

An tÚdarás Rialála Comhlachtaí
Tithíochta Ceadaithe

Approved Housing Bodies
Regulatory Authority



Standards for AHBs

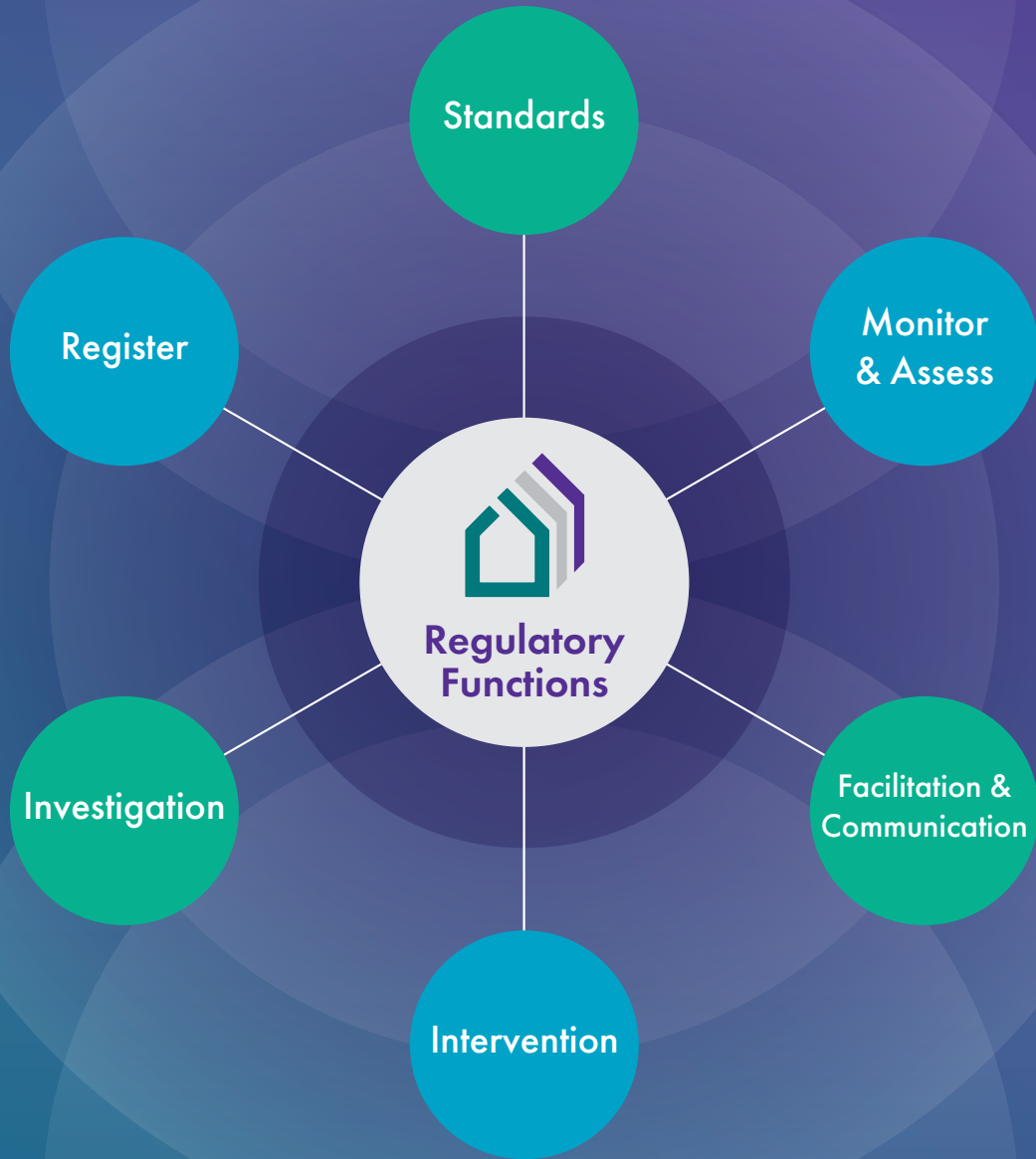


February 2022
ahbregulator.ie

The 'Standards for AHBs'
form an integral part of
the overall regulatory
framework and functions
of the Regulator

Contents

Context	03
AHBRA Functions	03
Vision, Mission and Values	04
Standards for AHBs	07
Legislation	07
About the Standards	08
Approach to the Standards	09
Guidance and Education	09
Regulatory Framework	10
Regulatory Approach	10
1. Governance Standard	11
Governance Standard Outcomes	12
Governance Standard Requirements	13
2. Financial Standard	18
Financial Standard Outcomes	19
Financial Standard Requirements	20
3. Property and Asset Management Standard	25
Property and Asset Management Standard Outcomes	26
Property and Asset Management Standard Requirements	27
4. Tenancy Management Standard	30
Tenancy Management Standard Outcomes	31
Tenancy Management Standard Requirements	32



Context

The Housing (Regulation of Approved Housing Bodies) Act 2019 (the Act) provides for the regulation of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) for the purposes of protecting housing assets provided or managed by such bodies.

It seeks to support stronger governance, financial management and reporting, property and asset management, and tenancy management by AHBs, with a focus on safeguarding the significant public investment being made in the delivery of social housing by AHBs. Central to this is the establishment of the Approved Housing Bodies Regulatory Authority (AHBRA).

AHBRA was established on the 1st February 2021 by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Darragh O'Brien TD. The Regulator has responsibility for establishing a regulatory framework that delivers effective oversight of all AHBs.

AHBRA Functions

AHBRA was established to oversee the effective governance, financial management and performance of all AHBs, in accordance with the legal framework set out in the Act.

We have responsibility for establishing and implementing a regulatory framework for the AHB sector. This includes the registration of AHBs, the setting of standards, monitoring and assessing compliance with the standards, and as required, undertaking investigations. Where necessary, we will use the appropriate enforcement powers, in accordance with the Act.

