

## Minerva Housing Association

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The inspection of Minerva Housing Association took place in January 2005. It was carried out by Communities Scotland under section 69 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 on behalf of Scottish Ministers. Our purpose in inspection is to provide an independent external assessment of the effectiveness of housing service delivery and make recommendations to help improvement. Inspections are conducted within a published framework of Performance Standards. Much of Minerva's business is the provision of care and housing support, which is outside the remit of this inspection. This report concentrates on the housing services provided by the Association and on its governance and financial management as a registered social landlord.

### Inspection Findings

Minerva Housing Association was established in 1990 to provide housing and a range of care and support services for people with learning disabilities. It has 17 flats in Prestwick, South Ayrshire, and also provides care on an outreach basis beyond its local area.

Minerva has a clear mission to provide housing and support for those with learning disabilities and it has a forward looking approach to its business. However, it has found it difficult in the past five years to formulate long-term plans with any degree of certainty. The Association has been successful in developing the outreach side of its operations, leading to considerably increased turnover. There is a degree of risk associated with this approach in a competitive care and housing support market but Minerva is financially viable in the medium term and its projections indicate that it should be sustainable in the longer term.

Individual committee members have relevant knowledge and skills, are motivated to provide good services and have a shared vision for the Association. Despite these strengths, governance has been generally poor. Leadership and direction in Minerva has fluctuated, with several changes in Chief Officer and Chair. The Association has an inadequate membership base and does not take a sufficiently strategic approach to its future direction, due to a focus on operational issues and a lack of formal planning. Minerva's performance in meeting certain ethical standards applying to RSLs is a major weakness.

Key strengths in Minerva's services:

- Good access to its housing for those with particular needs, including homeless people;
- Meeting housing need through letting and providing choice where possible;
- Its work to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness among its tenants;
- Attractive, well maintained homes and environment;
- Its good quality responsive repairs service, and;
- Listening and responding to tenants' views.

Key areas for improvement in Minerva's services:

- Providing tenants with appropriate tenancy agreements;
- Compliance with gas safety regulations;
- Ensuring that all relevant people from diverse communities are encouraged to access its houses;
- Providing tenants with their rights to repair and compensation, and;
- Compliance with its duty to put an asbestos management plan in place.

### Next steps

As for all inspected organisations, we require Minerva to give this Summary report to all its tenants. Minerva should respond to our findings by submitting an improvement plan, for agreement with us, as part of a regulatory support strategy, within 8 weeks of the publication of this report.

### How to get more information and contact details

If you would like to see Minerva's improvement plan you should contact::

Minerva Housing Association  
Unit 3 Ladykirk Business Park  
Prestwick  
KA9 2TA

Telephone: 01292 471 484

The full report is on our website at <http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk> .  
This Summary can also be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For information please contact Janette Campbell on 0131 479 5163 or email: [campbellj@communitiesscotland.gov.uk](mailto:campbellj@communitiesscotland.gov.uk)

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