, Health Social Care and Well Being Strategies, etc; and</li> <li>– Evidenced by minutes, correspondence, review of documents and meeting/interview with appropriate Local Authority and other agencies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association is clear what its role is in delivering against the priorities of relevant strategies and can demonstrate how its work contributes directly to this achievement.</li> <li>• The Association has effective involvement in strategy forums:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Local Housing Strategy Partnerships;</li> <li>– Supporting People strategic planning mechanisms;</li> <li>– Homelessness Forums; and</li> <li>– evidenced by minutes, correspondence, action plan progress, review of documents and meeting/interview with appropriate Local Authority and other agencies.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association Business Plan/Strategic Objectives are clearly linked to delivering priorities of local authority strategic plans.</li> <li>• The Association seeks local authority and other agency evaluation of its role and contribution to the delivery of the above forums and key strategies and plans.</li> <li>• The Association can provide evidence that it evaluates its contribution to the above forums and key strategies and plans by focussing on outcomes.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Associations should work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies to identify and provide for the housing-related needs of the area.</p>	<p><u>Community housing agreements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association maintains a full suite of current Community Housing Agreements with Local Authorities.</li> <li>• The Association holds regular meetings with local authorities and other agencies.</li> <li>• The Association centrally coordinates the monitoring of action plans from these meetings to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– ensure the agreements are adhered to;</li> <li>– ensure that they are meaningful; and</li> <li>– the Association can demonstrate that all partnership activity is linked to and contributes to Local Authorities’ overarching strategies such as the Local Housing Strategy and Community Strategy.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>Community development and regeneration activity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a clear framework for appraising different types of regeneration and renewal projects, including an evaluation against relevant strategic objectives.</li> <li>• The Association communicates effectively with all parts of affected communities, regularly and consistently. Information about projects and their potential impact is given out frequently, in an appropriate, inclusive, imaginative way that is sustained throughout the life of projects.</li> <li>• The Association establishes the strategic need for changes to services and areas with residents, users and stakeholders and can demonstrate that significant sections of the community participate with a broad view of improvement.</li> <li>• The Association has a structured approach to community development:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– can identify the benefits of how partnership arrangements work for the Association, its tenants and the Community;</li> <li>– retains information about all its projects and understands their potential impact on communities;</li> <li>– participates in community development and/or neighbourhood renewal and regeneration initiatives eg, Neighbourhood Renewal Areas , Communities First, Healthy Living Centres etc; and</li> <li>– activity is monitored, reviewed and evaluated.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Appendix 4

## Rents and Service Charges

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Rents and Service Charges is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the Inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the rents and service charges Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Rents and Service Charges Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Associations should keep rent arrears to a minimum.