The regulatory environment will be transparent, robust and fair, focusing on key outcomes, facilitation and communication, establishing effective and co-operative relationships, building strong communication with key stakeholders and providing regulatory assurances to the government, tenants and funders.

The 'Standards for AHBs' form an integral part of the overall regulatory framework and functions of the Regulator.



Vision, Mission and Values



Our Vision

Our vision is of a sector in which AHBs demonstrate best practice in the areas of governance, finance, property and tenancy management and who provide quality homes for their tenants.



Our Mission

Our mission is to protect housing provided and managed by AHBs, through effective regulation.



Our Values



We will **operate with integrity**, ensuring consistent adherence to our principles



We will deliver **independent, proportionate and fair** regulatory oversight



We will be **accountable and transparent** in our decision-making



We will work with key stakeholders in a **co-operative manner**



We will **strive for innovation** in our delivery of regulation



Standards for AHBs

Section 37 of the Act provides for the drafting of ‘Standards for AHBs’. The Standards relate to:

- 1 the governance of AHBs

- 2 the financial management of and financial reporting by AHBs

- 3 property and asset management by AHBs

- 4 tenancy management by AHBs

The Standards do not stand alone, they form part of the overall regulatory approach and framework. They are aligned to the legislation and the application of risk-based regulation. The Standards for AHBs were approved by Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O’Brien on 15th February 2022. Section 37(8) of the Act requires all AHBs to comply with the Standards.

Legislation

The Act outlines the high-level requirements that may be provided for within the Standards. These are outlined below:

Governance of an AHB

- the membership and governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of the board, committee of management or the trustees, as the case may be, of an AHB
- the procedures for decision-making to ensure control and oversight of an AHB
- the management of conflicts of interest including a register of interests of the members of the board or committee of management, or of the trustees, as the case may be, of an AHB, and
- a code of conduct for the board, committee of management or trustees, as the case may be, of an AHB.

Financial management of, and financial reporting by, an AHB

- the requirements for financial and risk control
- the procedures for monitoring and assuring the financial viability of the AHB

- the keeping of proper books of account that:
 - (i) correctly record and explain the transactions of the AHB,
 - (ii) enable the financial position of an AHB to be determined with reasonable accuracy at any time, and
 - (iii) enable the accounts of the AHB to be readily and properly audited
- the requirements for internal control and audit
- the requirements for strategic planning, including the preparation of financial and business plans
- the procedures for monitoring performance, and
- the requirements for the confirmation and verification of compliance with statutory obligations including, in particular, obligations arising under the Charities Act 2009 and the Companies Act of 2014.

Property and asset management and tenancy management by AHBs

- nominations to dwellings of tenants, and allocations of dwellings to tenants by AHBs
- the management of dwellings by AHBs, and
- communication by AHBs with their tenants.



About the Standards

The Standards establish a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve. It is important to note that AHBs are subject to a range of legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations and must comply with existing requirements. It is the primary responsibility of AHBs to identify these obligations and provide assurances that they have effective procedures for monitoring and reporting on compliance.

Governance Standard

The Governance Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in relation to the governance and management of their organisations. It relates to responsibility and accountability of the Board.

The Governance Standard outlines the key outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve relating to membership, roles and responsibilities, procedures for decision-making, control and oversight, conflicts of interest, code of conduct, effective governing, accountability, honesty, integrity and risk management.

Financial Standard

The Financial Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in relation to their financial management and financial reporting.

The Financial Standard outlines the key outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve relating to management of resources and risks, whilst maintaining financial viability. The Financial Standard outlines the requirements for financial and risk control, financial viability, financial management, financial reporting, governance, strategic planning, monitoring of performance and risk management.

Property and Asset Management Standard

The Property and Asset Management Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in their management and delivery of housing, ensuring the provision of safe, suitable, and sustainable housing for tenants and service-users. It relates to how AHBs manage their housing assets efficiently and effectively.

The Property and Asset Management Standard outlines the key outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve relating to their management of dwellings, statutory, legal and compliance obligations, asset management programmes and how they effectively manage the AHB's housing stock.

Tenancy Management by AHBs

The Tenancy Management Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in their management of tenancies and in their communication with tenants. It relates to ensuring that AHBs have effective policies and procedures for the delivery of tenant services.

The Tenancy Management Standard outlines the key outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve relating to their statutory, legal and compliance obligations, allocations, nominations, communication with tenants and tenant satisfaction.

Approach to the Standards

Outcome Based Standards

The Standards for AHBs are produced in accordance with the legislation. They focus on desired and measurable outcomes and are supported by a risk-based regulatory approach.

These outcome-based Standards allow for greater flexibility and a recognition of the diversity within the AHB sector. They enable AHBs to demonstrate and evidence their approach to a particular outcome, recognising that AHBs have different deliverables based on their nature, scale and complexity of activities.

Proportionality

The outcome-based approach to standards means that proportionality is provided for within the standards and related outcomes. The high-level outcomes are set at a level where they are relevant and applicable to all AHBs. This approach ensures that the standards have regard to the nature, scale, complexity of the

activities of each category of AHB, the number of managed or owned properties, the level of borrowings and the level of financial risk of an AHB.

The outcome-based approach affords AHBs the flexibility to decide how their actions can best achieve compliance with the Standards. This allows for the diversity within different AHB business models and functions.

The onus is on each AHB to demonstrate whether their actions achieve compliance with the Standards. This approach provides the opportunity for AHBs to evidence compliance having regard to their size, functions and risk profile. This flexibility allows for an AHB's approach to be adapted over time, taking account of any changes to their business model, for example, changes in size, borrowings or level of financial risk.

