



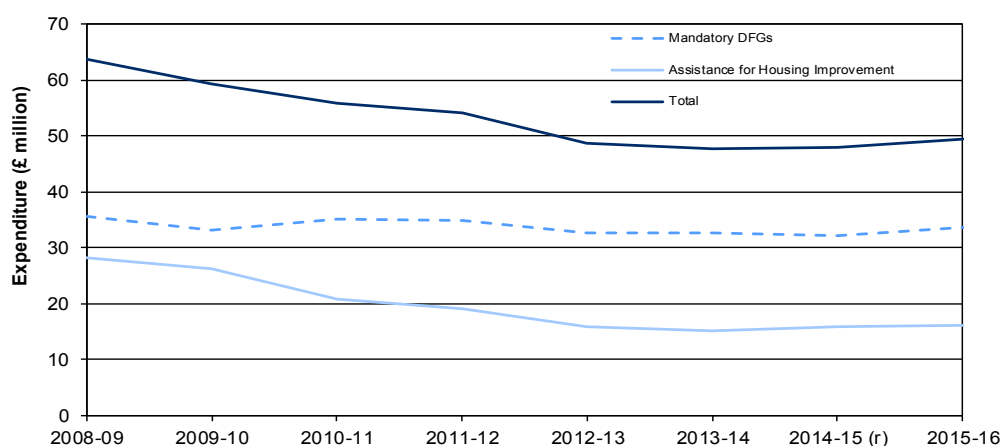
## Assistance for housing improvement by local authorities, 2015-16

08 Feb 2017  
SFR 14/2017

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](#).

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) 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.

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



(r) One Local authority revised DFG expenditure for 2014-15, and therefore total expenditure.

- During 2015-16 overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)) increased by 3 per cent compared with the previous year to £49.5 million.
- During 2015-16, 4,454 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, with a total value of £33.5 million, were completed by local authorities in Wales. This represents over two thirds (68 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 2015-16, the number of renewal areas in operation decreased to 16 and overall expenditure in these areas decreased by 21 per cent to £16.5 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 and non-mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). 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.

Table 1 shows the overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement, which includes expenditure on mandatory DFGs and other non-mandatory assistance. Further information on Disabled Facilities Grants is provided in the Key Quality Information and Glossary sections of this release.

The overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement decreased annually between 2008-09 and 2013-14 but since then expenditure has started to rise. During 2015-16 a total of £49.5 million was spent on all types of home improvement and repair, which is up by 3 per cent on the previous year (£47.9 (revised) million).

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

£ thousands

Year	Direct assistance by local authority			Residents' contribution	Third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authority		Non- Mandatory DFGs	Total expenditure (including DFGs)
	Grants	Loans	Total		Mandatory DFGs	Mandatory DFGs		
2008-09	26,776	321	27,097	.	989	35,708	.	<b>63,794</b>
2009-10	22,011	347	22,358	2,097	243	33,191	1,395	<b>59,285</b>
2010-11	16,517	1,307	17,824	1,617	492	35,077	882	<b>55,893</b>
2011-12	13,645	2,139	15,785	2,420	225	34,851	721	<b>54,002</b>
2012-13	12,055	1,511	13,566	952	422	32,700	982	<b>48,622</b>
2013-14	9,841	1,598	11,439	1,349	1,192	32,726	1,050	<b>47,757</b>
2014-15	9,004	2,284	11,288	875	2,599	32,096 r	1,088 r	<b>47,945 r</b>
2015-16	5,844	3,302	9,145	1,551	3,868	33,502	1,401	<b>49,468</b>

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

(a) See points 13 and 14 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

(r) One Local authority revised DFG expenditure for 2014-15, and therefore total expenditure

Since 2008-09, mandatory DFGs have contributed more to the total expenditure than other types of assistance for housing improvement. During 2015-16, mandatory DFGs accounted for over two thirds (68 per cent) of all spending, with non-mandatory DFGs accounting for a further 3 per cent. Over recent years, there has also been an increase in the provision of loans, whilst direct assistance via grants (excluding DFGs) has decreased. This may be a result of increased pressure on local authority budgets. In 2008-09, 42 per cent of all local authority expenditure on housing improvement was in the form of grants (excluding disabled facilities grants), this decreased to 12 per cent in 2015-16. Over the same period, expenditure on loans increased from less than 1 per cent of all local authority expenditure on housing improvement to 7 per cent.

Non-local authority expenditure, in the form of third party assistance, loans and the financial contributions made by individual residents, accounted for 11 per cent of overall spend during 2015-16, which is up from 7 per cent in 2014-15.