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Does the Association have effective debt prevention arrangements?</p>	<p><u>Access to Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a range of options available for people to access debt advice services including by telephone, in person, in writing and electronically.</li> <li>• The Association widely publicises its debt prevention service on a regular basis and via a range of mediums.</li> <li>• The Association provides appropriate and tailored information about its debt advice service including information in a comprehensive range of languages and appropriate formats eg, large print, Braille, etc.</li> <li>• The Association promotes benefit take-up campaigns, including housing benefit, to help prevent increases in rent arrears and other debt.</li> <li>• The Association has service standards in place for its debt advice service which have been set in agreement with service users and stakeholders, are tailored to meet local need, are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation with corrective action taken where required.</li> <li>• The Association provides its tenants with feedback on its performance against those service standards.</li> </ul> <p><u>Debt Advice Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association carries out benefit and financial assessment with potential new tenants to identify if a property is affordable.</li> <li>• The Association identifies, where appropriate, opportunities to downsize to smaller properties.</li> <li>• The Association minimises and prevents arrears by ensuring that all new tenants receive an advice on debt prevention at the start of their tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association provides debt advice and welfare benefits information when signing up new tenants.</li> <li>• The Association has a range of debt prevention arrangements in place including money management advice, assistance with housing benefit, affordability assessments, benefit assessments at sign up, income maximisation, etc.</li> <li>• The Association makes available a wide range of methods for paying rent.</li> <li>• The Association helps service users in arrears to stay in their homes by providing advice and assistance on debt management and pursuing debt collection strategies that sensitively balance the pursuit of debt against the needs of vulnerable tenants.</li> <li>• The Association pro-actively signposts service users to other agencies that can maximise their income, whether they are in arrears or not.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
Does the Association have effective debt prevention arrangements?	<p><u>Debt Advice Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has effective partnerships with Housing Benefit and other agencies (for example the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and debt advice agencies) that can maximise service users' income. All parties work closely together to agreed protocols.</li> <li>• The Association prevents debt increasing by taking early action as soon as accounts fall into arrears and ensures that customer-friendly letters and home visits to vulnerable residents are available and carried out when appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association monitors and evaluates its debt prevention services, whether internally or externally provided, and takes remedial action to address areas of under performance when identified.</li> <li>• The Association undertakes satisfaction surveys to monitor and improve performance with its debt prevention service.</li> <li>• Where the Association uses an external agency to undertake debt advice these services are underpinned by service level agreements which are regularly monitored and evaluated.</li> <li>• The Association is able to demonstrate the benefits of its debt prevention work – eg, reduced evictions, increased income, increased access to welfare benefits for tenants, etc.</li> </ul>
Does the Association have effective control and recovery arrangements?	<p><u>Access to Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a range of options available for people to access rent arrears and service charge management/recovery including by telephone, in person, in writing and electronically.</li> <li>• The Association widely publicises its rent arrears and service charge management/recovery service on a regular basis and via a range of mediums.</li> <li>• The Association provides appropriate and tailored information about its rent arrears and service charge management/recovery including information in a comprehensive range of languages and appropriate formats eg, large print, Braille, etc.</li> <li>• The Association has service standards in place for its rent arrears and service charge management/recovery services which have been set in agreement with service users and stakeholders, are tailored to meet local need, are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation with corrective action taken where required.</li> <li>• The Association provides its tenants with feedback on its performance against those service standards.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Does the Association have effective control and recovery arrangements?</p>	<p><u>Access to Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides clear and timely information to tenants eg, regular rent statements, appropriate information on the arrears recovery process.</li> <li>• The Association delivers accurate and timely information about rent and service charge accounts to service users, for example quarterly rent and service charge statements.</li> <li>• The Association provides comprehensive information to all service users that clearly describe the organisation's rent and service charge setting policy, and how rents and service charges are calculated and collected.</li> </ul> <p><u>Rent Arrears Recovery Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a policy on current tenant arrears that includes the methods used to collect such arrears and the factors to be taken into account when recovering debts.</li> <li>• The Association has a range of effective control and recovery arrangements in place including a range of options for recovery action, the use of eviction as a last resort, a focus on early personal contact, the provision of effective debt prevention advice and the appropriate use of incentives such as discounts for advance payments or reward schemes.</li> <li>• The Association has effective accounting systems with the production of timely and accurate information that differentiates the different types of debt a tenant may owe.</li> <li>• The Association uses a range of alternative remedies to recover tenant and leaseholder debt such as attachment of earnings, garnishee orders and the small claims court where appropriate and where it benefits tenants with costs.</li> <li>• The Association minimises and prevents arrears by ensuring that new rent accounts are always set up, and means of payment supplied to new tenants, before tenancies commence.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that accounting systems are well integrated with housing management and benefit systems and as a result can clearly identify arrears due to housing benefit claims or payment in credit or arrears.</li> <li>• The Association separately records and accounts for rent arrears, court costs, rechargeable repairs and other debts on an individual tenants account.</li> <li>• The Association seeks possession on rent arrears only as a last resort, once all other reasonable steps have been taken and after tenants have received comprehensive debt advice.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Does the Association have effective control and recovery arrangements?</p>	<p><u>Rent Arrears Recovery Procedures</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a policy on former tenant arrears that includes the methods used to collect such arrears and the factors to be taken into account when writing off these debts.</li> <li>• The Association takes into account the particular circumstances of residents in the recovery of rent arrears and tailors services to meet the specific needs.</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has good and improving performance in line with its published targets and close to the top quartile in comparison to similar organisations. This would include current arrears, the percentage of rent collected, former tenant arrears and write offs.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate improvement in performance over time for management of current rent arrears, percentage of rent collected, former tenant arrears and write offs.</li> <li>• The Association validates its performance data and ensures it is consistent with agreed definitions and can track how information is drawn to establish performance.</li> <li>• The Association has effective management of performance with service specific and individual staff targets in place, regular monitoring and evaluation of performance taking place and an understanding of what actions are required to improve performance.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence its policy is complied with and delivers intended outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><u>Partnership Working</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has established effective links with Local Authority housing benefit departments and these are underwritten by service level agreements or other arrangements.</li> <li>• The Association has effective links with other agencies involved in recovery processes such as the Courts, external advice services, voluntary sector and tenancy support organisations, etc.</li> <li>• The Association makes appropriate and timely referrals to statutory agencies such as Homelessness and Social Services Departments and support organisations when evictions are undertaken.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5

## Letting Housing

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Letting Housing is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the Inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the letting housing Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate KLOE to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guide there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Letting Housing Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Does the Association ensure that, as far as possible, people in housing need are aware of and have good access to the Association's housing?
- Associations should work in partnership with relevant local authorities on the allocation of housing.
- Associations should have a fair selection policy and seek to achieve a balance in housing allocation between:
  - the needs and preferences of applicants and transferees;
  - the need to maximise social inclusion;
  - the need to build stable communities; and
  - the need to make best use of a publicly funded resource.

- Does the Association let properties quickly and efficiently?
- Does the Association ensure that homes are let in good condition?