Guidance and Education

A key element of the regulatory framework is the use of guidance documents, webinars and other educational tools to support the Standards. AHBRA's objectives include consistent and effective communication with all AHBs, which will evolve as the needs of the sector develop and change.

The publication of relevant guidance, advice and best practice and the delivery of education programmes will be fully aligned to the categorisation of AHBs. This provides guidance and education to AHBs depending on their delivery model, size, scale and risk profile.

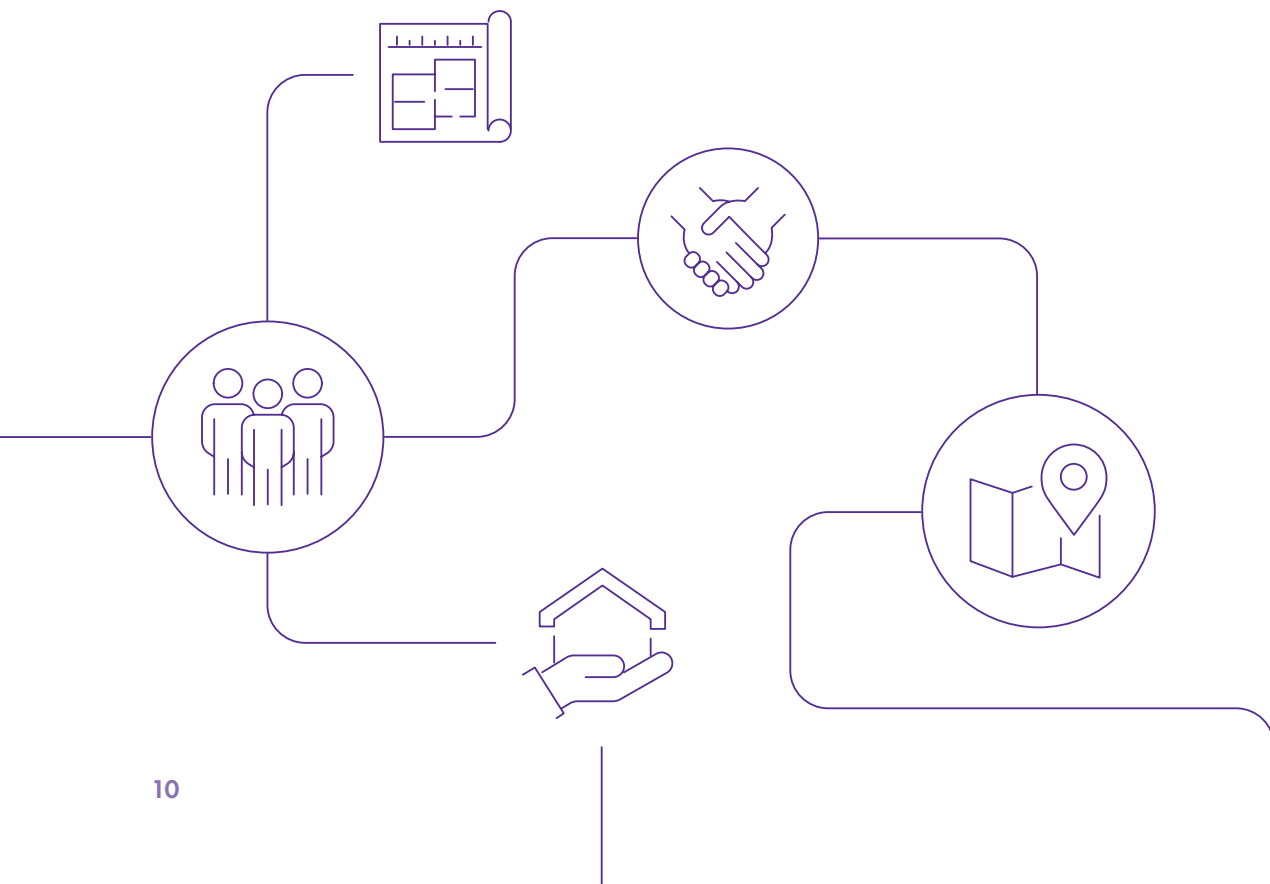
All AHBs should be able to demonstrate their compliance with the Standards. The guidance provided to AHBs aims to provide clarity on what our expectations will be when it comes to meeting the Standards.

Regulatory Framework

Regulatory Approach

The Standards form part of the wider regulatory framework, including the registration of AHBs, setting of Standards, monitoring and assessing of compliance with the Standards, encouragement and facilitation of better governance, administration and management within AHBs, promotion and awareness of the Act, and the collection and publication of certain information on AHBs.

Risk-based regulation forms the basis for our regulatory approach. This utilises data and information to identify and evaluate risk trends and enables informed decision-making on the application of our regulatory functions. Risk-based regulation ensures our regulatory approach is appropriate, measured and proportionate.





Governance Standard





Governance Standard

Introduction

The Governance Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in relation to the governance and management of their organisations.

Good governance is essential to the effective operation of all AHBs. Ensuring an AHB is well-governed is the responsibility of the Board¹.

Successful Boards provide strong, effective leadership and direction. They fully understand the nature and scale of the opportunities and

risks that their organisations face and how to deliver on their agreed strategy and objectives. Effective Boards communicate in an open and transparent manner with key stakeholders and are committed to promoting and maintaining high ethical standards.

The Governance Standard establishes a set of outcomes that, where achieved, will enable an AHB to demonstrate and evidence good governance in their organisation.

Governance Standard Outcomes

The Governance Standard is comprised of five outcomes which AHBs are required to demonstrate. These are:

- 1 AHBs comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations
- 2 An effective Board
- 3 Be accountable to tenants, the Regulator, and other key stakeholders
- 4 Act with honesty and integrity and in the best interests of the AHB
- 5 Manage risk effectively



¹ By Board we mean the governing body of the AHB. This can be a Board of directors, trustees, or a committee of management.

