

[Empower Housing Association's grading under review](#)

News story

Providers being investigated for an issue regarding their compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard are added to the regulator's GUR list.



The Regulator of Social Housing reports that Empower Housing Association Limited has been placed on its gradings under review list today (23 July 2021).

At the time of the last [Statistical Data Return](#), the provider had fewer than 1,000 homes and therefore does not have a current published regulatory grading in accordance with our established procedures.

The regulator is currently investigating matters which may impact on Empower's compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard.

The regulator's [gradings under review list](#) is available on the [website](#).

Further information

For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#).

For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.

Notes to editors

1. The GUR lists providers where we are investigating a matter that might result in them being assessed as non-compliant in relation to the regulator's Governance and Financial Viability Standard.
2. The [regulatory standards](#) can be found on the RSH website.

3. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

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[Team GB athletes to fly the 'preventing plastic pollution' flag](#)

An Environment Agency flyer made of plantable (UK-only) seed paper has been included in the athletes' official Tokyo Olympic 2020 kit bags.

It signposts athletes to the [Big Plastic Pledge website](#) – a global campaign founded by Olympic sailing champion Hannah Mills that aims to unite athletes and fans from around the world to help tackle the issue of plastic pollution and eradicate single-use plastic in sport.

Gold medallist Hannah Mills said:

It's great to have this message in the Team GB kit bags. I believe through the power of sport, we can change the fate of our planet.

The flyer features 3 key messages for athletes – make one simple change, like using a bamboo toothbrush instead of plastic varieties, shout about their preventing plastic pollution support, and use their position as worldwide role models to influence others.

It has been produced by the Environment Agency's plastics and sustainability team on behalf of the [Interreg Preventing Plastic Pollution \(PPP\)](#) project, a cross-Channel partnership of 18 expert organisations which identifies and targets hotspots for plastic, embeds behaviour change in local communities and businesses, and implements effective solutions and alternatives.

The flyer is the first of a number of initiatives with Team GB having also provided learning and teaching resources for its family and school education programme [Travel to Tokyo](#) – a free programme of virtual activities for children aged 5 to 11.

Environment Agency project officer Hannah Amor said:

We are thrilled to be working with representatives for Team GB and the Big Plastic Pledge. The flyer is an incredible opportunity to encourage athletes to help prevent plastic pollution and become worldwide ambassadors for behaviour change.

Everyone has a part to play in minimising the amount of avoidable plastic they use. It is estimated that 12 million tonnes of plastic enters the environment each year – that is a bin lorry load every minute. If everyone kicks plastic out of sport and is kinder to our planet, we could see this staggering figure reduce, helping to protect our wellbeing and wildlife for generations to come.

As a regulator, preventing waste plastic entering the environment by cracking down on waste crime and poor waste management is a key activity for the Environment Agency. As an influencer, it also has an ambition to promote better environmental practices that result in a reduction of plastic waste, helping to achieve the goals and commitments outlined in its 5 year plan to create better place for people, wildlife and the environment, and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

Under the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan, it is committed to eliminating all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. Steps already taken by ministers include banning microbeads in rinse-off personal care products, prohibiting the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds, and introducing a charge for single-use carrier bags which has cut sales by 95% in the main supermarkets, with this being extended to all retailers in May and increased to a minimum of 10p.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

I'm thoroughly looking forward to seeing Team GB in action at the Olympics, setting the pace both on the track and by doing their bit to prevent plastic pollution.

With all eyes on the Games, this is a fantastic opportunity to draw attention to the scourge of plastic pollution and what we can do to stop it.

The UK is a global leader in tackling plastic pollution, from banning the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds to our plans for a deposit return scheme to stop millions of plastic bottles being littered every year, and I hope the heroes of Team GB will pick up the baton and help us win the race.

Notes to editors

Preventing Plastic Pollution is a €14million funded EU INTERREG VA France

(Channel) England Programme project co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund which works mainly across 7 pilot sites: Brest Harbour, Bay of Douarnenez, Bay of Veys, Poole Harbour, and the Medway, Tamar, and Great Ouse estuaries.

