

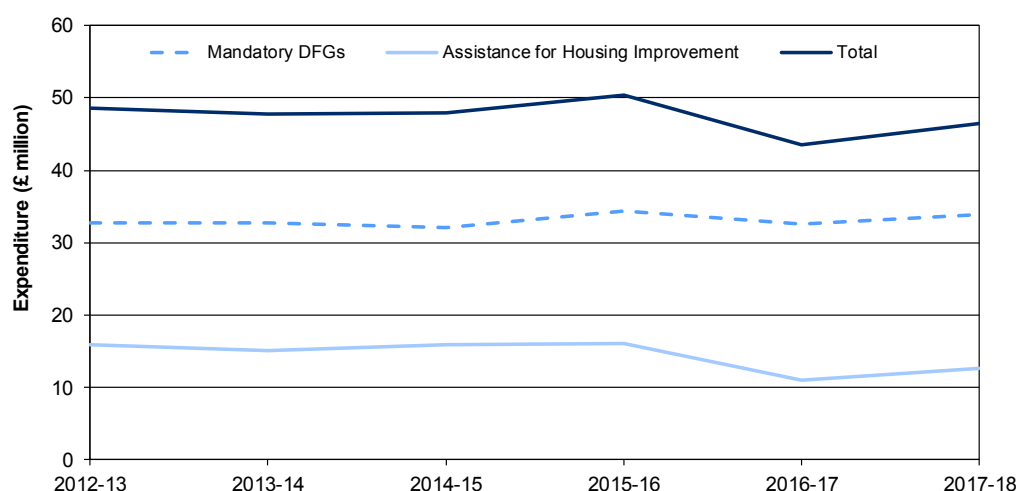


## Assistance for housing improvement by local authorities, 2017-18

07 Feb 2019  
SFR 9/2019

Financial help is provided by local authorities, to owners and tenants, for home improvement and repair under the [Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#).

### Total expenditure on all types of assistance for housing improvement, including Disabled Facilities Grants



(r) One Local authority revised DFG expenditure for 2015-16, and therefore total expenditure.

- During 2017-18 overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)) increased by 7 per cent compared with the previous year to £46.5 million. Of the 22 local authorities, 13 reported an increase in overall expenditure.
- During 2017-18, 4,144 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, with a total value of £33.9 million, were completed by local authorities in Wales. This represents almost three quarters (73 per cent) of the overall expenditure on private sector renewal.

Renewal areas are established to improve housing and general amenities of an area where social and environmental problems are combined with poor housing.

- During 2017-18, the number of renewal areas in operation decreased to 6 and overall expenditure in these areas decreased by 72 per cent to £3.9 million.

### About this release

This release presents information about assistance provided by local authorities for housing improvement. It includes information on mandatory disabled facilities grants which are paid by a local authority and help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable a disabled person to continue to live there. Assistance is primarily aimed at improving private sector housing but is also provided for social housing via housing renewal schemes. The information is used to monitor trends in activity undertaken by local authorities to improve the quality of housing stock within their area.

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# 1. Overall expenditure on all assistance for housing improvement by local authorities, including disabled facilities grants (DFGs)

This section of the release looks at the overall expenditure across Wales on all types of home improvement, and repair, where assistance has been provided by the local authority. This includes expenditure by the local authorities themselves (in the form of grants and loans) and money spent on both mandatory disabled facilities grants (DFGs) as approved under the 1996 Act and other non-mandatory assistance. DFGs are grants paid by a local authority which can help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable a disabled person to continue to live there.

It also includes other non-local authority expenditure in the form of third party assistance, and loans, facilitated by the local authorities, and the financial contributions made by individual residents. It does not include any expenditure by individuals on home improvement which does not involve, or is not supported by, the local authority.

Further information on Disabled Facilities Grants is provided in the [Key Quality Information](#) and Glossary sections of this release.

[Table 1](#) below shows the overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement, which includes expenditure on mandatory DFGs and other non-mandatory assistance. Following a decrease during 2016-17, a total of £46.5 million was spent on all types of home improvement and repair in 2017-18, which is up by 7 percent on the previous year.

**Table 1 – Overall expenditure on all assistance for housing improvement, including disabled facilities grants (DFGs) by type of expenditure**

								£ thousands
	Direct assistance by local authority			Third party assistance and Residents' loans facilitated by			Non- Mandatory	Total expenditure (including DFGs)
Year	Grants	Loans	Total	contribution	the local authority	Mandatory DFGs	DFGs	
2012-13	12,055	1,511	13,566	952	422	32,700	982	48,622
2013-14	9,841	1,598	11,439	1,349	1,192	32,726	1,050	47,757
2014-15	9,004	2,284	11,288	875	2,599	32,096	1,088	47,945
2015-16	5,844	3,331 (r)	9,174 (r)	1,551	3,868	34,345	1,401	50,341 (r)
2016-17	5,057	2,682 (r)	7,740 (r)	705	470	32,520 (r)	2,039 (r)	43,474 (r)
2017-18	5,997	2,875	8,872	1,067	413	33,870	2,231	46,453

Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement and Disabled Facilities Grants

(r) Bridgend revised DFG expenditure for 2016-17 and Neath Port Talbot revised loan expenditure for 2015-16 and 2016-17, and therefore total expenditure for these years.

Since 2008-09, mandatory DFGs have contributed more to the total expenditure than other types of assistance for housing improvement. During 2017-18, mandatory DFGs accounted for almost three quarters of all spending (73 per cent), with non-mandatory DFGs accounting for a further 5 per cent.

In recent years, in terms of direct assistance by local authorities, the provision of loans had been increasing whilst direct assistance via grants (excluding DFGs) had been decreasing. During 2017-18, however, the amount spent on both increased. Local authorities across Wales spent 19

per cent more on direct assistance via grants (excluding DFGs) and 7 per cent more on the provision of loans than they did in 2016-17.

Following a decrease of 78 per cent in 2016-17 in non-local authority expenditure (third party assistance, loans and the financial contributions made by individual residents), 2017-18 saw an increase of just over a quarter 26 per cent. However, as was the case in 2016-17, this still only accounted for just 3 per cent of overall spend.

**Table 2 – Overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement, including DFGs, by local authority area (a)**

*£ thousands*

Local Authority	2016-17	2017-18	Difference between 2016-17 and 2017-18 (£)	Difference between 2016-17 and 2017-18 (%)
Isle of Anglesey	1,039	850	-189	-18.2
Gwynedd	1,300	1,440	141	10.8
Conwy	1,105	1,691	586	53.0
Denbighshire	1,018	1,167	148	14.6
Flintshire	1,362	941	-421	-30.9
Wrexham	2,776	3,421	645	23.2
Powys	2,176	2,298	121	5.6
Ceredigion	1,419	1,026	-393	-27.7
Pembrokeshire	1,020	1,015	-5	-0.5
Carmarthenshire	2,061	2,371	310	15.0
Swansea	4,423	5,125	702	15.9
Neath Port Talbot	3,042 (r)	3,272	230	7.6
Bridgend	2,695 (r)	2,236	-458	-17.0
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,447	1,239	-208	-14.4
Cardiff	5,588	6,452	864	15.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4,119	4,365	246	6.0
Merthyr Tydfil	786	1,076	290	36.9
Caerphilly	2,164	1,957	-207	-9.6
Blaenau Gwent	1,062	793	-270	-25.4
Torfaen	1,185	1,837	651	55.0
Monmouthshire	508	740	232	45.8
Newport	1,177	1,144	-34	-2.9
<b>Wales</b>	<b>43,474 (r)</b>	<b>46,453</b>	<b>2,979</b>	<b>6.9</b>

Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement and Disabled Facilities Grants

(a) See point 13 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

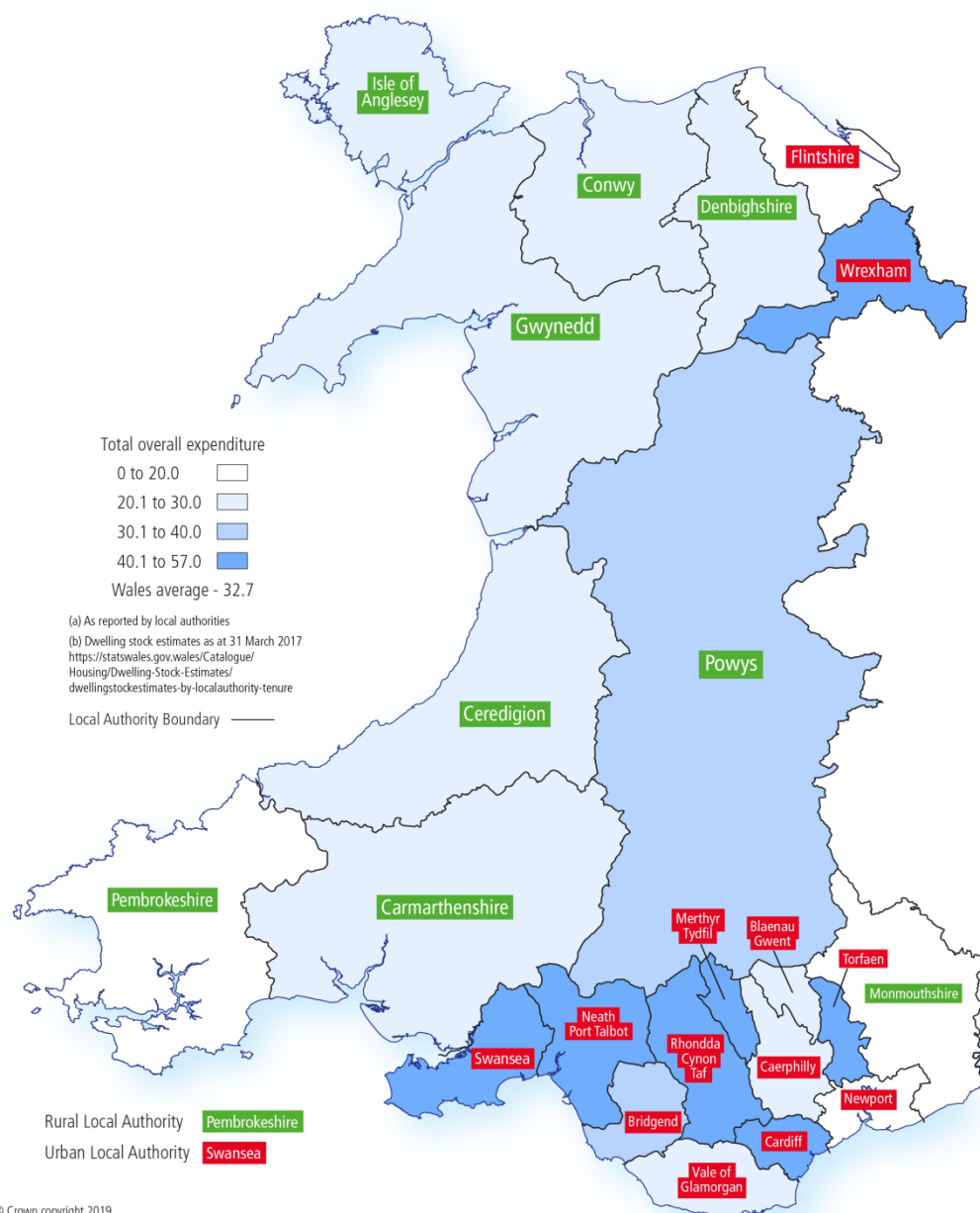
(r) Bridgend revised DFG expenditure and Neath Port Talbot revised loan expenditure for 2016-17.

At a local authority level 9 of the 22 local authorities reported decreases in overall expenditure compared with the previous year and 13 reported an increase. The decreases in expenditure reported ranged from 31 per cent (£421,000 less) in Flintshire to 0.5 per cent (£5,000 less) in Pembrokeshire ([Table 2](#)).

The percentage increases in overall expenditure compared with the previous year were generally much higher, ranging from 55 per cent (£651,000 more) in Torfaen to 6 per cent in both Powys (£121,000 more) and Rhondda Cynon Taff (£246,000 more) and ([Table 2](#)).

# Assistance for Housing Improvement

**Map 1:** Total overall expenditure (Including mandatory DFGs) during 2017-18 per 1,000 dwellings (a) (b) (£ thousands)



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February 2019

**OGL**

Cardiff reported the highest amount of overall spending on assistance for housing improvement during 2017-18 (£6.5 million). However, taking into account the number of dwellings in each area, Wrexham was the local authority with the highest rate of spending (£56,600 per 1,000 dwellings), followed by Neath Port Talbot (£50,000 per 1,000 dwellings).

In contrast, Monmouthshire reported the lowest overall spending on assistance for housing improvement (£740,000 in total), while Flintshire had the lowest rate of spending at just £13,900 per 1,000 dwellings.

## **2. Expenditure on assistance for housing improvement by local authorities, excluding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)**

This section of the release looks at the expenditure by both local authorities and others on home improvement and repair, but excludes spending on mandatory DFGs and any additional non-mandatory DFG assistance. Assistance is available in three forms:

- direct assistance by the local authority in the form of grants and loans
- third party loans and other assistance facilitated by the local authority
- residents' contributions

During 2017-18 expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs) increased by 16 per cent to £10.4 million compared with £8.9 million in the previous year.

### **2.1 Expenditure by type of assistance (excluding DFGs)**

Though there were increases during 2017-18 in the amount of direct assistance via local authority grants and loans, the largest increase was in the form of residents' contribution. These were up by 51 per cent to £1.1 million, compared with £705,000 in 2016-17. Residents' contributions have fluctuated since information was collected in 2009-10, as the amount of contributions will depend on the overall costs for different projects in each year. The 2017-18 residents contributions figure was up on the previous year mainly due to increases in 5 of the 22 local authorities. The largest increase (£187,000) was reported in Powys, followed by Merthyr Tydfil with an increase of around £180,000.