Governance Standard Requirements

1 AHBs comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations

Context

The Board is responsible for ensuring that the AHB is meeting its relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations. This includes acting within the AHB's constitution or other governing documents.

An AHB finances, builds, lets, maintains and improves buildings whilst managing the tenancies of people living in

their homes. This means that an AHB will fall under a wide range of laws and regulations about housing, asset management, tenant services, health and safety and other requirements. In addition, it may have obligations in relation to other areas of activity.

It is important that the Board has a clear understanding of all such obligations

affecting it. An AHB is responsible for maintaining awareness of all relevant obligations with which it must comply. This will include monitoring for any new legal and regulatory obligations and making changes to its policies, working practices and compliance oversight, where necessary.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- They operate in line with the organisation's constitution²;
- All relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations are identified and there are effective procedures for monitoring and reporting on compliance; and
- Timely communication with the Regulator and any other relevant parties, of significant breaches or sanctions relating to its legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations.



² By constitution we mean the rules, in writing, that govern the administration and control of an AHB.



Governance Standard Requirements

2 An effective Board

Context

The Board has a duty to provide effective leadership, oversight, and strategic direction to an organisation in order to achieve its stated objectives. Each AHB should ensure that its governance arrangements clearly set out the respective roles and responsibilities of Board members, sub-committees and staff, where applicable. There should be clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

Effective Boards meet regularly and make decisions based on timely and accurate information, and through open and robust discussions. They can stand over and evidence any of their decisions and provide appropriate justification, where necessary.

They also review and refresh their skills and expertise on a regular basis, allowing for continuity of membership, while facilitating new ideas and innovation. It is important

that the Board plans for the future of the AHB through Board renewal and succession planning. This involves identifying the optimal composition of the Board and the skills and expertise that are required for the successful governance of the AHB, both now and into the future.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Strong leadership and clear strategic direction, in line with their organisational purpose;
- Decisions are made based on reliable, accurate and timely information;
- Effective oversight of activities and monitoring of progress against stated objectives by the Board;
- Clear roles and responsibilities for Board members and staff (where applicable);
- Relevant skills, expertise and knowledge; and
- Board renewal and succession planning.



Governance Standard Requirements

3 Be accountable to tenants, the Regulator, and other key stakeholders

Context

The trust and confidence of tenants, the Regulator and other key stakeholders in the work of an AHB is fundamental to its reputation and success. Demonstrating accountability, through genuine and open two-way communication, helps to build trust and confidence.

The Board is accountable to a range of stakeholders, including its tenants and the Regulator, and has a wider public accountability. The Board should be open and transparent about what they do and make information available about their activities and performance.

Boards that behave in an accountable manner can demonstrate their ability to make decisions in an open, objective, and transparent way. Board members have equal and collective responsibility for the decisions they make. Where the Board votes on a particular matter, each vote should be given equal weighting, i.e., one member, one vote.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Openness and transparency;
- Provision of good quality, timely, and appropriate information relating to the organisation's performance; and
- Board members have equal and collective responsibility for the decisions they make.





Governance Standard Requirements

4 Act with honesty and integrity and in the best interests of the AHB

Context

The Board should uphold and promote the highest standards of conduct and probity while also promoting and maintaining high ethical standards within the organisation. They must conduct their affairs with honesty and integrity.

Boards should ensure that decisions are made in an open and transparent manner. There should be clear evidence of engagement from the Board

when decisions are made through intelligent questioning, constructive debate, and rigorous challenge.

The Board should be able to demonstrate that the decisions they make are based on sound evidence, free from undue pressure or influence of third parties, free from any conflicts of interest (real or potential) and founded on collective agreement. Decisions should always be made in the best interests of

the AHB and should not place the organisation at undue risk. Conflicts of interest should be appropriately managed, and a register of interests should be in place.

Relationships with other organisations should be managed appropriately, and there should be clarity on governance structures, roles and responsibilities, risk management and arrangements governing such relationships.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Honesty and integrity at all times;
- Adherence to their code of conduct;
- Documented, appropriate and transparent management of any group structures, related party(s) and/or third-party relationships;
- Clear accountability and responsibility relating to any group structures, related party(s) and/or third-party relationships;
- Conflicts of interest and conflicts of duty are appropriately managed, including holding a register of interests; and
- Members act independently and place the organisation's interests above any private, personal, or professional interest.



Governance Standard Requirements

5 Manage risk effectively

Context

Appropriate risk identification, management and reporting is essential to the successful operation of an AHB.

Managing risk reduces the likelihood of a risk occurring or lessens the impact if it does occur. However, being risk-aware can also highlight possible opportunities and

benefits. Well-managed risks can lead to improvements in service delivery and the achievement of organisational objectives.

The Board must have a clear understanding of the AHB's work and of the external environment in which it operates.

The Board should ensure proportionate and effective practice in its approach to risk reporting, communications and audit. It should also make sure that appropriate controls are in place to manage risks, both to safeguard its tenants and its assets, and help achieve its objectives.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Understanding of the work of the AHB and the environment in which it operates;
- An effective and proportionate approach to risk management;
- An appropriate system of internal control;
- Appropriate internal and external audit; and
- Risk is dealt with effectively and the AHB has the appropriate assurance frameworks.





Financial Standard





Financial Standard

Introduction

The Financial Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in relation to the financial management and reporting of their organisation.

AHBs should manage their resources and risks effectively to ensure their financial viability and sustainability and to protect their social housing assets. The Financial Standard outlines the requirements for financial management,

controls, reporting, governance and monitoring practices, which are appropriate to their size, scale, development plans and debt profile.

AHBs should strive to ensure effective, efficient and economic use of their resources. The consideration of Value for Money is fundamental in achieving optimal value from all resources and assets.

