



HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

2024 - 2027

cairn ancho

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INTRODUCTION

The Cairn Housing Group (the Group) works together to deliver great homes and services to our customers and communities across Scotland. This strategy applies to:

- Cairn Housing Association (Cairn)
- Ancho
- Pentland Community Enterprise (PCE)

This document updates the Cairn Housing Group Health & Safety Strategy adopted in 2020. It covers the three-year period from 2024-25 to 2026-27, aligning with the Group Business Plan of the same period.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy will enable the Group to maintain good quality, affordable homes and maintain Health and Safety standards through setting clear objectives for the next three years.

The Strategy also takes account of Regulatory Standard and Guidance, in particular Regulatory Standard 1: The governing body sets the Association's strategic direction. It agrees and oversees the strategic and financial plans to achieve its purpose and intended outcomes for its tenants and service users. It pays particular attention to the focus given to Tenant and Resident Health and Safety by the Regulator and other relevant statutory bodies.

SCOPE

The scope of this strategy addresses employees and stock owned and managed by Cairn and Ancho. It also covers employees and stock owned and managed by our subsidiary, PCE.

BACKGROUND

The Cairn Housing Group was formed in 2018, following a partnership agreement between Cairn and Ancho. Prior to this, Cairn has for over 30 years served a wide variety of communities throughout Scotland offering a range of affordable housing and related services. Ancho has served communities in North Ayrshire for over 20 years.

With over 4,400 homes under management and offices in Edinburgh, Inverness, Bellshill, Irvine and Thurso, we address housing needs of people in both urban and rural areas, including dedicated housing for older people, mid-market, and market rent as well as larger properties used as hostel and supported accommodation.

Our aim, in partnership with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities and others, is to create strong communities by improving access to and choice in affordable housing and services.

Cairn Housing Group is a non-profit distributing organisation, controlled by a voluntary Board. We are a recognised Scottish charity and registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator as a Registered Social Landlord (RSL).

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The following is a list of our key stakeholders, who are core to our business delivery and influence this strategy and our future aspirations.

Customers

Our customers include tenants, residents, and service users. Our focus is on delivering the best possible services and developing meaningful relationships between ourselves and our customers. This is the group of stakeholders for whom we exist. These are the people that we deliver services to and build homes for. Our customers are the basis of our organisation and are the most important stakeholder group.

Staff

Our staff team are vital to all that we do as an organisation. We are only as good as those who deliver services on our behalf. It is vital that we provide appropriate incentives, support and direction to our staff in return for performance and high levels of professional behaviour. We will focus on engaging our people and maximising their potential to deliver great services to our customers.

Local Authorities

We work in 24 local authorities across Scotland. The customers we serve are also customers of the local authority, therefore local authorities have significant interest and influence on our work. We will continue to develop our existing good partnership relationships with local authorities to contribute to their strategic objectives in the interests of local communities.

Regulation

We welcome the rigor and scrutiny that audit, and regulation brings to ensure high standards of probity, risk management, governance, and financial health. We will continue our positive and professional working relationship with our Regulators, responding to queries and information requests accurately and in a timely fashion to meet regulatory standards.

Lenders

As a charitable, not-for-profit organisation, and social business, we borrow money from lenders to support both the building of new homes and the refurbishment of existing stock. Communicating with this group of stakeholders and providing them with relevant, accurate and timely information is vital and we will manage our finances to ensure compliance with our financial covenants.

Government

We will continue to seek to make a range of contributions to align our services and investment to meet the national policy priorities of the Scottish Government. We seek, with others, to influence the Government on housing policy, community, and health and social care where appropriate for the benefit of all our customers.