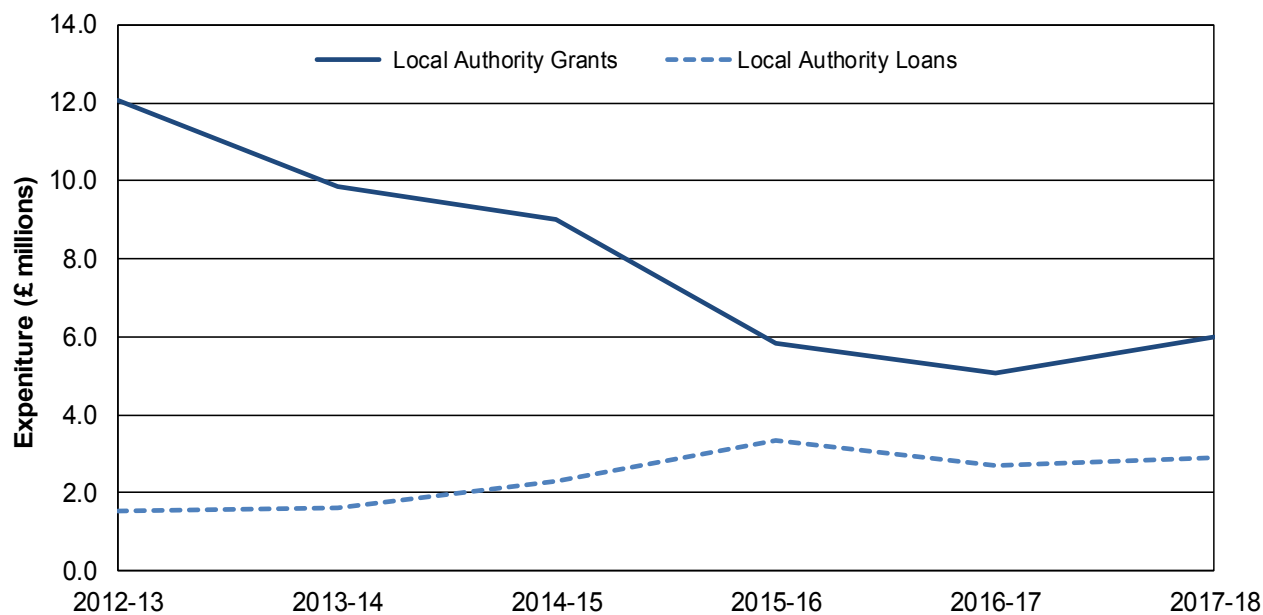
The majority of the expenditure, £8.9 million (86 per cent), continued to be via direct assistance by authorities in the form of grants and loans. In recent years, there has been a distinct move away from grants towards loans. During 2017-18, however, the amount spent on both increased. Expenditure on grants was up by 19 per cent during 2017-18 to £6.0 million and expenditure on loans increased by 7 per cent during 2017-18 to £2.9 million ([Chart 1](#)).

In contrast, expenditure in the form of third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authority decreased in 2017-18 compared to the previous year, down by 12 per cent. The decrease was mainly due to the ending of funding for particular schemes<sup>1</sup> in 2017-18; with only two local authorities responsible for the total £413,000 spend (Isle of Anglesey and Wrexham).

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<sup>1</sup> These included funding for energy efficiency schemes including Arbed and National Energy Action (NEA) schemes, houses into homes and innovative funding.

**Chart 1 – Expenditure on direct assistance provided by local authorities by type of assistance (excluding DFGs) (a).**



Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

(a) See point 13 in [Key Quality Information](#) for details of expenditure included.

Further information on the types of organisations providing third party loans and assistance is provided in the Glossary section of this release.

Detailed data tables on expenditure by type of assistance can be found on [StatsWales](#).

## 2.2 Number of dwellings improved (excluding DFGs)

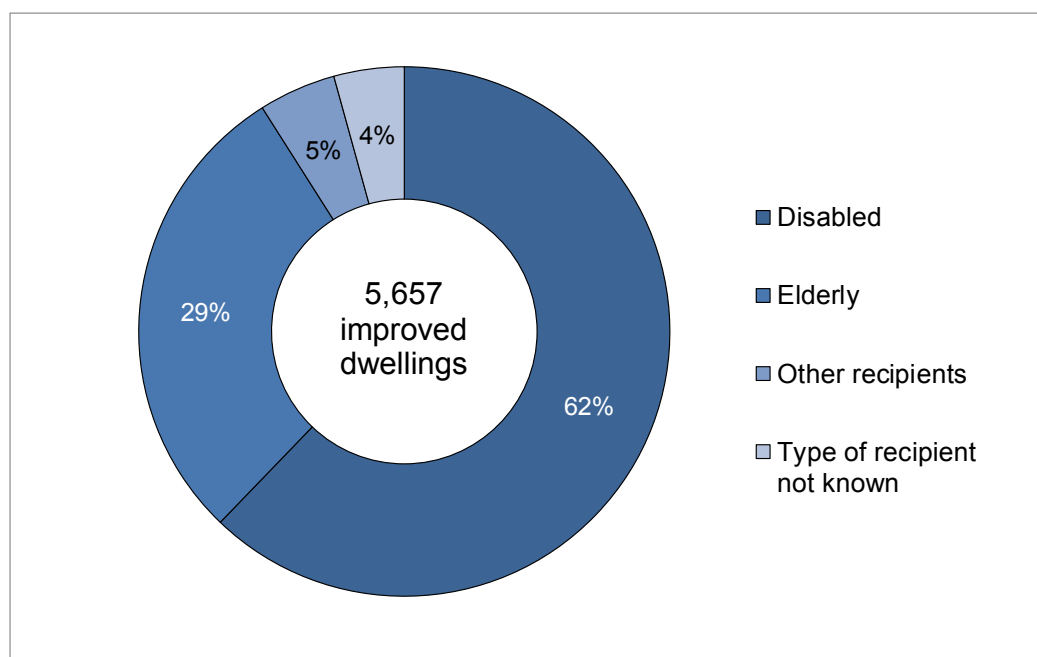
This section of the release looks at the number of dwellings improved as a result of expenditure by the local authority in the form of grants, loans and other third party assistance under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The number of dwellings improved will only include those dwellings where the improvement work has been completed during the year.

During 2017-18, 5,657 dwellings were improved, which is a decrease of 2 per cent compared with the previous year. Over the same period, however, overall expenditure (excluding DFGs) increased by 16 per cent to £10.4 million as, on average, more was spent on each dwelling improved. The amount spent per dwelling in 2017-18 was around £1,800 compared with around £1,500 during the previous year. There can be considerable variation in the amount spent per dwelling across the different local authorities depending on the type of assistance provided.

## Dwellings improved by type of recipient

Assistance for housing improvement is usually targeted towards more vulnerable households, though assistance is not limited to them.

**Chart 2 – Percentage of dwellings improved, by type of recipient) (a)**



Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

(a) Includes assistance for housing improvement under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. May also include some residual activity under the 1996 Act. Does not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs).

It should be noted that a recipient can only be recorded under one category type even though it may be possible for a recipient to belong to more than one group. Please see the Key Quality Information section for further information.

The highest proportion of dwellings improved continued to be for disabled recipients accounting for 62 percent of all dwellings improved during 2017-18 compared with 57 per cent in 2016-17. The number of homes improved for the disabled also increased by 6 per cent during 2017-18 to 3,518 dwellings.

The number improved for the elderly however was down by 14 per cent on the previous year to 1,631 dwellings, accounting for 29 per cent of all dwellings improved, compared with a third in 2016-17 ([Chart 2](#)).