Financial Standard Outcomes

The Finance Standard is comprised of five outcomes which AHBs are required to demonstrate. These are:

- 1 Resources are managed effectively to ensure financial viability
- 2 Effective financial governance framework
- 3 Appropriate financial management, cashflow and treasury management
- 4 Effective systems for reporting and monitoring financial performance
- 5 Robust financial risk framework





Financial Standard Requirements

1 Resources are managed effectively to ensure financial viability

Context

Financial viability is a measure of an AHB's ability to meet operating expenses and any debt repayments as they fall due, while maintaining service levels. Financial viability is crucial to ensure that social housing assets are safeguarded in the short,

medium and long term, ultimately protecting the interests of their tenants.

The Board of each AHB should demonstrate that the appropriate systems are in place to protect and maintain the AHB's housing assets. Maintaining housing assets

is critical to the provision of social housing. The Board should fully understand the financial obligations required to maintain and keep the housing stock in good condition.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Sufficient income to meet operational payments and debt commitments as they fall due, while maintaining service levels;
- Sustainable cash flows and sufficient liquidity to meet expected future obligations;
- Effective management and monitoring of financial resources and risks;
- Reliable and up-to-date information on the condition of all properties; and
- Adequate financial resources to meet investment requirements of maintenance and capital expenditure obligations as they fall due.



Financial Standard Requirements

2 Effective financial governance framework

Context

AHBs should have effective financial governance arrangements in place, which are proportionate to their organisation. The Board is responsible for the oversight and monitoring of the organisation's financial viability and economic effectiveness.

AHBs must ensure they are meeting their relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations. This includes obligations arising under the

Charities Act 2009 and the Companies Act 2014.

The Board should be assured that there are effective systems for internal controls including finance and risk. A robust internal control framework provides a full oversight of the organisation's activities and performance. It is a fundamental part of the assurance framework and allows for informed decision-making.

It is expected that the Board will review the effectiveness

of this framework regularly and has systems in place that provide assurance regarding the quality and integrity of data.

AHBs should have arrangements in place to ensure clear segregation of duties, demonstrating good corporate and financial governance.

The Board should have the appropriate skills, expertise and competencies suitable for the size, scale and risk profile of the organisation.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations;
- Robust and effective financial controls, including processes and procedures by which resources are directed (used), monitored and measured (reported);
- Integrity of financial management and reporting, with appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluating accuracy of financial data;
- Effective internal control systems are in place;
- Appropriate internal and external audit plan(s);
- A full understanding of all aspects of the organisation's financial plan, providing a platform for informed decision-making;
- Effective governance, reporting and oversight arrangements in place for group structures and related parties;
- Appropriate financial governance relating to third party relationships and contractual obligations; and
- All relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations are identified and there are effective procedures for monitoring and reporting on compliance.





Financial Standard Requirements

3 Appropriate financial management, cashflow and treasury management

Context

Effective financial management, including financial planning and forecasting and maintaining positive liquidity, is vital for Boards to understand and ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation.

Robust and effective financial planning and forecasting

Financial planning and budgeting are a fundamental part of the financial management of an AHB.

Budgets and financial forecasts should take into consideration the objectives of the organisation, clearly stating any underlying operational and economic assumptions used in preparing the financial plan.

Financial forecasting should be used to project how the organisation is expected to perform financially against its stated future objectives. It should be used to assess the financial impacts of decisions made by the Board.

Cashflow and treasury management

AHBs with complex funding, repayment schedules and group structures will need to implement a treasury management mechanism, which will incorporate the cash and liquidity management function. In these organisations, an appropriate treasury strategy should be in place to reflect the financial risks, financial forecast and future funding plans of the organisation. Any treasury strategy adopted should reflect the financial complexity of the AHB.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Effective financial management to ensure sufficient funds are available to fund expected expenditures;
- Management of housing income in a timely manner, including arrears, bad debts and voids;
- Annual Budgets which are aligned to and monitored against the overall objectives of the organisation;
- Access to sufficient cash and liquidity, as required;
- Financial forecasts are based on appropriate and reasonable assumptions and information;
- Evaluation of the impact of current and potential future funding arrangements on financial viability, liquidity and risk, including reporting and monitoring; and
- Compliance against all funder covenants is identified and there are effective procedures for monitoring and reporting.



Financial Standard Requirements

4 Effective systems for reporting and monitoring financial performance

Context

Financial reporting provides crucial information required for effective oversight of an organisation. Accurate and regular financial reporting and analysis provides

an understanding of the organisation's performance. The Board should receive timely and accurate financial information to allow for oversight, decision-making and performance monitoring.

AHBs must demonstrate:



- Proper keeping of accounts which accurately reflect the organisation's financial position;
- Compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory, accounting and financial reporting obligations;
- Externally audited annual financial statements;
- Accurate and up-to-date records of its assets and liabilities are held and maintained, particularly those liabilities relating to social housing assets;
- Transparent financial management and reporting on the housing element of the business;
- Regular monitoring of financial performance by setting a range of key financial indicators and reporting progress against these; and
- Compliance against all contractual obligations, as required by third party funding arrangements, are identified, with effective procedures for monitoring and reporting.

Financial Standard Requirements

5 Robust financial risk framework

Context

AHBs must identify the risks to the delivery of financial plans and manage them effectively, considering the financial implications of risks to delivery of plans.

Every AHB will have risks to consider and manage. The level and variety of

risk will vary depending on the nature and complexity of each organisation. Risk management should enhance strategic and business planning, whilst supporting informed decision-making for the Board and ensuring that the organisation can pro-actively respond to any challenges it faces.

AHBs should ensure that any activities they undertake do not place social housing assets, tenants or their own financial viability at undue risk.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Financial risks are assessed, managed and reviewed regularly to ensure the long-term protection of social housing assets;
- Risk appetite and responsibility for the management of risk is defined and clearly understood;
- Regular monitoring of financial risks, with appropriate testing and mechanisms to mitigate risks, where possible;
- An understanding and management of the likely impact on current and future financial viability and sustainability before taking on new liabilities; and
- Assessment of capacity to take on new business and development opportunities.