Partners

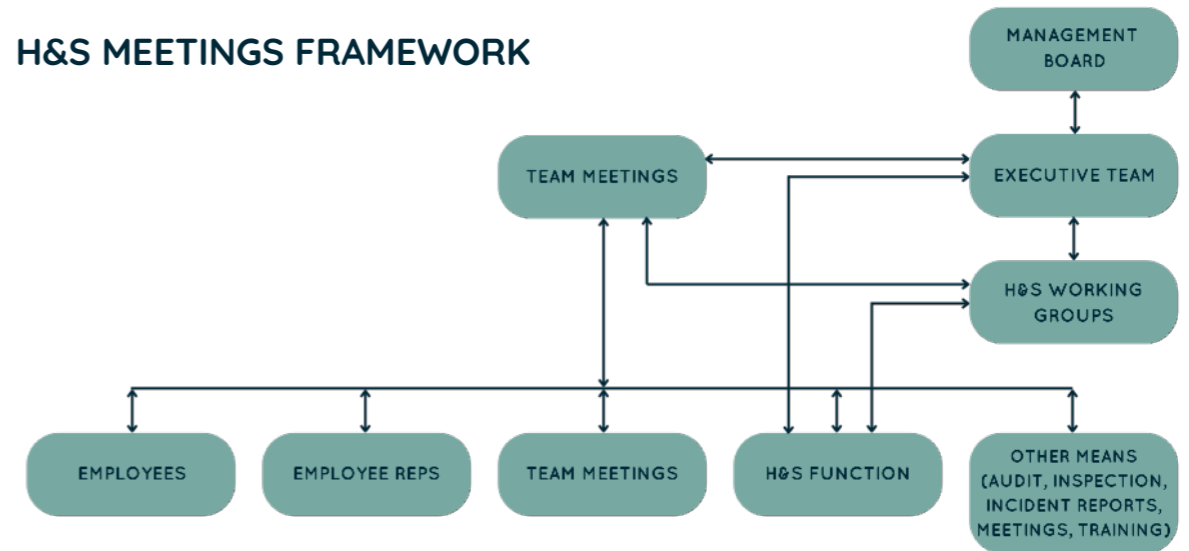
We work with local and national partner organisations on a variety of initiatives. These relationships are valued by us and allow us to deliver a range of projects. We will also seek to learn from others and actively engage in the sector, including the CIH and SFHA, to contribute our voice and influence where appropriate.

Suppliers and Contractors

We work with a number of suppliers, contractors and developers throughout Scotland and have developed a great relationship with all our suppliers. We will ensure positive, professional partnerships following best practice in partnering, procurement and contract management.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

H&S MEETINGS FRAMEWORK



The responsibility for health and safety sits ultimately with the Board and the Executive Team. To support this the Health and Safety Group has been established and is made up of representatives from all areas of the business. The group has the following remit:

1. To provide a forum for consulting with employees on health and safety.
2. To develop and monitor the implementation of the Health and Safety Strategy and Action Plan and to monitor compliance across the organisation with the Health and Safety Policy.
3. To promote a positive culture of compliance and best practice in health and safety culture across the organisation.
4. To provide an escalation route for the discussion of health and safety matters and areas of concern from team meetings and individual members of staff throughout the Group and a route to escalate matters to the Executive Team and health and safety working groups
5. To monitor and make recommendations for improvement, to safety management systems and procedures across the organisation.
6. To monitor and discuss the H&S dashboard and KPIs and recommend mitigation measures.
7. To identify relevant changes to legislation and guidance.

The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of attendees.

Directors, managers and health and safety function:

- Directors to represent Executive Team and their areas of work.
- Managers to represent their areas of work, provide feedback and disseminate information after the meeting to staff in their areas, including at team meetings.
- Health and safety function to advise the meeting on health and safety issues, performance, progress against targets, KPIs, Group health and safety protocols and health and safety legislation and guidance.

Representatives of Employee Safety:

- Representatives to seek any issues that persons want to raise in advance of the meeting and proactively seek views for staff in their areas on the agenda items and any other issues.
- Representatives to actively represent the views of employees in their areas as well as providing comments and proactively entering into discussion on agenda items.
- Representatives to provide feedback and disseminate information after the meeting to staff in their areas, including at team meetings across their area of representation.

LINKS TO THE BUSINESS PLAN

This document provides a framework to deliver against the strategic objectives identified in the Group Business Plan, covering the period 2024-2027. These are aligned with the following strategic outcomes.