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

	<i>£ thousands</i>						
Local Authority	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Isle of Anglesey	1,263	1,112	1,018	812	988	1,829	970
Gwynedd	2,450	1,632	1,295	1,213	1,453	2,308	1,903
Conwy	1,843	1,843	1,200	1,344	1,162	1,638	956
Denbighshire	1,705	1,525	1,663	1,539	1,550	1,523	2,917
Flintshire	3,078	2,273	2,777	2,516	1,839	1,098	1,080
Wrexham	3,944	3,068	3,209	3,331	2,883	2,468	3,353
Powys	2,806	2,754	3,561	2,525	3,017	1,738	2,858
Ceredigion	2,834	2,697	2,947	1,303	1,395	2,694	3,056
Pembrokeshire	2,569	2,220	1,429	1,081	1,105	1,303	977
Carmarthenshire	2,417	2,542	2,330	2,401	1,830	1,256	2,156
Swansea	3,156	4,442	4,698	3,671	4,411	4,494	4,284
Neath Port Talbot	2,319	3,545	2,920	2,873	2,748	2,773	2,882
Bridgend	2,824	2,276	2,025	2,394	2,167	1,711	2,812
The Vale of Glamorgan	2,122	2,515	1,609	1,303	2,103	2,401 r	2,875
Cardiff	6,571	6,504	5,384	5,404	4,940	4,702	4,609
Rhondda Cynon Taf	8,843	6,789	6,881	6,769	5,306	5,507	4,819
Merthyr Tydfil	805	629	1,060	1,149	1,270	869	977
Caerphilly	3,257	3,250	4,080	3,205	3,278	3,255	1,947
Blaenau Gwent	1,195	1,113	999	735	759	850	916
Torfaen	1,246	977	1,139	858	1,148	1,117	1,071
Monmouthshire	524	511	460	510	526	1,111	707
Newport	1,513	1,674	1,318	1,686	1,877	1,302	1,345
<b>Wales</b>	<b>59,285</b>	<b>55,893</b>	<b>54,002</b>	<b>48,622</b>	<b>47,757</b>	<b>47,945 r</b>	<b>49,468</b>

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

(a) See points 13 and 14 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

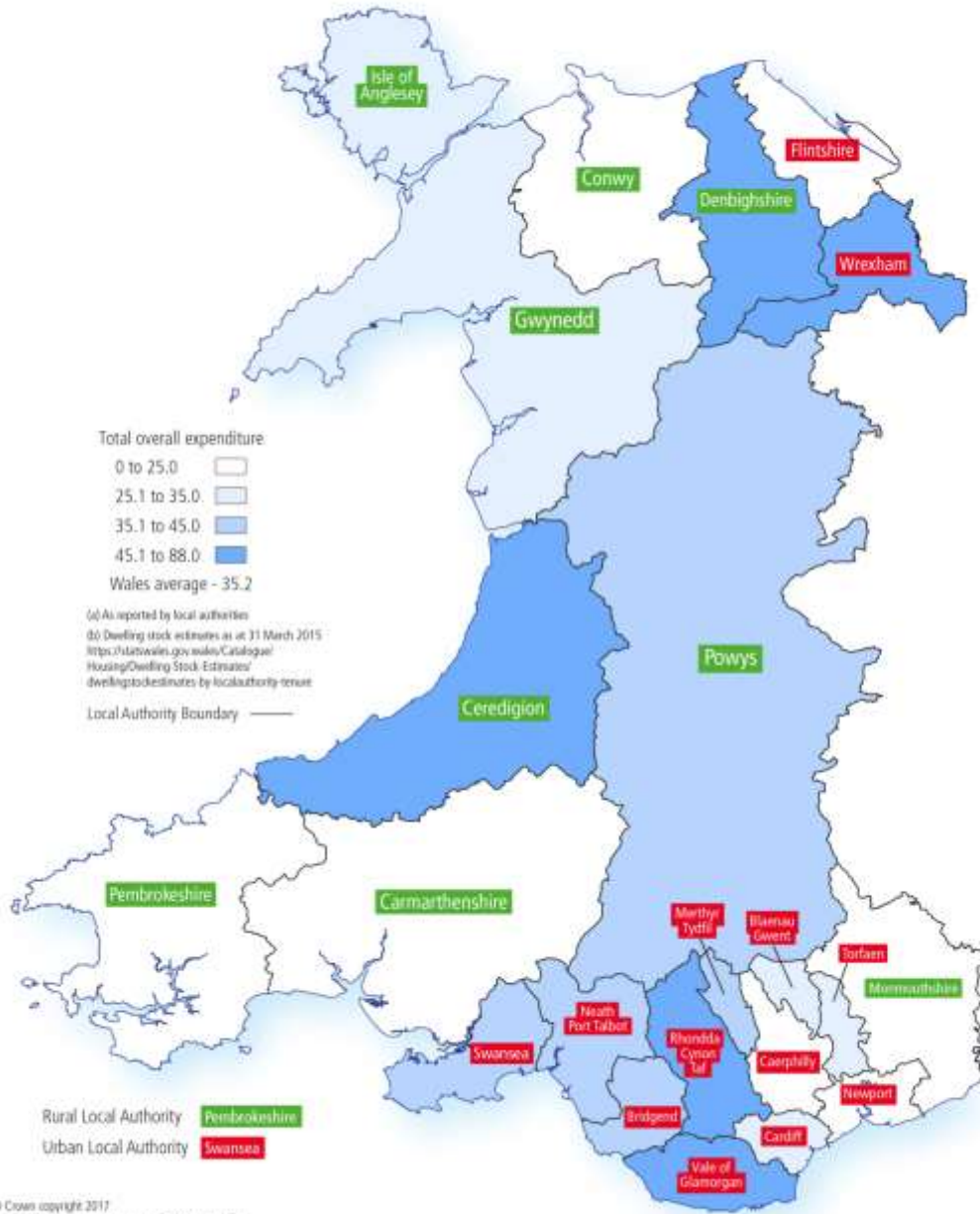
(r) One Local authority revised DFG expenditure for 2014-15, and therefore total expenditure