3

Property and Asset Management Standard





Property and Asset Management Standard

Introduction

The purpose of the Property and Asset Management Standard is to ensure AHBs manage their stock efficiently and effectively. This Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in their management and delivery of housing, ensuring the provision of safe, suitable and sustainable housing for tenants.

The Property and Asset Management Standard seeks to ensure that AHB housing assets, and public funding in these assets are protected

so that those properties will continue to meet current and future housing needs and be managed in a sustainable manner.

As landlords, all AHBs have a statutory obligation to keep tenants' homes in good repair, which aims to deliver on tenant safety, well-being and satisfaction. AHBs should ensure that they have appropriate mechanisms in place to fund and deliver an effective and efficient repairs and maintenance function.

Property and Asset Management Standard Outcomes

The Property and Asset Management Standard is comprised of three outcomes which AHBs are required to demonstrate. These are:

- 1 AHBs comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations
- 2 AHBs protect their housing assets by delivering an effective asset management programme
- 3 AHBs provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance programme that meets the needs of tenants



Property and Asset Management Standard Requirements

1 AHBs comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations

Context

To ensure that homes are of a sufficient quality and standard, AHBs must comply with a range of existing statutory and regulatory obligations relating to the safety, quality, and energy efficiency of their properties. AHBs should have

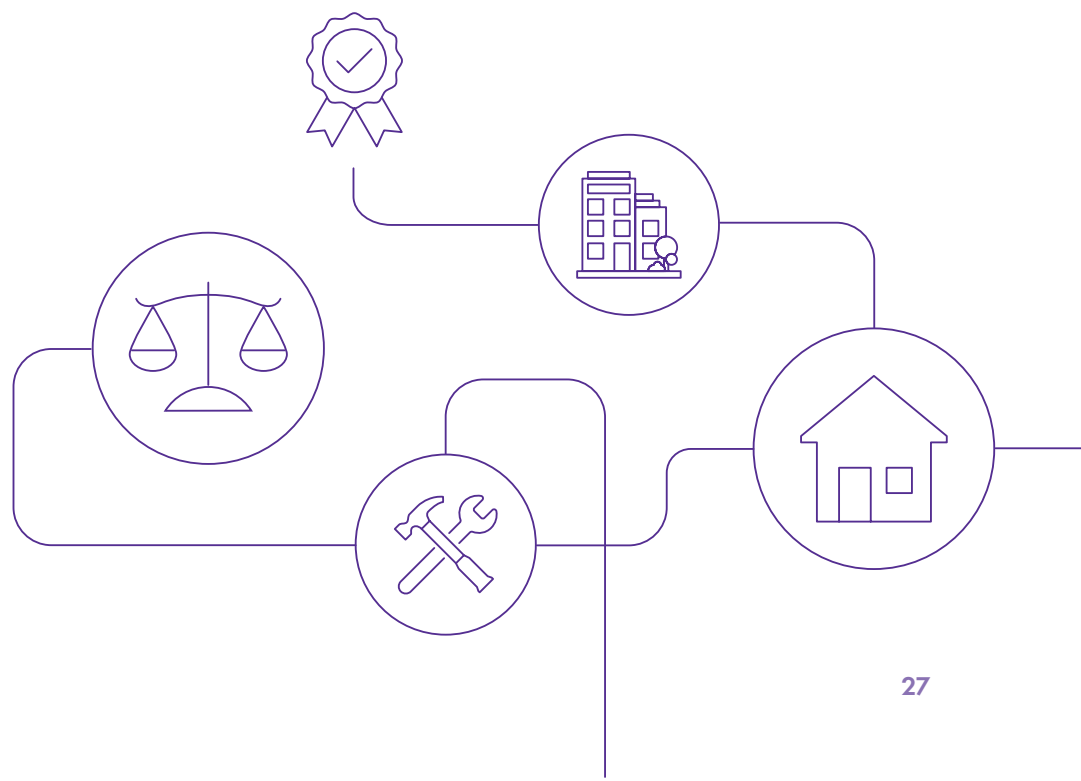
appropriate procedures in place for obtaining assurance on whether they comply with all their obligations.

The specific obligations that any AHB must meet may vary depending on their functions, services provided

and funding arrangements. It is the responsibility of the Board to identify, understand and comply with the legal and compliance obligations that are relevant to them.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Compliance with all relevant existing legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations relating to safety, quality and energy efficiency;
- All relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations are identified and there are effective procedures for monitoring and reporting on compliance; and
- Risks to the Health & Safety of their tenants and staff are identified and managed appropriately.





Property and Asset Management Standard Requirements

2 AHBs protect their housing assets by delivering an effective asset management programme

Context

Asset management is a core activity of any landlord and each AHB should have a tailored approach to identifying their asset management objectives which reflects the size and activities of their organisation.

AHBs should have a planned approach to asset management that meets both their current and future property requirements, which

is based on reliable data on the condition of their properties. This will enable the AHB to assess both the immediate and long-term requirements of maintaining those properties.

By obtaining regular, accurate and reliable data on the quality of their properties, AHBs will be much better placed to effectively forecast their current and future investment requirements.

Making best use of available properties is an important factor of asset management. AHBs should have a clear approach to void management which considers the reasons why voids may exist. Addressing issues around long-term voids should also be an important focus of the AHB's overall asset management strategy.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Asset management objectives and priorities are identified and delivered;
- A clearly defined approach to responsive repairs, planned or cyclical maintenance, capital works and work to void properties;
- Accurate and up-to-date records of all properties owned, leased or managed, including each property's repair and inspection history and voids;
- Reliable and up-to-date information on the condition of all properties, which is subject to external validation;
- Forecasting of future maintenance investment needs for all properties;
- Void properties are identified in overall asset management objectives;
- Adequate financial resources to fund both short-term and longer-term maintenance requirements; and
- Strategy relating to future needs regarding environment and sustainability policy obligations.