## Dwellings improved by tenure

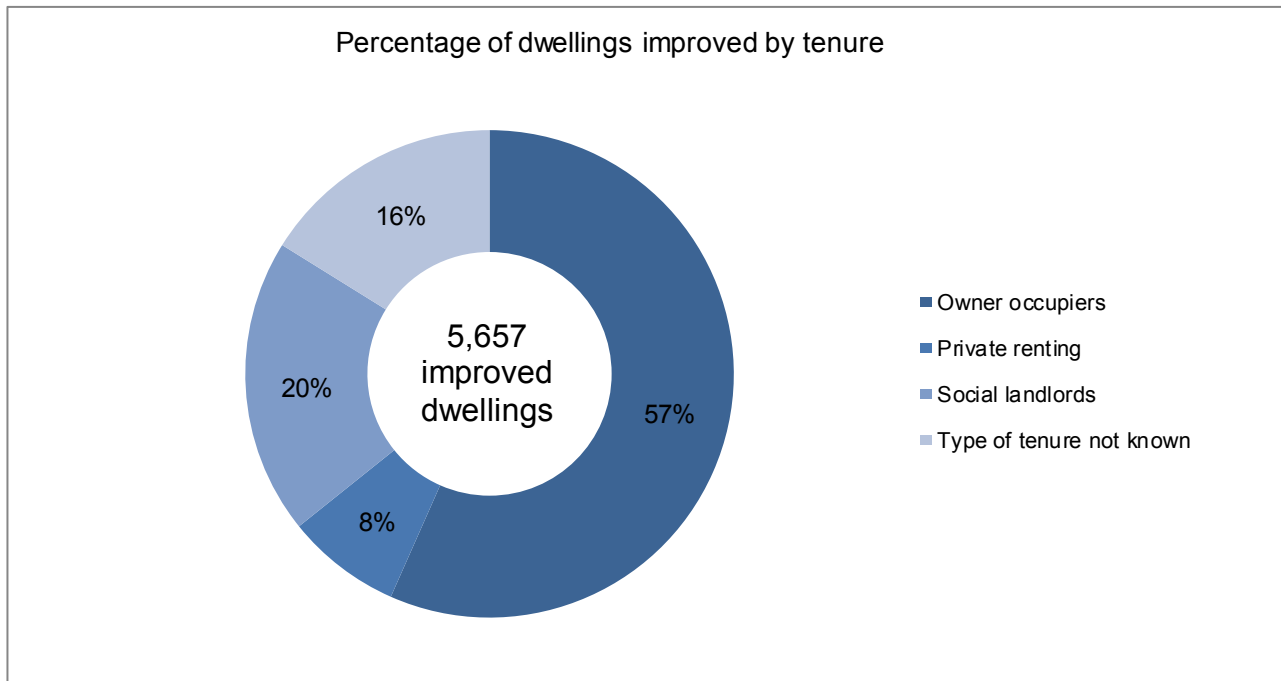
During 2017-18, the majority of dwellings improved continued to be in the private sector (owner occupied and privately rented), most of which were owner occupied. Around 57 per cent (3,203 dwellings) of the dwellings improved were owner occupied, down from 61 per cent during 2016-17. A further 8 per cent (431 dwellings) were privately rented dwellings, up from 6 per cent (357 dwellings) in 2016-17 ([Chart 3](#)).

During 2017-18, there was an increase in both the number and proportion of social sector dwellings improved. The number was up by almost a third (31 percent) on the previous year to 1,110 dwellings, accounting for 20 per cent of dwellings improved, compared with 15 per cent in 2016-17.



The type of tenure was unknown for 16 per cent (913 dwellings) of the dwellings improved during 2017-18, which is lower than the 18 per cent recorded during 2016-17.

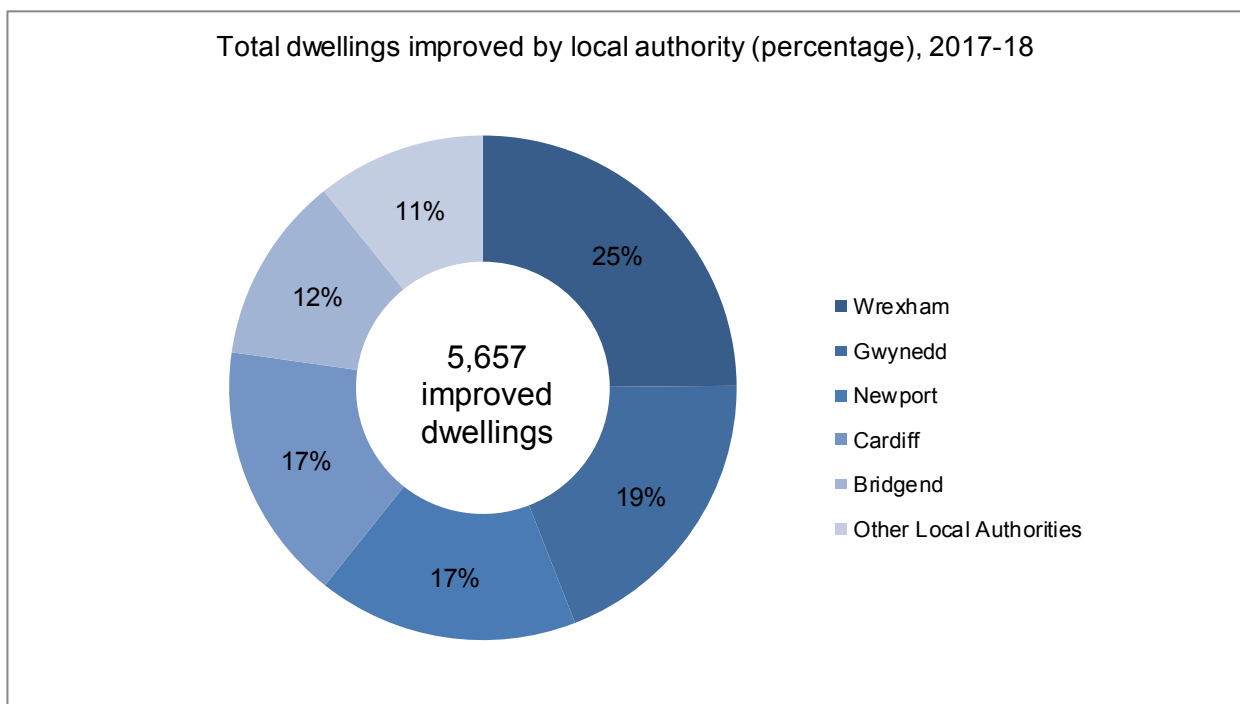
**Chart 3 – Percentage of dwellings improved, by tenure (a) (b)**



Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

- (a) Includes assistance for housing improvement under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. May also include some residual activity under the 1996 Act. Does not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs).
- (b) The percentages shown in the chart may not add to 100% due to rounding

**Chart 4 – Percentage of dwellings improved, by local authority (a)**



Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

- (a) Includes assistance for housing improvement under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. May also include some residual activity under the 1996 Act. Does not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs).



At a local authority level, 5 local authorities contained around 89 per cent of all the dwellings improved due to expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs). Wrexham contained the highest proportion at 25 per cent, followed by Gwynedd with 19 per cent and both Newport and Cardiff with 17 per cent respectively. Bridgend followed which accounted for 12 per cent.

