



Department for  
**Communities**

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department fur  
**Commonities**

# Regulatory Framework

## Connswater Homes – Regulatory Judgement

Report 2020/21



## Introduction

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

## RHA Background

Connswater Homes, previously known as Connswater Housing Association, was formed and registered with the Department of Environment in 1977. With much of the local regeneration in the Connswater area of East Belfast now completed, in 2003 the association made the decision to move outside its traditional boundaries and actively seek development opportunities province wide. The organisation became known as Connswater Homes in 2006.

It currently owns and manages approximately 1,100 units and continues to expand with housing developments located in Belfast, Antrim, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, Newtownards, Portaferry and Downpatrick.

## Regulatory Approach

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

When we refer to risk, we are referring to the risk to the interests of tenants and other service users. This may not always be the same as an RHA's own detailed assessment of the operational risks it faces. This judgement is completed in accordance with the risk based approach to regulation introduced in April 2017.

## Overall Opinion

**Regulatory Judgement:**  
**Connswater Homes**

**1**

Meets the requirements

Based on a review of the evidence submitted, Housing Regulation Branch has determined that Connswater Homes has demonstrated that it meets the Regulatory Standards for Governance, Finance and Consumer in respect of the 2020/21 year. Further information on our Regulatory Standards can be obtained within the following Advice Note - [How We Regulate](#).

## Assessment Findings

### Outcome of Governance Standard - MET

#### **Governance Standard 1:**

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

#### **Governance Standard 2:**

Connswater Homes adopts a robust approach to the assessment and management of risk. In addition, it has an effective decision-making process in place, which allows informed and transparent decisions to be made.

### Outcome of Finance Standard - MET

#### **Finance Standard 1:**

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

## **Finance Standard 2:**

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

## **Outcome of Consumer Standard - MET**

### **Consumer Standard 1:**

Connswater Homes has managed its business so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

### **Consumer Standard 2:**

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

### **Consumer Standard 3:**

Connswater Homes has illustrated how it contributes to supporting vibrant communities, encouraging tenant opportunities and promoting well-being.

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

**Level 1** – Where following submission of the Regulatory Standards Annual Return (RSAR) and required financial information, we are content there is sufficient assurance and little additional contact is required unless other matters arise.

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