Property and Asset Management Standard Requirements

3 AHBs provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance programme that meets the needs of tenants

Context

Repairs and maintenance to their properties is a vital function of any AHB. It usually accounts for the largest level of expenditure within the organisation and is often the service most relied upon by tenants. The AHB's approach to repairs and maintenance

should offer value for money, with the Board having a clear understanding of expected costs and actual expenditure.

AHBs should have a system to continuously manage and monitor the delivery of repair and maintenance services, response times, cost

management, contractor performance and tenant feedback. Effective performance management enables AHBs to maximise the value achieved for investment in their homes and monitor progress against key objectives.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Annual Programmes of repairs and maintenance to deliver on their asset management objectives;
- Appropriate budgets for all repairs and maintenance to be delivered are set, reported on and monitored;
- Pro-active management of void properties;
- Procurement policies and procedures that deliver value for money, including the monitoring of contractor performance;
- Performance is regularly monitored, with a range of key performance indicators for repairs, maintenance and voids, and reporting progress against these; and
- Effective and easily accessible mechanisms for receiving tenant feedback on repairs and maintenance.





Tenancy Management Standard





Tenancy Management Standard

Introduction

The Tenancy Management Standard establishes a set of outcomes that AHBs are required to achieve in their management of tenancies and communication with tenants. This Standard requires that AHBs have effective policies and procedures in place for the delivery of tenant services, ensuring AHB tenants are central to the work of the AHB, with the main objective of safeguarding tenants.

Regular communication with tenants in relation to service provision, tenant responsibilities and landlord performance will help establish an effective relationship between landlord and tenant. This includes opportunities for tenants to

provide feedback and engage with the AHB on policies and procedures that impact them.

While the Tenancy Management Standard seeks to ensure that AHBs take the appropriate measures to meet their obligations to their tenants, AHBRA is not responsible for regulating the relationship between an AHB and a tenant. The Residential Tenancies Board (RTB) is the public body who regulate the rental sector, including dealing with disputes between landlords and tenants. They also provide information to landlords and tenants regarding their rental rights and responsibilities. AHBs must register their tenancies with the RTB.

Tenancy Management Standard Outcomes

The Tenancy Management Standard is comprised of seven outcomes which AHBs are required to demonstrate. These are:

- 1 AHBs comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations
- 2 Homes are allocated in a fair, transparent and efficient manner, and aligned to funding obligations
- 3 Effective communication with tenants on all aspects of their tenancy
- 4 Fair and transparent rent policies in place, where rents are charged and collected in an accurate and efficient manner
- 5 An AHB's complaints process is clear and easily accessible
- 6 Tenant engagement regarding the future delivery of tenant services is encouraged and facilitated
- 7 AHBs understand tenant satisfaction through monitoring and reporting on the performance of service delivery





Tenancy Management Standard Requirements

1 AHBs comply with all relevant legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations

Context

AHBs must comply with a range of existing statutory and regulatory requirements relating to how AHBs manage the relationship with their tenants. AHBs should have

appropriate procedures in place for obtaining assurance on whether they comply with all their obligations. The specific obligations that any AHB must meet may vary depending on their

functions, services provided and funding arrangements. It is the responsibility of the Board to identify, understand and comply with the legal and compliance obligations that are relevant to them.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Compliance with all relevant existing legal, regulatory, funding and statutory obligations relating to the management of tenancies; and
- All relevant legal, regulatory, statutory and compliance obligations are identified and there are effective procedures for monitoring and reporting on compliance.



2 Homes are allocated in a fair, transparent and efficient manner, and aligned with funding obligations

Context

Having an efficient process for identifying vacant homes and seeking nominations for these will reduce the loss of rental income for the AHB. Local Authority funding arrangements for the provision of social and affordable

homes determines the obligations for AHBs in how those homes should be allocated. Therefore, building effective working relationships with Local Authorities is key to ensuring an effective and efficient nominations and allocations process.

Where AHBs have some discretion over the nominations and allocations, there should be an open and transparent process in place that delivers on an AHB's core objective of alleviating housing need.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Effective procedures for the identification of vacancies within existing housing stock and the availability of newly completed homes;
- Efficient procedures for seeking timely nominations when filling vacant properties, making best use of available homes;
- Clear and accessible allocations policies and procedures that are fair, transparent and consistently applied; and
- A nominations and allocations process aligned to funding obligations.



Tenancy Management Standard Requirements

3 Effective communication with tenants on all aspects of their tenancy

Context

It is essential that AHBs provide tenants with good quality, accurate and up-to-date information on all aspects of their tenancy. Whilst a tenancy agreement should clearly set out the rights, responsibilities and obligations of both the tenant

and the landlord, AHBs must utilise a range of appropriate communication channels to assist and support tenants in sustaining their tenancy over the longer term.

Building a relationship with tenants is critical to achieving effective communication.

Ensuring regular communication between the AHB (as landlord) and the tenant, including making clear what services are available to tenants and how these can be accessed, should also improve overall tenant satisfaction.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- A clear approach to communication and the provision of support for tenants;
- Provision of pre-tenancy information and support for all tenants based on their needs;
- Tenant-related services and information are easily accessible to tenants;
- A range of communication methods which cater for the diverse needs of tenants; and
- Communication of performance on the delivery of services to tenants in an easy-to-understand manner.