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Does the Association ensure that, as far as possible, people in housing need are aware of and have good access to the Association's housing?</p>	<p><u>Access to Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a range of options available for people to access the service including by telephone, in person, in writing and electronically.</li> <li>• The Association provides information about its services in a comprehensive range of languages and appropriate formats eg, large print, Braille, etc.</li> <li>• The Association makes freely available information on its Allocation scheme, how priorities within the scheme are determined, the eligibility criteria for admission to the Housing Register and how it determines who to let a house to.</li> <li>• The Association has a formal written appeals/review process which is widely publicised, has defined timeframes from start to finish and treats each appeal individually on its merits.</li> <li>• The Association makes freely available information about its stock and this is regularly updated to ensure its accuracy and widely publicised and made available in all appropriate formats and languages.</li> <li>• The Association has consulted with tenants/residents on the format or contents and ease of use of published information and regularly uses feedback to revise its policies, procedures and systems for letting housing.</li> </ul> <p><u>Meeting the Needs of People in Housing Need</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association Eligibility criteria are not restrictive and ensure those in housing need access accommodation.</li> <li>• The Association operates an Open Housing Register with limited restrictions in place.</li> <li>• The Association provides users with options and choice in where they move to.</li> <li>• The Association has arrangements in place for taking referrals from appropriate organisations to access its accommodation.</li> <li>• The Association fully reviews its Housing Register at appropriate intervals.</li> <li>• The Association regularly notifies and keeps applicants up to date with their position on the register and provides them with an indication of the likelihood and timeframe within which they are likely to be rehoused.</li> <li>• The Association provides effective assistance to those who want to exchange; transfer; move from, or to, supported housing; or buy into low cost home ownership.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Does the Association ensure that, as far as possible, people in housing need are aware of and have good access to the Association’s housing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association effectively participates in national and local mobility and exchange schemes.</li> <li>• The Association carries out risk assessments on lettings where appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has service standards in place which have been set in agreement with service users and stakeholders, are tailored to meet local need, are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation with corrective action taken when required.</li> <li>• The Association regularly monitors and evaluates all lettings and can evidence that people in housing need are treated fairly.</li> <li>• The Association canvasses the views of service users and the information collated, evaluated and used to review and improve services – eg, refusal surveys, new tenant surveys, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Associations should work in partnership with relevant local authorities on the allocation of housing.</p>	<p><u>Nominations to Local Authorities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has formal nomination agreements in place with Local Authority partners which are subject to regular review and are updated to take account of changes in legislation and good practice.</li> <li>• The Association and its partners have set targets for nomination performance and these are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure targets are achieved.</li> <li>• The Association does not apply its own criteria to refuse nominations unless this has been agreed with Local Authorities.</li> <li>• The Association has an agreed process with Local Authorities to inform nominees of their nomination for accommodation and whether their nomination has been successful or not.</li> </ul> <p><u>Joint Working to meet the needs of vulnerable and high risk clients</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association is working effectively with Local Authorities on fulfilling their homelessness duty by maximising opportunities to secure permanent and temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• The Association signposts and provides advice on housing options to homeless and potentially homeless people.</li> <li>• The Association does not unduly restrict access to housing for vulnerable people or those who are considered high risk. This would include having no blanket refusal policy.</li> <li>• The Association has developed common approaches to allocations with Local Authorities including common registers of housing need, common allocations schemes and common suspensions policies.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should work in partnership with relevant local authorities on the allocation of housing.</p>	<p><u>Joint Working to meet the needs of vulnerable and high risk clients</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has an effective risk management approach to clients who might be considered high risk (including schedule 1 offenders).</li> <li>• The Association is actively involved in Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPP) Meetings and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committees (MARAC).</li> </ul>
<p>Associations should have a fair selection policy and seek to achieve a balance in housing allocation between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the needs and preferences of applicants and transferees;</li> <li>• the need to maximise social inclusion;</li> <li>• the need to build stable communities; and</li> <li>• the need to make best use of a publicly funded resource.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Access to Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association works in partnership with local authorities and others and uses mobility schemes to provide additional housing opportunities for those wishing to transfer.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that appropriate support is available for vulnerable service users at the start of their tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association does not have a blanket policy refusing applications for housing from individuals who require support where support is not available.</li> <li>• The Association carries out risk assessments on lettings where appropriate.</li> <li>• The Association only operates local lettings policies that are consistent with Welsh Assembly Government guidance. These are evidence based, consulted upon, have clear objectives, are timebound, subject to ongoing monitoring and review, evaluated to ensure they are not restricting access to housing and can evidence that a balance between competing needs is being achieved.</li> </ul> <p><u>Allocations Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has clear and comprehensive allocations policy which was derived in consultation with service users, Local Authorities and other key stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Association does not have blanket allocation policies that favour one group over another – eg, transfer over applicants.</li> <li>• The Allocations Policy is widely publicised and this is regularly updated to ensure its accuracy and made available in all appropriate formats and languages.</li> <li>• The Association has a clear registration policy which is widely publicised and accessible by all potential applicants.</li> <li>• The Association has clear and appropriate information on an applicant’s rights and entitlements for housing under its Allocation Policy including its approach and management of suspensions, right to review and appeals process.</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should have a fair selection policy and seek to achieve a balance in housing allocation between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the needs and preferences of applicants and transferees;</li> <li>• the need to maximise social inclusion;</li> <li>• the need to build stable communities; and</li> <li>• the need to make best use of a publicly funded resource.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association acts on clear procedures to ensure applications are processed efficiently and effectively.</li> <li>• The Association has a clear policy for those tenants wishing to transfer to alternative social housing.</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association records, collects and takes accounts of individual's needs and support requirements in allocating a home.</li> <li>• The Association monitors all lettings and ensures all lettings are made in line with its published Allocations Policy.</li> <li>• The Association regularly monitors all aspects of its allocations and lettings service to demonstrate that those housed are fairly selected and restrictions are limited. Where performance is failing, appropriate remedial action is taken to address these weaknesses.</li> <li>• The Association regularly publishes performance information on allocations decisions and lettings for those seeking housing.</li> </ul>
<p>Does the Association let properties quickly and efficiently?</p>	<p><u>Performance Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association re-lets void properties promptly, in line with its published targets and has close to top quartile performance in comparison to similar organisations.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate improvement in performance over time for management of empty housing.</li> <li>• The Association has challenging re-let targets for the future that have been developed in consultation with service users and support continued improvement in performance.</li> <li>• The Association validates its performance data and ensures it is consistent with agreed definitions and can track how information is drawn to establish performance.</li> <li>• The Association records reasons for refusals and uses the information to improve the range, quality and performance of its services.</li> <li>• The Association has a customer focussed lettings procedure which includes accompanied viewings, follow-up visits to new tenants, support made available for vulnerable service users at the start of their tenancy, information about the property and neighbourhood is provided in advance of viewing and undertakes satisfaction surveys to monitor and improve performance.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Does the Association let properties quickly and efficiently?</p>	<p><u>Unauthorised Occupation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has effective arrangements to report vacancies and unauthorised occupation, and checks them quickly.</li> <li>• The Association carries out periodic tenancy checks to ensure that the legal tenant is in occupation.</li> <li>• The Association reacts promptly, effectively and legally to remove unauthorised occupiers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Difficult to let homes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association understands why it has difficult to let homes and has a systematic approach using a variety of appropriate methods to deal with difficult to let properties.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate an understanding of its stock and reasons for problems letting certain properties.</li> <li>• The Association has effective policies and strategies in place to address difficult to let problems – eg, low demand, marketing, etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Does the Association ensure that homes are let in good condition?</p>	<p><u>Relet Standard</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has challenging a re-let standard that was developed in conjunction with service users.</li> <li>• The Association makes the relet standard available to tenants and prospective tenants before they view the property.</li> <li>• The Associations relet standard can be evidenced as having been applied to a sample of properties viewed.</li> <li>• The Association has high levels of tenant satisfaction with the standard of re-lets.</li> <li>• The Association carries out repairs and safety checks to empty properties quickly and efficiently and to the re-let standard.</li> <li>• The Association ensures all safety checks are undertaken when re-letting its homes and provides tenants with copies of all safety certificates automatically.</li> <li>• The Association has established budgets for the management and turnaround of empty homes. These are subject to regular monitoring and evaluation and issues of under performance or overspend addressed.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 6