The 18 partners are the Environment Agency, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Queen Mary University of London, LABOCEA Conseil, Expertise et Analyses, Syndicat mixte établissement public de gestion et d'aménagement de la baie de Douarnenez, Office Français De La Biodiversité, Parc naturel marin d'Iroise, Brest Métropole, Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Conseil départemental de la Manche, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer, The Rivers Trust, Syndicat de bassin de l'Elorn, ACTIMAR, Brest'aim, Westcountry Rivers Trust, South East Rivers Trust and Plymouth City Council.

Further policies to cut plastic waste are also underway in government, including a plastic packaging tax from April 2022, a Deposit Return Scheme for single-use drinks containers, an Extended Produce Responsibility system which will make producers more responsible for their packaging waste and incentivise them to hit higher recycling targets, and consistent collections to ensure that more plastic waste is captured in homes and sent for recycling.

[COP President addresses G20 Climate and Energy meeting in Naples](#)

Thank you to all our Italian colleagues for hosting us at this crucial G20 meeting.

Friends, we are 100 days from COP26 where the global community expects world leaders to come together, and with one voice, demonstrate that we are living up to the expectations of the Paris Agreement, that we are doing all we can to limit global temperature rises to well below 2 degrees and closer to 1.5 degrees.

This G20 ministerial is a vital step on the road to Glasgow.

Countries in this room represent almost 80 percent of global emissions. And 85 percent of the global economy.

And what we do, what we decide, and the level of ambition we demonstrate, matters.

We hold in our hands the keys to our children's future.

And the choices we make, literally today, the choices we make, can unlock a

healthier, safer, cleaner future, or they can drive the Paris Agreement goals further out of reach.

And I think as friends we have to be frank: our decisions to date have harmed our children's future.

Since the Paris Agreement was put in place, global emissions have gone up, not down.

Globally a million species face extinction because of human activity, because of our treatment of the planet.

So my friends, be in no doubt, that what we decide today really matters.

And the eyes of the world, the eyes of our children, are on us.

Each of us need only look to our own doorsteps to recognise why, every fraction of a degree in global temperature rises makes a difference.

Extreme weather is on the march across the world.

Wildfires are raging across North America.

Floods in China and across Europe, are leaving a trail of devastation in their wake.

In the past few years, South Africa has faced municipal water supplies running dry.

Super Cyclone Amphan unleashed destruction in Bangladesh and India.

Last year Jakarta experienced the biggest rainfall since records began, causing 100,000 people to evacuate their homes.

In Brazil we have seen forests on fire.

Permafrost is melting in Russia.

Dust storms, caused by desertification are costing Saudi Arabia some billions of dollars a year.

And in the last few weeks alone, Turkey has recorded its highest ever temperature.

Friends, people are dying now because we are losing control of climate change.

People are losing their livelihoods, their homes.

And their communities are being destroyed.

So we have to ask ourselves, how did it come to this?

We cannot say that we were not warned.

We cannot say that scientists had not raised the red flag.

We knew this was coming, and we know that without change, the situation will get far worse.

Climate change is not a distant threat, one that we can try and fix in 2 years, 5 years or 10 years.

We must collectively and decisively deal with this foe now, before it overwhelms us.

Sadly, it is already starting to overwhelm the most climate vulnerable nations on earth.

Small island developing states.

Countries which have done the least to cause the impacts they are experiencing.

Countries like Antigua and Barbuda, where I have seen the destructive power of hurricanes like Irma, which are increasing in ferocity and frequency.

And which has scarred the country, causing death, which can never be overcome, and damage which, 4 years on, has not been repaired.

Or mountain states like Nepal, where I have spoken to communities driven out of their villages, due to a combination of droughts and flooding from melting glaciers.

Or countries in Africa, like Ethiopia, where crops have been destroyed because of plagues of locusts, spawned by a changing climate.

Friends, these people are scared for their futures.

Communities that have, through no action of their own, had their livelihoods and their basic sources of food stolen from them.

So what do we need to do to play our part in defeating this threat?

As the Paris Agreement, which we have all signed, says, we need to limit temperature rises to well below 2 degrees, closer to 1.5 degrees.

This is the only way to protect our people and our economies.

We can and must deliver on the 100 billion dollar commitment and increase action on adaptation.