Both the number of dwellings improved and the amount spent per dwelling varies considerably across the different authorities, depending on the type of assistance provided. This is a reflection of the different housing improvement assistance policies and grant schemes operated by each local authority. For example, other than expenditure on DFGs, Monmouthshire reported no expenditure on housing improvement assistance and no dwellings improved during 2017-18. Pembrokeshire reported expenditure of just £3,000 with 5 dwellings improved, whilst the Vale of Glamorgan reported expenditure of £39,000 with just 3 dwellings improved. Similarly both the Isle of Anglesey and Merthyr Tydfil reported 4 dwellings improved yet the spend in Merthyr Tydfil was £500,000 compared £123,000 in the Isle of Anglesey.

### **3. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)**

This section of the release looks specifically at the number of, and expenditure on, Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) during 2017-18 as well as expenditure on non-Mandatory DFG assistance by the local authorities including 'top up' loans and grants. Information on non-Mandatory DFG assistance has only been collected separately on the annual DFG return since 2009-10.

Disabled Facilities Grants are grants paid by a local authority which can help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable a disabled person to continue to live there.

The payment of some DFGs is mandatory under the [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act \(1996\)](#), the amount of grant will depend on the cost of the approved works and the homeowner's financial circumstances. It is also possible to improve a dwelling by delivering disabled adaptations without using a Disabled Facilities Grant and instead just using additional non-mandatory assistance. Local authorities are required to provide information on the amount they spend on this type of non-mandatory assistance. However this must be the amount spent specifically on supporting a disabled adaptation rather than general improvement work. Further detail is provided in the [Key Quality Information](#) and Glossary sections of this release.

During 2017-18, 4,144 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), with a total value of £33.9 million, were completed by local authorities in Wales. This was an increase of 4 per cent on the previous year and represented almost three quarters (73 per cent) of the overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement during 2017-18.

Since 2013-14 information has also been collected covering the number of dwellings improved through adaptation work. As dwellings can be improved through adaptation work which is outside the mandatory DFG process, the number of dwellings improved may differ from the number of completed grants. During 2017-18, a total of 6,347 dwellings were improved across Wales, compared with a total of 4,144 completed Mandatory DFGs.

**Table 3 – Expenditure on all disabled facilities grants and assistance (a)(b)**

	<i>£ thousands</i>					
DFG	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Mandatory DFGs approved under the 1996 Act.	32,700	32,726	32,096	34,345	32,520 (r)	33,870
Additional non-mandatory DFG assistance (including top-up loans and grants)	982	1,050	1,088	1,401	2,039 (r)	2,231
<b>Total DFG expenditure</b>	<b>33,682</b>	<b>33,776</b>	<b>33,183</b>	<b>35,746</b>	<b>34,559 (r)</b>	<b>36,101</b>

Source: Disabled Facility Grants return

(a) Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

(b) Only includes expenditure on completed mandatory disabled facility grants where final payments have been made on the grant and certified. Does not include applicants' contribution and additional fees. Includes additional non-mandatory assistance by the local authority such as top up loans and grants.

(r) Bridgend revised DFG expenditure for 2016-17, and therefore total expenditure.

At a Wales level, expenditure on mandatory DFGs has remained fairly constant, with only slight fluctuations over recent years. Across Wales, expenditure on additional non-mandatory DFG assistance is generally at a much lower level than that on mandatory DFGs; however, it has been increasing each year since 2012-13 ([Table 3](#)).

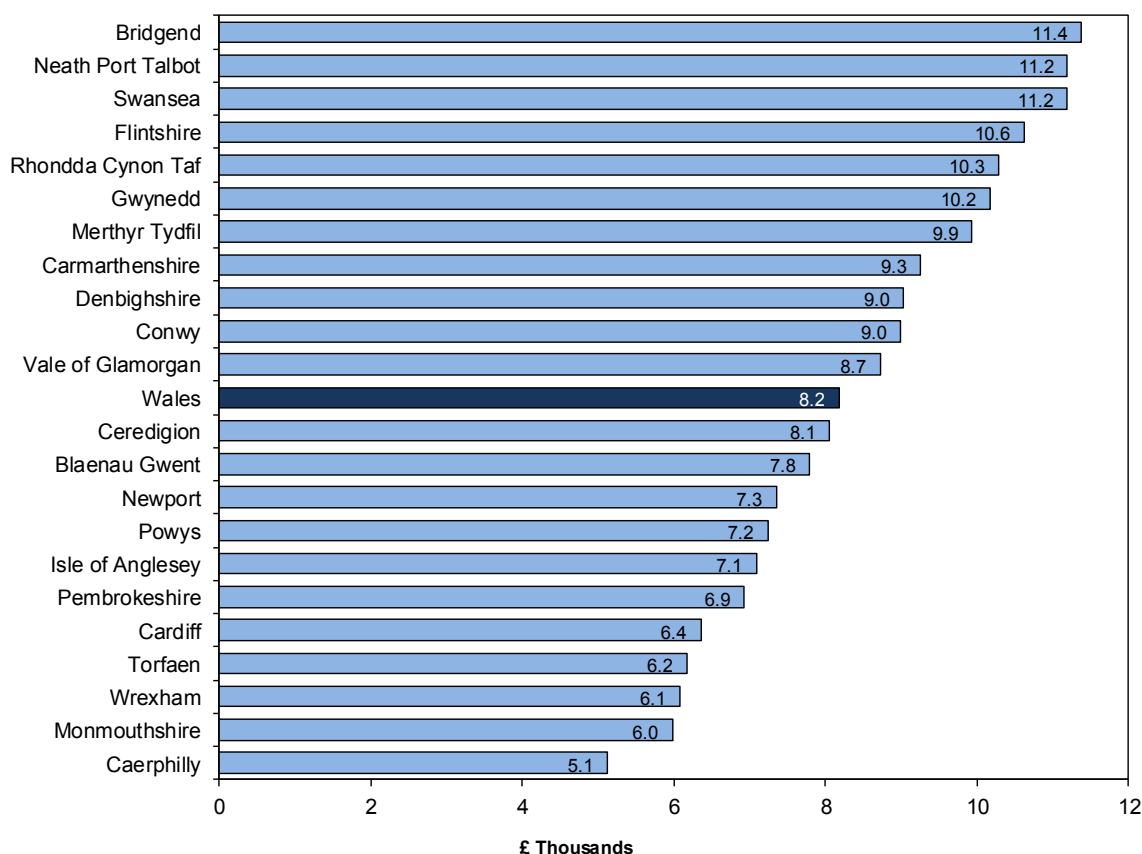
During 2017-18, expenditure on non-mandatory DFG assistance increased by 9 per cent compared to the previous year to £2.2 million ([Table 3](#)). This represented around 6 per cent of all DFG expenditure during the year.

At a local authority level, 10 of the 22 authorities reported a decrease in their spending on mandatory DFGs over the past year. The largest percentage decrease was recorded in Flintshire, where expenditure was down by 42 per cent (£450,000), followed by Blaenau Gwent, where spending was down by 39 per cent (£232,000). In Flintshire the number of dwellings improved decreased as grants were put on temporary hold in the later half of the year which resulted in a decrease in spend. Blaenau Gwent reported a reduction in demand for mandatory DFGs during 2017-18.

In contrast, the largest increase in mandatory DFG expenditure was recorded in Monmouthshire, with a rise of 55 per cent (£224,000), followed by Conwy where spending was up by almost half (49 per cent, £390,000). Monmouthshire reported receiving increased funding in the Capital Budget which along with fewer "larger", adaptations meant more DFGs could be completed. In Conwy the increased expenditure was due to a 14 per cent rise in the number of grants completed compared to the previous year.