## Managing Housing

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Managing Housing is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the Inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the Managing Housing Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides, there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Managing Housing Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Does the Association ensure that residents are offered the most secure form of occupancy?
- Does the Association help to safeguard the quality of life of residents and neighbours?

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
Does the Association ensure that residents are offered the most secure form of occupancy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association uses the following tenancy types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– licenses;</li> <li>– assured tenancies;</li> <li>– assured shorthold tenancies for new lets as introductory tenancies; and</li> <li>– assured shorthold tenancies in designated schemes – eg, supported housing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association has clear procedures indicating which tenancy should be correctly used in which circumstances.</li> <li>• The Association has appropriate tenancy variations in place for shared/supported housing and general needs accommodation.</li> <li>• The Association issues tenants with the Assembly's Guarantee for Housing Association Residents.</li> <li>• The Association clearly explains tenancy conditions and how breaches will be dealt with at the start of every new tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association updates the tenancy agreement, conditions of tenancy and Tenants' Handbook to take account of changes in the law, regulatory requirements and its own policy.</li> <li>• If the Association is using introductory tenancies, there are clear procedures in place to manage transition to an Assured Tenancy including review and evaluation processes.</li> <li>• The Association has evaluated the impact of use of introductory tenancies.</li> <li>• The Association's tenancy agreement contains clear and comprehensive conditions relating to nuisance and anti social behaviour and the sanctions available where breached.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that those conditions have been enforced.</li> <li>• The Association has effective arrangements for people to report breaches of tenancy conditions and keep them informed on progress of their case and these are explained both at start of the tenancy and during the course of the tenancy.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
Does the Association help to safeguard the quality of life of residents and neighbours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a comprehensive, clear and accessible statement of its policies and procedures on ASB and these are reviewed regularly.</li> <li>• The Association has service standards in relation to estate management and anti social behaviour which have been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– set in agreement with service users and stakeholders; and</li> <li>– are regularly monitored and reviewed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association involves service users in the development of the service.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that its targets have been met or exceeded.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that tenants are aware of tenancy conditions and how breaches will be dealt with at the beginning of, and throughout, the tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that tenants are kept regularly informed of progress on their case from reporting to resolution and beyond.</li> <li>• The Association takes a proactive and creative approach to combating anti social behaviour and uses the full range of remedies to address ASB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Mediation;</li> <li>– Injunctions;</li> <li>– Exclusion orders;</li> <li>– Anti Social Behaviour Contracts;</li> <li>– Anti Social Behaviour Orders;</li> <li>– Possession proceedings;</li> <li>– Demoted tenancies;</li> <li>– Introductory/ starter tenancies;</li> <li>– Security measures;</li> <li>– Local lettings policies; and</li> <li>– Community development activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association can evidence use of this range of remedies and publicises successes.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
Does the Association help to safeguard the quality of life of residents and neighbours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association works in partnership with appropriate external agencies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Social Services;</li> <li>– Environmental Health;</li> <li>– Police;</li> <li>– The Courts; and</li> <li>– Other landlords.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association has effective protocols for sharing information.</li> <li>• The Association is an active member of Crime and Disorder or Community Safety Partnership.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that crime prevention is a key issue in designing estate improvements and new homes.</li> <li>• The Association uses a range of methods to gather evidence eg, professional witnesses, CCTV, video cameras, noise monitoring equipment etc.</li> <li>• The Association works proactively to promote, support and sustain tenancies through mechanisms like the use of floating support rather than terminating or demoting them.</li> <li>• The Association supports victims either directly or in conjunction with specialists.</li> <li>• The Association's tenants have a high level of satisfaction with its approach to tackling ASB.</li> <li>• The Association records and monitors reports of ASB and uses that information to improve services.</li> <li>• The Association has estates which are clean, tidy and attractive and deals swiftly with abandoned vehicles, graffiti and vandalism.</li> <li>• The Association works with residents to carry out systematic estate inspections to tackle illegal parking, graffiti and vandalism, abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, etc and ensures that swift and effective action is taken.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 7

## Maintaining Housing

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Maintaining Housing is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the maintaining housing Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Maintaining Housing Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively.