Great Homes

Outcome 1

We have high quality homes.

We will continue to prioritise investment in our properties to ensure we provide warm, safe and secure homes for our tenants. We will use the data from our Asset Performance Review to understand the needs of our stock and to target the investment program and consider disposal or demolition and regeneration where appropriate. We will continue to work with our local authority partners to develop new build properties where appropriate to meet housing need across Scotland. We will continue to work towards our green homes and net zero targets and access grant funding where appropriate.

Outcome 2

We have thriving neighbourhoods.

It is not only important that we focus on bricks and mortar, but the neighbourhoods our tenants live in too. We will consider consolidation of where we have stock located to allow us to deliver services to customers in an effective manner. We will support tenants to stay in their homes, by providing access to welfare advice and other support services for those struggling financially. We will continue to reduce the time properties are empty and that we allocate to those in housing need. Working with partners, particularly local authorities, we will improve the estates and communities our tenants live in.



Great Services

Outcome 3

We have customer focused services.

Our customers are at the heart of the services we provide, and we will continue to involve them in our decision-making processes. We will update and modernise the services delivered within our independent living properties to ensure they meet our customer's needs. We will continue to use modern technology to allow customers to contact us in a way that is suitable to them and to deliver services in a timely manner. We will also use modern technology to ensure our customers' homes are safe.



Outcome 4

We are efficient and value for money.

Achieving value for money for our tenants is one of our highest priorities. We will review our charging framework for the services tenants receive to ensure that these are the best value. The service level agreements and our working arrangements with our partners will be updated to ensure we are getting value for money. We will continue to focus on how we procure goods and manage services to ensure we are getting the best value out of tenant's rent.

Great People

Outcome 5

We have skilled and engaged people.

Having the right people equipped with the right skills to deliver our services is important to us, as is our organisational culture expressed through our values. We will continue to invest in our team, whether that be staff or board members. We will continue to ensure that we recruit high quality individuals to work with us.



Outcome 6

We have sound governance.

Sound governance underpins every high performing organisation. We will build on our strong reputation, good relationship with the Regulator and continue to ensure that Cairn is run as effectively as possible. Compliance with regulatory standards and wider legislation, particularly that relating to Tenant and Resident Health and Safety will continue to be our priority. We will ensure we meet national standards and requirements for the safety of our customers.

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the Health and Safety Strategy 2024 to 2027 is to provide a mechanism for effective health and safety management throughout the Group. It is important to set this strategy alongside the Business Plan and the Asset Management Strategy which run for the same time period. The objectives of this strategy compliment the contents of these documents to allow us to achieve better value for money and use of resources. In support of the strategic outcomes identified in the Business Plan, the objectives of this Strategy are set out below:



OBJECTIVE 1: TENANT AND RESIDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY

- We will ensure that health and safety considerations are built into the review of the court offering (as outlined in the Business Plan)
- We will ensure effective compliance with applicable statutory and non-statutory requirements across all our stock, focusing on tenant safety and improved processes.
- We will implement the findings from the water hygiene audit and our ongoing improvement plan.
- We will respond to the findings of the fire safety risk assessments
- We will continue to ensure that our properties are compliant with gas safety
- We will ensure that our properties are EICR compliant
- We will manage asbestos
- We will respond to damp, mould and condensation guidance
- We will ensure that our lifts are compliant

OBJECTIVE 2: GOVERNANCE

- We will ensure that there is effective governance of the delivery of health and safety including a health, safety and wellbeing management system.
- We will have a clear health and safety communication framework
- We will have quarterly reporting on tenant health and safety
- We will aspire to be compliant with ISO 45001 by the end of this strategy.