Detailed information on DFG expenditure at an individual local authority level is available on [Stats Wales](#).

**Chart 5 – Value of completed mandatory disabled facilities grants (DFGs) per completed grant, 2017-18**



Source:  
Disabled Facilities Grants return

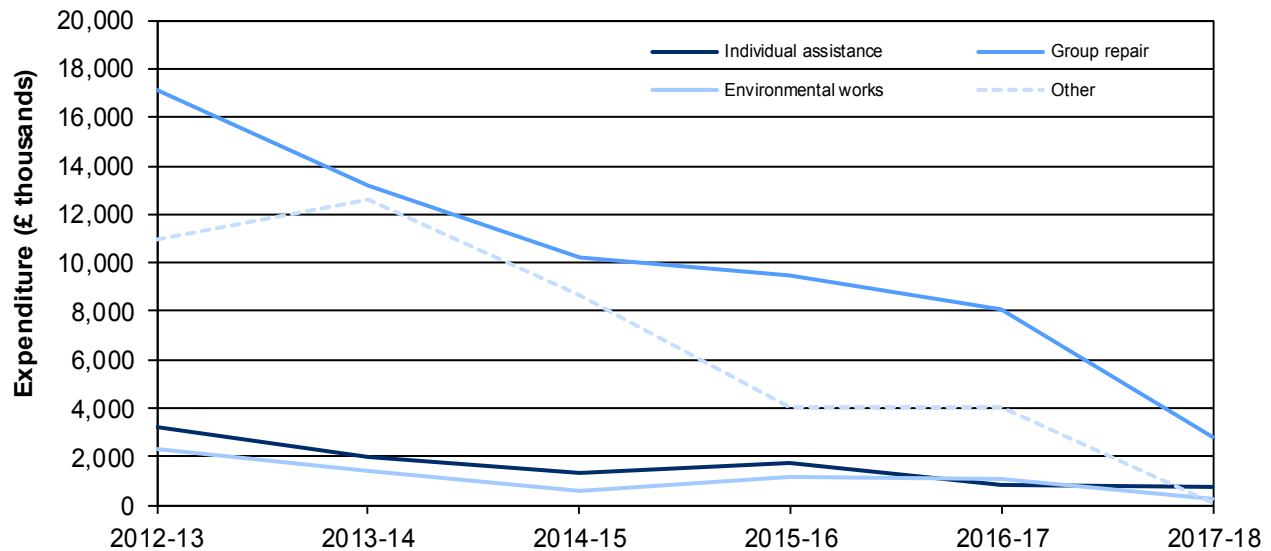
During 2017-18, the average spend on mandatory DFGs per completed grant in Wales was £8,173 which was 4 per cent more than the 2016-17 figure (£7,885 per completed grant). However, the amount spent varied considerably between authorities, with Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Flintshire spending, on average, around £11,000 per completed grant, compared with £5,000 per completed grant in Caerphilly. The average spend is based on the number and value of all completed mandatory DFGs over the period and it should be noted that it is possible for a dwelling to be in receipt of more than one mandatory DFG. Further data on Local Authority expenditure on mandatory DFGs can be found on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/).

#### 4. Renewal areas

Renewal areas were established to improve housing and general amenities of an area where social and environmental problems are combined with poor housing. Area-based renewal schemes enable local authorities to focus activity and investment on areas that combine a need for assistance with the potential for regeneration. Investment in these areas aims to secure improvements to both the houses themselves and to environmental, social and economic conditions, and is regarded as important in tackling the problems many local communities face in terms of social exclusion and sustainability. The Welsh Government provides local authorities with grants for housing renewal areas. Further information is available in the key quality information and glossary sections of the release.

During 2017-18, there were 6 renewal areas in operation in Wales compared with 11 in the previous year, resulting in the number of dwellings within such areas falling to 8,818 compared with 20,451 in 2016-17. In 5 local authorities; Wrexham, Ceredigion, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Caerphilly, the renewal areas recorded during 2016-17 were no longer in operation.

**Chart 6 – Renewal area expenditure, by type of expenditure (a)(b)**



Source: Annual Renewal Area Activity returns and Welsh Government

(a) Includes third party loans and other third party assistance facilitated by the local authority. Excludes any repayments of grants or repayments of loans to local authorities  
(b) Data includes Specific Capital Grants (SCGs).

A total of £3.9 million was spent on these areas in 2017-18 which is a significant drop of 72 per cent on the previous year. As was the case in previous years, most expenditure (73 per cent) went on group repair schemes amounting to £2.8 million.

Expenditure in renewal areas on both individual assistance and environmental works has been generally falling since 2012-13 ([Chart 6](#)). Expenditure on environmental works was down by 80 per cent during 2017-18 compared with the previous year and accounting for just 6 per cent (£223,000) of all expenditure in renewals areas. Expenditure on individual assistance fell by 17 per cent compared to 2016-17 and accounted for 19 per cent (£725,000) of all expenditure in renewals areas; an increase on the 6 per cent recorded the previous year.

Of the 4 local authorities where renewal areas were in operation during 2017-18, all reported a decrease in overall expenditure. One authority Flintshire, recorded no expenditure in its renewal area during 2017-18 as all group repair work had been completed during 2016-17 and no new work was carried out during 2017-18. In 7 local authorities, whilst there were no longer any renewal areas in operation during 2017-18 there was some residual spending. This varied from £822,000 in Swansea to £49,000 in Blaenau Gwent.

Detailed information on renewal area expenditure at a local authority level is available on [Stats Wales](#).

## Future collections

We are reviewing the collection and publication of information on assistance for housing improvement and adaptations and are considering the feasibility of introducing a robust central data collection covering all funding streams for aids and adaptations. A revised data collection would capture information on all adaptation work carried out by Local Authorities, Registered Social Landlords, Large Scale Voluntary Transfer organisations (LSVT) and Care and Repair Agencies and covering a range of funding sources (Disabled Facilities Grant, Rapid Response Adaptations Programme, Physical Adaptations Grant, Enable and the Integrated Care Fund). Data would be published on a regular basis.

Given the scope of the proposed data collection, it is possible that this will replace the information currently collected annually from local authorities on assistance for housing improvement as published within this release.

We would welcome any feedback on these early proposals. Please provide your comments by email to [stats.housing@gov.wales](mailto:stats.housing@gov.wales).

## 5. Key quality information

1. In addition to the information below, further information can be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#) which is available on our website.

### Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

2. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

3. The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

### National Statistics status

4. The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

## **Policy and operational context**

5. This information is used to monitor the effectiveness of current policy, particularly progress against the [National Housing Strategy](#) objective for all households in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality homes and for future policy development. The ['White Paper for Better Lives and Communities'](#) also outlines the Welsh Government commitment to 'improve the quality of existing homes'.
6. The [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) became law on 17 September 2014 and introduces significant improvements across the housing sector to help ensure that people have access to a decent, affordable home and better housing-related services. The Act sits alongside a wide range of policy developments and deployment of resources to increase housing supply, improve housing quality and housing services.