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively</p>	<p><u>Responsive Repairs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association categorises and completes all responsive repairs in accordance with Assembly guidance.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate good or improving performance from accurate performance data. Current and trend data is available.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate good or improving performance by maintaining a reasonable balance of emergency, urgent and routine repair numbers.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of its performance data and uses it in an informed way.</li> <li>• The Association has appropriate target repair response times and responsibilities in place.</li> <li>• The Association has an effective framework in place to monitor and report performance and can evidence that it acts on this information when necessary.</li> <li>• The service is securing value for money through effective use of procurement, benchmarking and probity.</li> <li>• The service can demonstrate that it is managing contractor performance and behaviour pre and post inspection.</li> <li>• The Association involves tenants in contractor selection and performance feedback.</li> <li>• The Association has surveyed resident/tenant satisfaction and can demonstrate use of feedback to improve services.</li> <li>• The Association uses a range of methods to secure meaningful tenant feedback.</li> <li>• The Association has responsive repairs service standards which:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– set in agreement with service users and stakeholders;</li> <li>– tailored to meet local need;</li> <li>– monitored and reviewed - evidence that targets have been met or exceeded; and</li> <li>– evidence that people in housing need are treated fairly.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively</p>	<p><u>Responsive Repairs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has facilities in place to make it easy to report a repair.</li> <li>• Appropriate information is given to residents when reporting a repair, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a reference number;</li> <li>– what will happen next;</li> <li>– who will do the repair;</li> <li>– what is rechargeable; and</li> <li>– what to do if the contractor does not turn up or the repair is not completed to their satisfaction.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association has an effective and comprehensive appointment system in place.</li> <li>• The Association has an accessible and effective out of hours repairs arrangement.</li> <li>• The Association produces reports on repairs which are accurate and timely.</li> <li>• The Association has in place effective arrangements for responding to the needs of vulnerable residents.</li> <li>• The Association has effective arrangements in place to manage access difficulties.</li> <li>• The Association has adopted a 'right first time' approach and uses available data on repeat calls to identify any problem areas.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate effective budgetary control.</li> <li>• The Associations residents have been involved in the development of the service and there is evidence that the service has been tailored to suit resident needs.</li> <li>• The Association provides a good range of good quality information in appropriate formats about the service to residents.</li> <li>• The Association has an effective relationship between planned and responsive repairs.</li> <li>• The Association has in place proactive systems of inspection to identify repairs other than those reported by residents.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively</p>	<p><u>Statutory Servicing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has good and improving performance for statutory servicing including gas servicing outstanding.</li> <li>• The Association has reliable systems in place which holds accurate data on its property portfolio which has gas appliances.</li> <li>• The Association undertakes regular safety checks in accordance with statutory obligations.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of its performance.</li> <li>• The Association has an effective management framework in place which involves monitoring reporting and responding to appropriate management information.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate that it is managing contractor performance and behaviour and probity.</li> <li>• The Association has in place effective arrangements to secure access such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a suitable range of methods which are sufficiently robust; and</li> <li>– uses forced access as last resort.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association provides relevant and timely information to residents in appropriate formats.</li> <li>• The Association has in place service standards which:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– were set in agreement with service users and stakeholders;</li> <li>– are tailored to meet local need;</li> <li>– are monitored and reviewed including evidence that targets have been met or exceeded; and</li> <li>– can evidence that people in housing need are treated fairly.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association has a high level of resident satisfaction.</li> <li>• The Association has in place effective Asbestos Management arrangements which include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– surveys;</li> <li>– up to date records; and</li> <li>– provision of relevant and timely information to staff, residents and contractors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Association provides a full range of staff training.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively</p>	<p><u>Cyclical Maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has in place appropriate programmes of work.</li> <li>• The Association is securing Value for money through effective contract management arrangements and probity.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate it is effectively managing the service. There is evidence of monitoring, reporting, and responses to appropriate management information.</li> <li>• The Association has a full range of information on cyclical maintenance available for residents.</li> <li>• The Association has surveyed resident satisfaction of the service and the response shows a high level of satisfaction.</li> <li>• The Association has service standards for cyclical maintenance in place which include monitoring and review.</li> <li>• The Association provides an appropriate level of choice for residents.</li> </ul> <p><u>Planned Maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has in place appropriate programmes of work based on up to date stock condition survey information and which address issues such as security, ASB and hard to let areas and properties.</li> <li>• The Association is working to a comprehensive programme of planned maintenance and is on target to comply with the Welsh Housing Quality Standard and associated guidance.</li> <li>• The Association has affordable warmth strategies in place and knowledge of energy efficiency of stock.</li> <li>• The Association can demonstrate that it is securing value for money including for example:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– effective contract management arrangements;</li> <li>– economies of scale from partnering contracts with other agencies; and</li> <li>– improving the proportion of spend on planned and responsive maintenance.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should maintain homes in good condition by ensuring that planned and cyclical maintenance and responsive repairs are carried out effectively</p>	<p><u>Planned Maintenance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association can demonstrate effective management of the service – monitoring, reporting, and responding to appropriate management information.</li> <li>• The Association has a full range of information on planned maintenance available for residents and in appropriate formats.</li> <li>• The Association provides an appropriate level of choice for residents.</li> <li>• The Association has surveyed resident satisfaction of the service and the response shows a high level of satisfaction.</li> <li>• The Association has service standards for planned maintenance in place which include monitoring and review.</li> <li>• The Association has in place appropriate arrangements for aids and adaptations including effective partnership working with relevant agencies eg, Social Services and Health and arrangements to secure recycling where necessary.</li> <li>• The Association had an Affordable Warmth Strategy and was working to improve its lowest rated properties.</li> </ul> <p><u>Welsh Housing Quality Standard</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association had carried out a full stock condition survey which has included an assessment of Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) requirements.</li> <li>• The Association has appropriate systems in place to monitor and evaluate investment activity that allows it to measure compliance with the WHQS.</li> <li>• The Association has surveyed all of its tenants and identified the qualitative measures that need to be undertaken to achieve the WHQS in individual homes.</li> <li>• The Association has achieved all key milestones set by the Assembly Government in delivering the WHQS.</li> <li>• The Association had developed a WHQS Achievement Plan and programme which includes an identification of the level of resources required and available to the Association to meet the standard.</li> <li>• The Association has notified tenants in advance of its programme to achieve the WHQS including the type of work that will take place to their home, when it is anticipated the work will take place and the options and choices available to tenants on individual components eg, colour choices, units, doors, etc.</li> <li>• The Association has completed a consultation exercise with tenants on their priorities.</li> <li>• The Association has surveyed tenants to establish their level of satisfaction with works carried out (or something like that).</li> </ul>

## Appendix 8

## Housing for People with Support Needs

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on Housing for people with support needs is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific Inspection Guides are used as a basis for assessing 'How Good is the Service?' and the housing for people with support needs Inspection Guide is one of this set.