At a local authority level there was a fairly even split with 11 reporting increases in expenditure and 11 reporting decreases. The decreases reported, ranged from 47 per cent in the Isle of Anglesey to just 2 per cent in Flintshire (Table 2).

The increases in overall expenditure compared with the previous year ranged from 92 per cent in Denbighshire to 3 per cent in Newport.

## Assistance for Housing Improvement

**Map 1:** Total overall expenditure (Including mandatory DFGs) during 2015-16 per 1,000 dwellings (a) (b) (£ thousands)



Rhondda Cynon Taf reported the highest amount of overall spending on assistance for housing improvement during 2015-16 (£4.8 million). However, taking into account the number of dwellings in each area, Ceredigion was the local authority with the highest rate of spending (£87,100 per 1,000 dwellings), followed by Denbighshire (£67,800 per 1,000 dwellings).

In contrast, Monmouthshire reported the lowest overall spending on assistance for housing improvement (£707,000 in total) whilst Pembrokeshire had the lowest rate of spending at just £15,900 per 1,000 dwellings.

## 2. Expenditure on assistance for housing improvement by local authorities, excluding disabled facilities grants (DFGs)

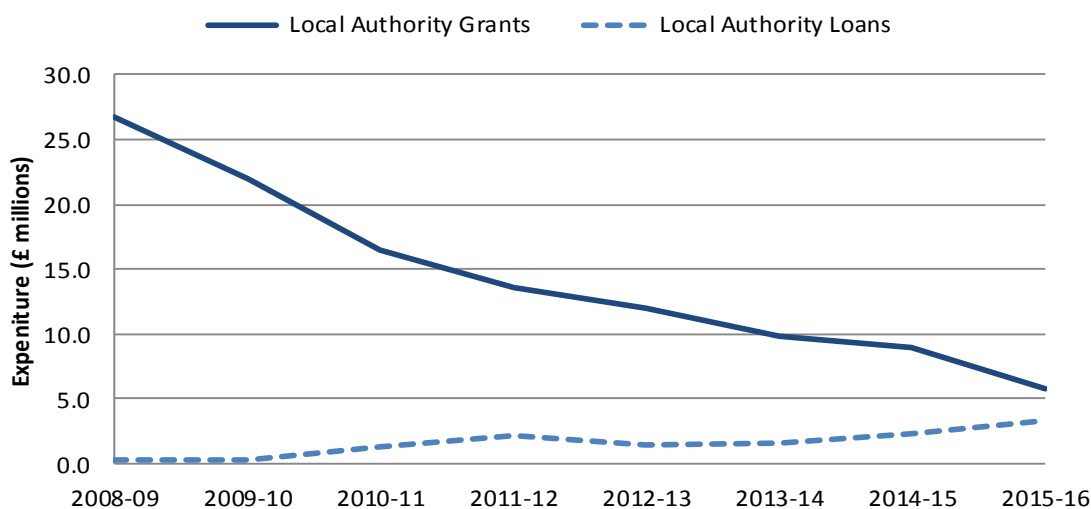
This section of the release looks at the expenditure by both local authorities and others on home improvement and repair, but excludes spending on mandatory DFGs and any additional non-mandatory DFG assistance. Assistance is available in three forms; direct assistance by the local authority in the form of grants and loans, third party loans, and other assistance facilitated by the local authority and residents' contributions.

Expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs) had been falling each year between 2008-09 and 2013-14, before increasing in 2014-15 when it was up by 6 per cent compared to the previous year. During 2015-16 however, expenditure (excluding DFGs) decreased by 1 per cent to £14.6 million. The decrease was mainly due to large decreases seen in expenditure on local authority grants whilst expenditure on loans, resident's contributions and third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authorities had all increased compared to 2014-15.

### 2.1 Expenditure by type of assistance

The majority of the expenditure, £9.1 million (63 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 (Chart 1).

**Chart 1 – Total expenditure and types of local authority expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs) (a)**



Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

(a) See points 13 and 14 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

Residents' contributions have fluctuated since information was collected in 2009-10. During 2015-16, around 11 per cent (£1.6 million) of expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs) was provided by residents' contributions, compared to 6 per cent (£0.9 million) during 2014-15. The 2015-16 figure is up by over two thirds (77 per cent) on the 2014-15 figure.

Expenditure on third party loans and other third party assistance has also fluctuated since 2008-09, and over the last two years has been higher than the amount spent on local authority loans. During 2015-16 expenditure on third party loans and other third party assistance was up by almost half (49 per cent) to £3.9 million and accounted for 27 per cent of all expenditure (excluding DFGs).

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

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

## 2.2 Number of dwellings improved

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.

**Table 3 – Number of dwellings improved, by tenure and type of recipient (a)**

Activity	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
<b>All Activity</b>	<b>8,073</b>	<b>9,667</b>	<b>9,906</b>	<b>9,060</b>	<b>7,126</b>	<b>6,154</b>
<b>Activity by tenure</b>						
Owner occupiers	5,257	5,717	6,102	5,968	4,278	3,404
Private renting	149	354	295	551	371	438
Social landlords	1,034	938	894	805	804	1,038
Type of tenure not known	1,633	2,658	2,615	1,736	1,673	1,274
<b>Activity by type of recipient (b)</b>						
Disabled	3,994	4,810	4,738	4,851	3,640	3,105
Elderly	2,294	2,451	2,890	2,474	2,253	2,160
Other recipients	649	413	666	322	295	164
Type of recipient not known	1,136	1,993	1,612	1,413	938	725

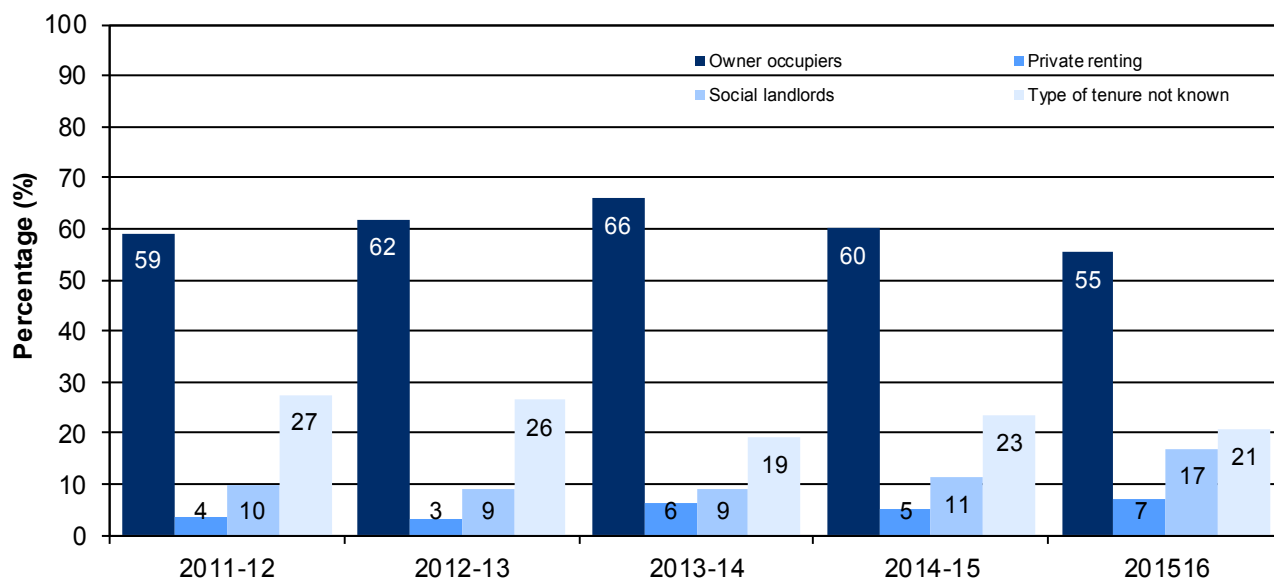
Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

(a) Includes assistance for housing improvement under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Does not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs) Does not include expenditure on completed Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants or additional non-mandatory DFG assistance.