## **Users and uses**

7. The information in this release is used by the Welsh Government to establish and monitor the amount spent annually across Wales on assistance for housing improvement and the number of dwellings that have been improved. It is used to monitor trends in activity undertaken by local authorities to improve the quality of housing stock within their area.
8. The information on both mandatory and non-mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) helps provide a picture of the number and types of DFGs and the costs of adaptations at a local and national level. The Welsh Government local government finance department uses data on DFGs in its local government settlement calculations. Local authorities use the information for a number of reasons, including strategic planning for housing and completing Local Housing Market Assessments.
9. More generally the information is used for:
  - monitoring housing trends;
  - policy development;
  - advice to Ministers;
  - informing debate in the National Assembly for Wales and beyond; and
  - geographic profiling, comparisons and benchmarking.

10. There are a variety of users of these statistics including national and local government, researchers, academics and students. For further information on the users and uses please refer to the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#).

### **Data source and coverage**

11. Data in this statistical release is collected annually by the Welsh Government from all 22 local authorities in Wales. The most recent statistics cover the 2017-18 financial year. The data shown in this release are collected via three separate returns, covering:
- [Assistance for housing improvement](#)
  - [Disabled Facilities Grants](#)
  - [Renewal Areas](#)
12. Further information on the data processing cycle can also be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#). All 22 local authorities responded to the data collection for 2017-18 therefore there has been no imputation of the data.
13. The information shown includes activity under the [Local Government and Housing Act 1989](#), the [Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996](#) and the [Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#).

### **Quality**

14. The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
  - are well explained and readily accessible;
  - are produced according to sound methods, and
  - are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.
- Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.
15. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political reference.
16. Welsh housing statistics adhere to the Welsh Government's [Statistical Quality Management Strategy](#), and this is in line with the European Statistical System's six dimensions of quality, as listed in Principle 4 of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Further detail on how these are adhered to can be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#), which covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our housing statistics. The report covers various topics including definitions, coverage, timeliness, relevance and comparability.



## **Administrative data quality assurance**

17. This release has been scored against the UK Statistics Authority Administrative Data Quality Assurance matrix. The matrix is the UK Statistics Authority regulatory standard for the quality assurance of administrative data. The Standard recognises the increasing role that administrative data are playing in the production of official statistics and clarifies what producers of official statistics should do to assure themselves of the quality of these data. The toolkit that supports it provides helpful guidance to statistical producers about the practices they can adopt to assure the quality of the data they receive, and sets out the standards for assessing statistics against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

The matrix assesses the release against the following criteria:

- Operational context and administrative data collection
  - Communication with data supply partners
  - Quality assurance principles, standards and checks applied by data suppliers
  - Producer's quality assurance investigations and documentation.
18. Local authorities are notified of the data collection exercise timetable in advance. This allows adequate time for local authorities to collate their information, and to raise any issues they may have. There is guidance in the spreadsheet, which assists users on completing the form.

## **Validation and verification**

19. Local authorities complete data collection forms with built in guidance and primary validation which allow them to validate some data before sending to the Welsh Government.
20. Examples of validation checks within the forms include year-on-year changes, cross checks with other relevant data tables and checks to ensure data is logically consistent. The authorities are also given an opportunity to include contextual information where large changes have occurred (e.g. data items changing by more than 10% compared to the previous year). This enables some data cleansing at source and minimises follow up queries.
21. Copies of the data collection forms can be found on the website.

[Assistance for Housing Improvement – Data collection](#)

[Disabled facilities grants for housing - Data collection](#)

[Housing renewal areas activity - Data collection](#)

22. Once we receive the data, it goes through further validation and verification checks, for example:
- Common sense check for any missing/incorrect data without any explanation;
  - Arithmetic consistency checks;
  - Cross checks against the data for the previous year;
  - Cross checks with other relevant data collections;
  - Thorough tolerance checks;
  - Verification that data outside of tolerances is actually correct.

23. If there is a validation error, we contact the local authority and seek resolution. If we fail to get an answer within a reasonable timescale, we will use imputation to improve data quality. We will then inform the organisation and explain to them how we have amended or imputed the data. The method of imputation and the affected data is highlighted in the 'quality information' section of the first release.
24. More detailed quality information relating specifically to assistance for housing improvement by local authorities, which is not included in the quality report, is given below.

### **Data quality**

25. In tables where figures have been rounded, the sum of the individual figures may not equal the total shown.

Table 3 of the 'Assistance for Housing Improvement' data collection form splits the number of dwellings improved and expenditure as reported in table 1 by type of recipient. The guidance stipulates that only one type of recipient can be included per dwelling. If a recipient falls into more than one category, count them only once.

Allocate them to a category in the following order:

1. Disabled;
2. Older people;
3. Other.

'Older people' covers male and female applicants aged 60 and over

When the assistance is provided to the landlord, it should be allocated to 'type of recipient' in terms of the occupant of the dwelling.

26. The Welsh Government's [guidance on statistical quality](#) is available.

### **Comparability**

27. For the 2013-14 data collection process onwards, the definitions and guidance covering 'third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authority' were extended following review to ensure that funding schemes such as Houseproud, Warmer Wales, Energy Company Obligations (ECO), Green Deal, Nest and Arbed were included. The information shown from 2013-14 for 'third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authority' is therefore not strictly comparable with that shown for previous years where information on these funding schemes may have not been reported.
28. Data on non-mandatory DFG assistance has been collected and included in these statistics since 2009-10. Non-mandatory DFGs make up a small proportion of assistance for housing improvement, however caution should be taken when comparing figures from prior to 2009-10.
29. In 2013-14, information was collected for the first time covering the number of dwellings improved through adaptation work. The number of dwellings improved however may be greater than the total number of mandatory DFGs completed as dwellings can be improved through adaptation work which is outside of the Mandatory DFG process.
30. In order to assist with comparability between local authorities, all data providers are issued with the same data collection form and guidance. However, we are aware that some local authorities include other small works grants in their DFG figures, whilst others do not. These issues are relatively small and do not impact significantly on the Wales total.

## Revisions

31. This release contains the final data for 2017-18 financial year. Revisions can arise from events such as late returns from a local authority or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information and resubmits this. Occasionally, revisions can occur due to errors in our statistical processes. In these cases, a judgement is made as to whether the change is significant enough to publish a revised statistical release.
32. During the 2017-18 data collection one local authority, Neath Port Talbot revised the data previously provided in relation to local authority loans for both 2015-16 and 2016-17. The number of local authority loans in Neath Port Talbot for 2015-16 has been revised from 0 to 4 (totalling £29,369) and for 2016-17 from 0 to 5 (totalling £57,867).
33. During the 2017-18 data collection one local authority, Bridgend, revised the data previously provided in relation to Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants for 2016-17. The number of mandatory DFGS completed was revised from 171 to 174 and expenditure on Mandatory DFGS was revised from £2,351,715 to £2,395,325. The amount of non-mandatory assistance was also revised from £0 to £34,185.
34. The total expenditure (including disabled facilities grants) figures shown for both Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend for 2016-17 as shown in Table 2 of the release have been revised accordingly. The total expenditure figures for Wales shown in Tables 1, 2 and 3 have also been revised accordingly as have any corresponding figures and percentages within the charts.
35. Revised figures have been marked with an “r”, in the relevant tables, charts and in the related text throughout.
36. Where changes are not deemed to be significant (i.e. minor changes), these will be updated in the following year’s statistical release. However, minor amendments to the figures may be reflected in the StatsWales tables prior to that next release.
37. Sometimes local authorities submit revised data for previous years. If this happens, we will update the information in the following year’s statistical release.
38. We follow the Welsh Government’s [statistical revisions policy](#).