There is a separate Inspection Guide to assess 'What are the prospects for improvement?' This Inspection Guide covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The Housing for people with support needs Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:

- Associations should make housing available for people who have support needs and ensure they have access to appropriate services.
- Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs.

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should make housing available for people who have support needs and ensure they have access to appropriate services.</p>	<p><u>Access to Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a range of options available for people to contact the service including by telephone, in person, in writing, electronically and via a third party such as a voluntary sector group.</li> <li>• The Association has a range of options available for people to access supported housing including self-referrals from applicants with support needs and referrals/nominations from statutory authorities, support providers, etc.</li> <li>• The Association provides information about its services in a comprehensive range of languages and appropriate formats eg, pictures, word cards, audio tapes as well as large print, translations and Braille.</li> <li>• The Association makes freely available and publicises information on its supported housing services including how to access schemes, eligibility and payments criteria.</li> <li>• The Association has consulted with tenants/residents with support needs on the format or contents and ease of use of published information and regularly uses feedback to revise its policies, procedures and systems for letting housing.</li> </ul> <p><u>Service Provision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides each scheme or service with information which clearly defines the distinction between support and housing management. All parties are clear about the management agreements, roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that appropriate support – in house or by referral – is available for vulnerable service users at the start of their tenancy and liaises with the administering authority where SPRG/SPG is needed in order to ensure that the service user is able to sustain their tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association has ensures that service users are provided with the level of support which they need and which will enable them to sustain their tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association has clear and comprehensive system in place to determine priorities for allocation to supported housing and floating support vacancies which have been derived in consultation with service users, Local Authorities and stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Association provides assistance to applicants with support needs to find alternative accommodation if unable to secure housing including referral to appropriate agencies – LA, CAB, Shelter Cymru, Mind, etc.</li> <li>• The Association has established appropriate move-on arrangements with local agencies, has set targets and monitors and evaluates performance to ensure clients.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should make housing available for people who have support needs and ensure they have access to appropriate services.</p>	<p><u>Service Provision</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association complies with statutory and contractual requirements for robust and appropriate support plans under Supporting People and ensures that housing staff provide the appropriate services in the plans.</li> <li>• The Association has furnished all of its supported housing properties appropriately with service users involved in both the overall approach and specific choices.</li> <li>• The Associations and its partners are clear what services are eligible for support funding.</li> </ul> <p><u>Partnership Working and Working with Management Agents</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has Management Agreements in place for all supported housing services.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that it, or its managing agents, provide information and standards of service on which service users have been consulted, and which are appropriate to their housing and support needs and consistent with that provided to other service users.</li> <li>• The Association sets targets for the service provided by managing agents and monitors and evaluates performance through regular review meetings.</li> <li>• The Association shares performance information with the support providers and/or managing agents, addressing issues of under performance jointly where necessary.</li> <li>• The Association has clear procedures on how the relationship with the support provider or managing agent can be ended, how a new partner would be chosen and who will be responsible for the service users if any contract ends.</li> </ul>
<p>Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs</p>	<p><u>Access to and Tailoring of Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has staff who understand, and carry out appropriately, their role in dealing with supported housing residents and support staff. They treat people with respect at all times.</li> <li>• The Association has appropriate systems in place to enable tenants to self-refer and access floating support.</li> <li>• The Association has front-line staff who demonstrate a wide range of knowledge about the full range of enquiries they receive, or know who or how to access the necessary information to help service users.</li> <li>• The Association offices are fully compliant with the DDA.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association knows, records, analyses and monitors information about vulnerability and disability of service users and uses information to ensure services are delivered appropriately.</li> <li>• The Association makes it easy for service users to contact staff by telephone, in person or electronically, including outside normal office hours.</li> <li>• The Association provides information and standards of service on which service users have been consulted and which are appropriate to their housing and support needs.</li> <li>• The Association has set service standards for supported housing services that were developed and set in agreement with service users and stakeholders, are tailored to meet local need, monitored and evaluated to ensure that targets have been met or exceeded.</li> </ul> <p><u>Risk Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has established robust procedures to risk assess applicants and tenants, are carrying out appropriate risk and support assessments and making best use of the housing and support contracts.</li> <li>• The Association has established appropriate systems to identify and manage high risk clients and this information is accessible by staff that may come into contact and/or provide services to these clients.</li> </ul> <p><u>Relationship to Residents</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has actively canvassed the views of service users and uses them to review or improve services. Service users are consulted and involved in major decisions that affect the service.</li> <li>• The Association has the funding and staff in place to make effective service user involvement happen either through dedicated staff resources or through mainstreamed service delivery.</li> <li>• The Association involves service users in how schemes are run and in all relevant aspects of the landlord service including changes to policies and procedures, organisational strategies and plans relevant to supported housing.</li> <li>• The Association, when consulting, uses appropriate methods of communication for different service users according to the needs. For example, pictures, word cards, audio tapes as well as large print, translations and Braille are used as appropriate; actions, drawing, art, the use of audio-visual tools, drama, and collage are used to involve people in thinking about what they want from the service and in shaping new developments.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that carers and advocates are involved in decisions about service provision where appropriate.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs</p>	<p><u>Lettings and Allocations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association monitors, reviews and evaluates performance on allocations to demonstrate that the process is fair and open and does not restrict access to accommodation from applicants and tenants with support needs.</li> <li>• The Association has an allocation policy that records, collects and takes accounts of individual’s needs and support requirements in order to allocate supported housing on the basis of the greatest housing need.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that lettings to supported housing schemes achieve the purpose for which the housing was provided and which meets the criteria for the Supporting People contract.</li> <li>• The Association carries out an initial assessment of support needs for all applicants at the time an offer is considered, in partnership with appropriate agencies and providers as required, so that the support plan and services are in place where necessary when an offer is accepted.</li> </ul> <p><u>Income Management Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association provides comprehensive information to all service users that clearly describe the organisation’s rent, support and service charge setting policy, and how rents and service charges are calculated and collected. Also provides information to carers and advocates, where appropriate.</li> <li>• The Association prevents debt increasing by taking early action as soon as accounts fall into arrears and ensures that appropriate tailored arrangements such as customer-friendly letters and home visits to vulnerable service users are available and carried out when appropriate. Communicates with carers and advocates when appropriate.</li> <li>• The Association minimises and prevents arrears by ensuring that all new service users and their carers/ advocates receive an accurate welfare benefits and finance check at the start of their tenancies and advice on debt management as appropriate.</li> <li>• The Association ensures, in liaison with the support provider, that service users access all the welfare benefits and services that they require and are entitled to.</li> <li>• The Association has clear rent and service charge statements that distinguish between different elements, in particular support charges.</li> <li>• The Association makes it easy for service users to pay their rent and to understand the charges they are asked to pay and the differences between rent, support and other charges and adapts its approach to ensure the special needs of supported housing service users are accounted for.</li> </ul>