OBJECTIVE 3: STAFF WELLBEING

- We will develop and review suitable and sufficient risk assessments, COSHH assessments and manual handling assessments across the Group.
- We will ensure that our office estate is health and safety compliant.
- We will develop staff wellbeing responses in line with our People Strategy

OBJECTIVE 4: TRAINING AND RESOURCING

- We will train staff appropriately in line with our health and safety requirements
- We will establish a system of training records to support our health and safety management system.
- We will investigate appropriate resourcing for the health and safety and compliance functions.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE	COMMITMENT	ACTION	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER
Objective 1: Tenant and Resident Health and Safety	We will ensure that H&S considerations are built into the review of the Court offering (as outlined in the Business Plan)	Clarity around H&S roles and responsibilities with the courts Clear accountability paths in line with procedures	As per Business Plan	Director of Customer Services
	We will implement the findings from the water hygiene audit and our ongoing improvement plan	Develop and implement a written scheme of control for all sheltered and retirement housing courts. Address legionella risk assessments at all courts Develop testing regime and automate where possible in line with the Digital strategy	By the end of 2024	Director of Property Services
	We will respond to the findings of the Fire Safety risk assessments	Reduce the fire assessment risk rating to trivial at 50% of sheltered and retirement housing courts.	By the end of 2026	Director of Property Services
	We will continue to ensure that our properties are compliant with gas safety	All gas safety inspections to be carried out within timescale	100% target	Director of Property Services
	We will ensure that our properties are EICR compliant	All EICR checks to be done within timescale	100% by end of 2024	Director of Property Services
	We will ensure that there is effective management of our Asbestos risk	Accessible asbestos register maintained and updated as required. Risk-based approach agreed for any identified asbestos.	Ongoing By end of 2024	Director of Property Services
	We will ensure all cases of Damp, mould and condensation are investigated and addressed	All DMC cases to be responded to in line with policy and responses in timescale.	100% target	Director of Property Services
Objective 2: Governance	We will ensure that there is effective governance of the delivery of health and safety in line with the Groups priorities	Revise and develop CHG Health and Safety and Welfare control manual and management system. Review and develop structure and format of H&S management including ongoing support for the H&S group. Revise and develop protocols for the reporting, investigation and management of H&S incidents, hazards and near misses Revise and develop protocols for H&S risk assessments and safe systems of work Review and develop electronic forms or similar for the reporting, management and review of H&S monitoring and actions	By end of 2024/25	Director of Business Services
	We will have a clear communication framework	Review and revise protocols for H&S communications, both internally and externally Clearly communicate objectives, targets and management programmes across the organisation	By end of 2024/25	Director of Business Services
	We will aspire to be compliant with ISO 45001 by the end of this strategy.	Develop and implement an ISO 45001 compliant H&S management system including a structure of internal audit.	By 2027	Director of Business Services

OBJECTIVE	COMMITMENT	ACTION	TARGET DATE	LEAD OFFICER
Objective 3: Staff Wellbeing	We will develop and review suitable and sufficient risk, COSHH and manual handling assessments across the Group.	All COSHH assessments completed and available to staff in an accessible way Manual handling assessments completed for all relevant areas	By end of 2024/25	Director of Customer Services and Director of Property Services
	We will ensure that our offices are H&S compliant.	All offices 100% fire compliant	By 2027	Director of Finance and People Services
	We will develop staff wellbeing responses in line with our People Strategy and develop wellbeing protocols and initiatives.	Lone working policy and procedure review DSE assessments in office and at home Staff mental health support in place	By the end of 2025/26	Director of Business Services
Objective 4: Training and Resourcing	We will train staff appropriately in line with our H&S requirements	Review and revise protocols for H&S training, competence and awareness, including H&S training needs matrix	By end of 2024/25	Director of Business Services
	We will establish a system of training records to support our H&S management system.	Development of an electronic training database	By end of 2024/25	Director of Business Services
	We will investigate appropriate resourcing for the H&S and Compliance functions	Carry out a resource analysis against the current legislative demands	By 2025/26	Executive Team

RISK MANAGEMENT

Cairn and Ancho operate a strategic risk register of the following 14 risks that are monitored monthly by the Executive Team and quarterly by the Audit and Performance Committee. They are also annually assessed by the Board to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The following Strategic Risks apply particularly to this Strategy:

STRATEGIC RISKS	
5	There is a risk that the organisation fails to deliver its asset management strategy and maintain the quality of its stock
7	There is a risk that we fail to comply with legislation and regulatory standards



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