Tenancy Management Standard Requirements

4 Fair and transparent rent policies in place, where rents are charged and collected in an accurate and efficient manner

Context

Rent and income received for the provision of social housing is a vital income stream for any AHB to fund costs relating to the management of dwellings. It is important that all AHBs ensure that their approach

to rent setting, collection and management of arrears is fully aligned to funding obligations, clearly set out in tenancy agreements and communicated to all tenants in a clear and understandable manner.

Failure to collect rent due or to manage the build-up of rent arrears directly affects the AHB's ability to deliver key services and maintain their properties to the appropriate standard.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Tenants receive clear information on policies and procedures relating to rent setting, reviews and collection methods;
- Accurate monitoring, measurement and reporting on rent collection and related income; and
- Effective management of rental arrears to maximise income received.



5 An AHB's complaints process is clear and easily accessible

Context

Having a published and easily accessible complaints procedure for tenants to utilise should be a priority for all AHBs. It is

important that tenants know they can raise an issue with their landlord and have this managed in a professional and fair manner.

This could reduce the need for issues to be referred to the RTB and provide greater tenant confidence in the services received from their landlord.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- A clear and easily accessible complaints procedure for tenants and service users;
- A complaints procedure, which is fair, transparent and consistent; and
- An appropriate system for monitoring and reporting complaints and outcomes.



Tenancy Management Standard Requirements

6 Tenant engagement regarding the delivery of tenant services is encouraged and facilitated

Context

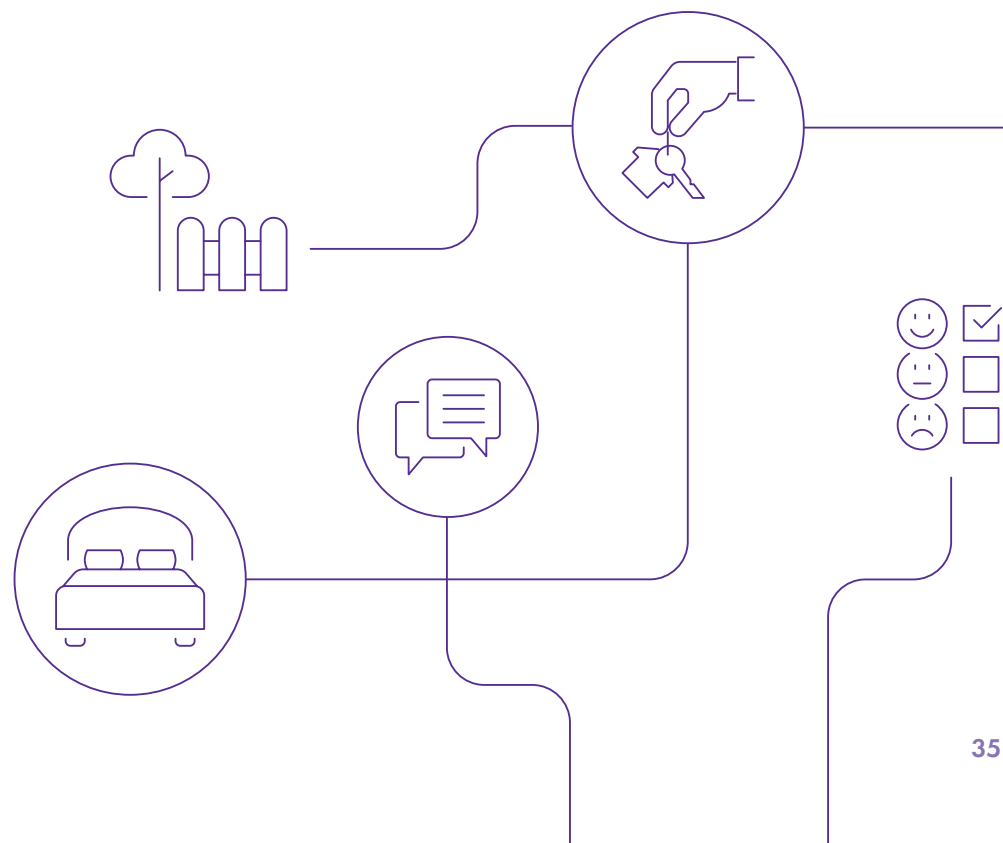
Tenant engagement should be a key focus for all AHBs in the development of policies and procedures that directly

affect their tenants. AHBs should have clear systems in place to provide tenants with opportunities to have their voice heard on a range

of issues relating to the management of their homes including maintenance and repairs programmes.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- They actively seek input from tenants and provide regular opportunities for tenants to engage with the AHB on service provision;
- Consultation with tenants when developing policies that impact on any aspect of tenant services;
- Clear communication to tenants on how they can influence current and future service delivery; and
- Consultation with tenants on approaches for improving the communities they live in.





Tenancy Management Standard Requirements

7 AHBs understand tenant satisfaction through monitoring and reporting on the performance of service delivery

Context

AHBs should continuously look to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their tenant services. Measuring against a range of performance indicators allows AHBs to determine areas where

improvements are required and to utilise resources in the best way to meet tenant needs.

Tenants are directly affected by the delivery of services by an AHB and are vital stakeholders in establishing

a performance management framework. Tenants should be kept informed of their landlord's performance and given regular opportunities to provide feedback on service delivery.

AHBs must demonstrate:

- Regular monitoring of a range of key performance indicators and reporting of progress against these;
- Effective procedures to ensure performance reporting information is accurate and reliable;
- Regular communication on performance with tenants; and
- Appropriate mechanisms are in place for tenant feedback on performance.



**An tÚdarás Rialála Comhlachtaí
Tithíochta Ceadaithe**

Approved Housing Bodies
Regulatory Authority



52 Mount Street Upper
Dublin 2, DO2 KT73
T: (01) 224 3900
E: info@ahbregulator.ie
W: www.ahbregulator.ie

 [@AHBregulator](https://twitter.com/AHBregulator)

 [ahbregulator](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ahbregulator)

February 2022