<b>Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales</b>	<b>The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association</b>
<p>Associations should apply all key expectations equitably to customers who require support, tailoring service delivery to meet their specific needs</p>	<p><u>Managing Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has specific occupancy agreements for supported and shared housing and policies to ensure they are correctly applied and grants occupancy rights to residents with support needs which appropriately reflect their circumstances.</li> <li>• The Association clearly explains the tenancy conditions, and how breaches will be dealt with, at the start of every new tenancy and in a way that is most likely to allow that individual to understand them.</li> <li>• The Association provides appropriate information and assistance to residents with support needs enabling them to understand and exercise their occupancy rights and obligations.</li> <li>• The Association ensures, in liaison with the support provider where appropriate, that tenants learn how to meet their responsibilities, behave in a reasonable way and sustain their tenancy.</li> <li>• The Association works proactively to promote, support and sustain tenancies through mechanisms like the use of floating support, rather than terminating or demoting them.</li> </ul> <p><u>Maintenance Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association routinely adjusts the urgency of a repair to the needs of particular user groups and individual residents.</li> <li>• The Association has robust procedures and monitoring processes that ensure that health and safety checks are always carried out effectively and appropriately. Procedures are in place to ensure that issues which arise are appropriately addressed.</li> <li>• The Association has carried out checks on all schemes and can demonstrate that they all have appropriate designs, layouts, facilities and locations for the group which is using them – eg, compliance with DDA.</li> <li>• The Association ensures that, where necessary, there is an independent witness present when repairs are carried out.</li> <li>• The Association has an asset management strategy that addresses all the issues facing all the properties used to provide supported housing. This includes risk assessment and an exit strategy.</li> <li>• The Association meets its duty of care by ensuring that housing provided for people with support needs is safe, and appropriate to those needs.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 9

## Strategic Direction, Performance Management and Continuous Improvement

This 'What we look for Inspection Guide' on strategic direction, performance management and continuous improvement is part of a set of Inspection Guides produced by the Wales Audit Office. To find out more about how Inspection Guides are used please read the Inspection guidance notes available from the Wales Audit Office.

Inspection Guides represent a set of questions and statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of housing services. These Inspection Guides are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services.

This Inspection Guide on strategic direction, performance management and continuous improvement takes a slightly different format to the other Inspection Guides which relate to service specific issues looking at 'How Good is the Service?'

While the Wales Audit Office has packaged some services together in producing these Inspection Guides there is no expectation that inspected bodies should organise and deliver services in a similar way. The Wales Audit Office remains committed to supporting service structures that best meet the needs of service users and that focus on service delivery outcomes not processes and structures.

The strategic direction, performance management and continuous improvement Inspection Guide covers the following Key expectations of the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales:


- Associations should have a clear strategic direction.
- Associations should ensure that they deliver good quality services.
- Associations should seek to deliver continuous improvement in all their activities and services.