Together we need to make clear our commitment to keeping 1.5 alive, to take the steps required to decarbonise our economies, agreeing to a net zero world by the middle of this century, and enhancing our 2030 commitments to get us on this track.

Friends, we all need to make these commitments.

And we have to show that this isn't just about our words, it's about our actions.

We know that unabated coal power is incompatible with a future that keeps 1.5 alive.

So let us tell the world today, we will seek to end unabated coal both at home and overseas.

We need to agree on these steps and make that clear through our statements today.

Because we have a choice, we can open the door to a healthier, cleaner and safer future for our children, or we can miss our chance.

Friends, I say to you, we must show the world that the G20 were not missing in action when it mattered most.

That confronted with the greatest threat to our planet, we stood tall and we acted.

That we took the decisions to secure our future and that of our children.

So we can look them in the eye and say: today, when it mattered most, we picked the planet.

[UK Minister for South Asia Lord Ahmad arrives in Uzbekistan for 2-day visit](#)

World news story

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict visited Uzbekistan on 15-16 July 2021.



The purpose of his visit was primarily to participate in the international conference “Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity. Challenges and Opportunities” and to hold talks on UK-Uzbekistan bilateral relations and UK support for Uzbekistan’s ambitious reform process.

During the visit Lord Ahmad met high-level Uzbek officials including Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister of Justice Ruslanbek Davletov, Chairperson of the Senate Tanzila Narbaeva, First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber and Director of the National Human Rights Centre Dr Akmal Saidov, Human Rights Ombudsman Feruza Eshmatova, Special Representative for Afghanistan, Ismatulla Irgashev.

Lord Ahmad also participated in Military Cooperation Plan signing ceremony at the Ministry of Defence and spoke at the plenary session of the Connectivity Conference.

In his speech, Lord Ahmad noted:

The focus of this conference on regional connectivity is of paramount importance. International coordination and regional cooperation form the backbone for secure, prosperous and sustainable development. The UK will do all it can to support in this effort...

We are proud to fund the Asia Regional Trade and Connectivity Programme and CASA 1000 – projects that are improving cross-border infrastructure, creating jobs and new trading opportunities, reducing carbon emissions, and bringing a more reliable energy supply to millions of households and businesses across this incredible region.

For further information

Please follow us on social media channels:

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[UK’s International Champion on adaptation and resilience for COP26 Presidency concludes virtual Paraguay](#)

visit

The British Embassy in Asuncion received the virtual visit of the Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change and UK International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency, on 19 and 20 July, 2021.

Thanks to technology, and a bit of help on the ground, the visit began by planting a Tajy native tree at the Cerro Ñemby Park from 10,000km away. During the first day, Minister Trevelyan met with the Paraguay Chapter of the UN Global Compact, formed of businesses committed to tackling climate change through active participation in COP26 campaigns such as the Race to Zero.

She also held meetings with the National Youth Network, who are at the forefront of climate change activism. The day ended with a roundtable with leading scholars working on adaptation and resilience research in Paraguay.

HMA Ramin Navai planted the “tajy” tree in honour of the virtual visit of Minister Trevelyan.

The Municipality of the city of Ñemby donated a memorial sign to commemorate the virtual visit.

On the second and final day, Minister Trevelyan met with Paraguayan Vice President Hugo Velazquez, the Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Ariel Oviedo and senior members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and congratulated Paraguay on its recent initiatives in climate change.

Just this month, the Paraguayan government announced an ambitious new set of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), including an adaptation communication. Paraguay also recently co-chaired, along with Chile, an important decarbonisation summit for regional finance ministries and chaired the Independent Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), a group of eight countries that share interests and positions on climate change.

Minister Trevelyan was joined throughout her visit by the British Ambassador to Paraguay, Ramin Navai, his Embassy team and the British COP26 Regional Ambassador for Latin America and the Caribbean, Fiona Clouder. Ambassador Ramin Navai said:

Paraguay has great potential for clean growth and it is a key priority for me as Ambassador to support Paraguay in its path to sustainable development. We hope this visit opens the door to many opportunities for collaboration between our nations across all sectors represented within this visit.

On the visit, Minister Trevelyan said:

The UK is deeply committed to helping Paraguay continue advancing in this global effort. There is a bright path ahead for this proud nation and the UK stands with Paraguay in realising its sustainable future.