## Accessibility

39. A full set of data on assistance for housing improvement, mandatory DFGs and renewal areas, including information by individual local authority is available to download from our StatsWales interactive website.  
[Assistance for housing improvement](#)  
[Disabled facilities grants](#)

## Coherence with other statistics

40. The National Strategic Indicators for local government also collected information on disabled facilities grants up until 2015-16 when the collection was discontinued. The National Strategic Indicator PSR/002 covered the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a disabled facility grant at an individual local authority level. The denominator for the indicator PSR/002 was the total number of completed DFGs during the year. There are some discrepancies however between these two data sets due to definitional and timing differences on the part of some local

authorities. The data for the [National Strategic Indicators up to 2015-16](#) can be found on the StatsWales website.

### **Related statistics for other UK countries**

Housing statistics for other UK countries are available at the following links:

#### **England**

41. Private sector renewal and DFGs in England are covered by the same legislation as Wales - the [Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#). Comparable information for England on loans, grants and other assistance is collected in Section F of the annual '[Local Authority Housing Statistics](#)' (LAHS) data returns. Data for 2016-17 are available.

#### **Scotland**

42. The Housing (Scotland) 2006 Act introduced powers enabling local authorities to provide assistance for repair and improvement similar to those covered by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.  
[Housing Statistics for Scotland - Private Sector Housing Improvement and Repair Grants](#)

#### **Northern Ireland**

43. [Information on grants available for home improvement in Northern Ireland](#) including Renovation, Home Repair Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grants.

## **Glossary**

### **Additional or ancillary fees**

All non-building works costs, for example agency fees.

### **Assistance for housing improvement**

Local authorities can offer homeowners financial help with home improvement and repair. This can include grants and loans for acquiring, adapting, improving, repairing, demolishing and replacing accommodation. In many cases, this assistance is targeted at vulnerable groups such as the disabled or elderly people. This assistance is referred to in this statistical release as assistance for housing improvement.

### **Certified**

The date on which the eligible works are completed to the satisfaction of the local housing authority.

### **Common parts**

In relation to a building, this includes the structure and exterior of the building and common facilities provided, whether in the building or elsewhere, for persons who include the occupiers of one or more flats in the building.

### **Completed grants**

Final payment has been made on the grant and it has been certified.

### **Disabled facilities grants (DFGs)**

Disable Facilities Grants are grants paid by a local authority for the provision of facilities for a disabled person (a) in a dwelling; or (b) in the common parts of a building containing one or more flats. These grants can help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable a disabled person to continue to live there. Examples of what a DFG might be used for are:

- Improving access to a room, for example widening doors or installing a stair lift;
- Providing additional bathing , for example a level access shower; and
- Making preparation of food and cooking easier, for example providing low level units.

The payment of some DFGs is mandatory under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The amount of grant will depend on the cost of the approved works and the homeowner's financial circumstances. The maximum grant payable is £36,000 in Wales but a local authority may use its discretion to pay additional costs if it chooses.

### **Dwelling**

A building or part of a building occupied or intended to be occupied as a separate dwelling. For the purpose of this return, dwellings include houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) as defined in section 77 of the Housing Act 2004. They do not include individual bedsits (that is single rooms without the exclusive use of bath/shower or inside WC), but each group of bedsits sharing facilities should be counted as one dwelling.

## **Elderly**

'Elderly people' covers male and female applicants aged 60 and over.

## **"Group repair" type schemes**

This is a generic term and not defined in legislation. It is used to cover a range of schemes that local authorities may have in their local policies for the purpose of renewing a number of dwellings at the same time.

## **Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)**

These are defined in sections 254-260 of the Housing Act 2004 as a building or part of a building which:

- (i) meets the standard test;
- (ii) meets the self-contained flat test;
- (iii) meets the converted building test;
- (iv) has an HMO declaration in force; or
- (v) is a converted block of flats.

## **Local authority expenditure in renewal areas**

Local authority expenditure is gross un-hypothecated General Capital Fund (GCF) expenditure which means that the money has not been given to the local authority for a specific purpose, and it is the local authority's decision as to how to spend it.

## **Mandatory DFGs**

All disabled facilities grants approved under the 1996 Act.

## **Owner occupiers**

Residents who own their own home or own with a mortgage.

## **Private renting**

Residents who rent their dwelling from a private landlord.

## **Renewal areas**

Area-based renewal schemes enable local authorities to focus activity and investment on areas that combine a need for assistance with the potential for regeneration. Investment in area-based renewal schemes should not only secure improvements to houses themselves but also to environmental, social and economic conditions, leading to a restoration of confidence in the area. These wide ranging benefits of area renewal are also important in tackling the problems many local communities face in terms of social exclusion and sustainability. The Welsh Government provides local authorities with grants for housing renewal areas.

Renewal areas seek to:

- improve housing and general amenities of an area where social and environmental problems are combined with poor housing;
- develop partnerships between residents, private sector interests and the local authority;

- bring about regeneration, including mixed-use development; and
- increase confidence in the future of an area, and through this help reverse any process of decline.

### **Repayments**

These include repayments of loans funded by the local authorities and recoveries resulting from breaches of grant conditions.

### **Residents' contributions**

These are counted at the point when the grant or assistance is awarded. The amount of contribution is determined by the test of resources as set by the local authority.

### **Social landlord**

Residents who rent from either registered social landlords (housing associations) or the local authority.

### **Third party assistance**

Includes any assistance to renewal activity from other sources. These could include contributions from the following organisations. (This is not a definitive list):

- Houseproud Assistance
- Voluntary sector expenditure
- Communities First expenditure
- Local Health Board expenditure
- Heads of the Valleys
- Groundwork
- Flying Start
- European Structural Funds
- Regeneration Investment Fund for Wales (RIFW), previously known as JESSICA (Joint
- European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas)
- National Park expenditure
- Energy efficiency schemes such as Nest, Arbed and the Warm Home Programme

### **Third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authority**

This means that the local authority is involved in some way, for example by providing the funding for the third party to give the loan.



## **Vibrant and viable places**

Vibrant and Viable Places is the Welsh Government regeneration framework which operated between 2014 and 2017. Local authorities shared a fund of more than £100m for projects in town centres, coastal communities and Communities First clusters. The aim was to achieve long-lasting economic and social change through investing in people and places. It aimed to increase skills and employment opportunities and improve communities so they are better for people and the environment. An additional £7m was allocated for town centre related projects that tackle poverty. This fund was ring fenced for projects in the top 10 per cent most deprived areas in Wales.

Housing renewal areas are an example of area-based housing-led regeneration programmes. Housing Renewal Areas can deliver significant regeneration impacts, and need to be part of wider plans, particularly in town centres. Since March 2013 funding for Renewal Areas was included in the overall regeneration budget allocations as part of the 'Vibrant and Viable places regeneration framework'. Specific Renewal Area funding came to an end in 2016/17.

## Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/assistance-housing-improvement/?lang=en>

## Next update

To be confirmed.

## We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to

[stats.housing@gov.wales](mailto:stats.housing@gov.wales)

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