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should have a clear strategic direction.</p>	<p><u>Strategic Direction</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a clear strategic direction that makes clear what the Association wants to achieve and this is plainly articulated (for example in a mission statement).</li> <li>• The Association has a clear vision which sets out what it wants to achieve over the long term which has translated its vision into tangible ambitions, aims and objectives.</li> <li>• The Association’s strategic direction is reflected in its business plan.</li> <li>• The Association’s business plan has SMART objectives and targets.</li> <li>• The Association’s performance against objectives and targets is regularly monitored by its senior management and the Board and where appropriate remedial action is taken.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that residents, staff and other stakeholders were involved in development of its Business Plan and are aware of its content.</li> <li>• Where the Association is a wholly or partial stock transfer organisation, the commitments made in the offer document and transfer agreement are reflected in its business plan objectives and targets and delivered.</li> <li>• The Association’s aims are challenging and focussed on making a real and measurable difference for service users.</li> <li>• The Association enshrines Value For Money and efficiency in corporate objectives and improvement plans.</li> </ul>
<p>Associations should ensure that they deliver good quality services.</p>	<p><u>Action/Operational Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has plans which address national and corporate priorities and key weaknesses in the service against which performance is measured.</li> <li>• The Association’s Plans are SMART and have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– clear milestones so that delivery can be assessed;</li> <li>– clear timescales and responsibilities for completion;</li> <li>– identify resources needed to deliver the plans;</li> <li>– are focussed on delivering objectives and targets;</li> <li>– include new legislative requirements; and</li> <li>– are focussed on good practice.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should ensure that they deliver good quality services.</p>	<p><u>Action/Operational Plans</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has integrated corporate, financial and service-delivery plans to ensure it makes the best use of resources.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that residents, staff and other stakeholders involved in development of Improvement Plans and are aware of, and able to influence their content.</li> </ul> <p><u>Performance management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has a comprehensive set of service standards developed in partnership with service users.</li> <li>• The Association has an effective performance management framework that is embedded in all services and understood by all staff.</li> <li>• The Association validates performance information and all national returns are accurate.</li> <li>• The Association has a range of appropriate performance indicators in place that cover national and local issues; give a complete picture of overall performance in all key areas; have targets that are challenging; and that enable performance against objectives to be monitored.</li> <li>• The Associations monitors and evaluates agreed local policy targets – eg, BME Housing Strategy, ASB Policy, Local lettings Policy, etc.</li> <li>• The Associations staff are accountable for performance and support is given to staff to take remedial action.</li> <li>• The Associations can evidence strong customer involvement in setting service standards and monitoring service performance.</li> <li>• The Association has adequate support mechanisms in place to deliver performance – eg, agendas, forward planning, project and review groups, scrutiny mechanisms, internal and external audit, user involvement, etc.</li> <li>• The Association understands the cost of the service and options to improve these are being delivered.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence improving performance year on year.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should ensure that they deliver good quality services.</p>	<p><u>Capacity and arrangements to deliver improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association has robust financial and staffing planning. It identifies sufficient resources to support improvement, has devolved budget management and monitoring with effective support services in place to oversee delivery.</li> <li>• The Association has strong leadership which is active, visible and effective and this is recognised by staff, partners and other stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Associations Senior Managers have the necessary range of skills to deliver the business and is capable of making improvements. Responsibility for action is clear and there is evidence that it will tackle difficult problems.</li> <li>• The Association has effective internal communication which includes, for example, Staff Newsletters, Briefings, Team meetings, Service reviews and feedback from staff is sought and used.</li> <li>• The Association has low levels of sickness and there are procedures in place to tackle sickness. The number of long term sick is reducing.</li> <li>• The Associations staff can demonstrate commitment, enthusiasm, customer focus and an understanding of diversity issues.</li> <li>• The Associations staff are clear on how they contribute to delivering strategic goals and objectives.</li> <li>• The Association has an effective approach to risk management. Risks are identified in a structured way and there are clear arrangements in place to mitigate and/or manage risk. Consideration is give to impact, probability and severity in determining risk ratings.</li> <li>• The Associations uses its IT systems to effectively deliver, manage and monitor services. It has plans in place to introduce modules/new IT where weaknesses are identified.</li> <li>• The Association has effective Human Resource management which provides support to staff and managers.</li> <li>• The Association has a strategic approach which retains and develops staff and addresses skill shortages.</li> <li>• The Association provides staff with appropriate job related and personal development training which is identified in a systematic way and effectively delivered.</li> <li>• The Association has an appraisals system in place that supports delivery of its Strategy/Business Plan. The Cycle of appraisals is in line with the Business Plan, delivery of the Business Plan targets/actions are linked to individual appraisals and individual performance is reviewed and evaluated.</li> </ul>

Link to the Regulatory Code for Housing Associations registered in Wales	The Range of Services to be provided by the Housing Association
<p>Associations should seek to deliver continuous improvement in all their activities and services.</p>	<p><u>Continuous Improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Association ensures that services remain relevant to customer and community needs and that standards of service continually improve, through a comprehensive five year rolling programme of service reviews.</li> <li>• The Association has a plan for continuous improvement and a continuous improvement programme in place which was agreed in consultation with staff, service users and stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Association provides clear information to residents, staff and other stakeholders on the service review programme, the outcomes of service reviews and the business targets the organisation plans to meet in future years.</li> <li>• The Associations identification of services to improve are determined via robust methodology – eg, four Cs – Compare, Compete, Consult, Challenge; SWOT; PESTLE; Risk; Internal Audit Reports; High cost/high impact; Business critical; stakeholder feedback; etc.</li> <li>• The Association has structured improvement activity that has involvement from key interests - Board, Tenants, staff and stakeholders.</li> <li>• The Association publishes its service review programme to residents, staff and stakeholders and feedback and involvement from these key interests is sought and used to shape improvement.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that intended outcome of reviews are achieved and lead to improvement.</li> <li>• The Association has made appropriate financial and staffing provision for planned improvements resulting from service reviews and has track to demonstrate delivery of improvement in previous reviews.</li> </ul> <p><u>Evidence of service improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Associations performance against published indicators is continually improving over time.</li> <li>• The Association has high levels of customer satisfaction for its services.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence a focus on customer benefits – eg, service easy to access, customer focussed, online services, right first time service is high, etc.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence customer focused outcomes of improvement activity – eg, reducing number of empty homes, increasing rent payment options, increasing number of repairs completed within target time, etc.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that it learns from its own experience and others by analysing success and failure and good practice is identified and implemented.</li> <li>• The Association can evidence that improvement action has resulted in intended outcomes.</li> <li>• The Association’s performance has a close match between targets and actual outcomes.</li> </ul>



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