(b) Where a recipient falls into more than one category they are included only once and allocated to a category in the following order:- (1) Disabled (2) Elderly (3) Other.

During 2015-16, 6,154 dwellings were improved which is a decrease of 14 per cent compared with the previous year. Over the same period overall expenditure (excluding DFGs) decreased by 1 per cent to £14.6 million. There can be considerable variation in the amount spent per dwelling across the different local authorities depending on the type of assistance provided.

**Chart 2 – Total dwellings improved, by tenure (percentage) (a)**



Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

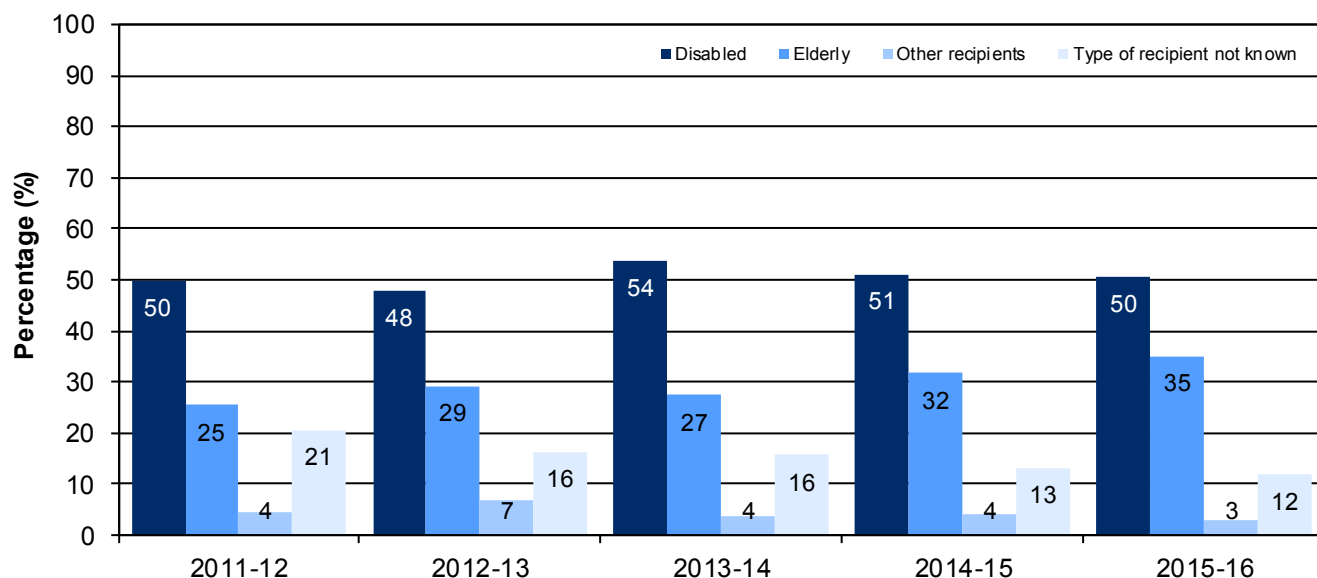
(a) Includes assistance for housing improvement under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. May also include some residual activity under the 1996 Act. Does not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs).

During 2015-16, the majority of dwellings improved continued to be in the private sector (owner occupied and privately rented), most of which were owner occupied. Around 62 per cent of the dwellings improved were owner occupied or privately rented dwellings down from 65 per cent in 2014-15 and 72 per cent in 2013-14 (Chart 2).

The percentage of dwellings improved that were in the social sector had been falling each year between 2010-11 and 2013-14. During 2014-15, however, the proportion of social sector dwellings improved increased to 11 per cent compared with 9 percent during the previous year. This increase has continued during 2015-16 with 1,038 social sector dwellings improved accounting for 17 per cent of all dwellings improved.

During 2015-16, the tenure was unknown for 21 per cent of the dwellings improved, which is lower than the 23 per cent during 2014-15.

**Chart 3 –Total dwellings improved, by recipient (percentage) (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).

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

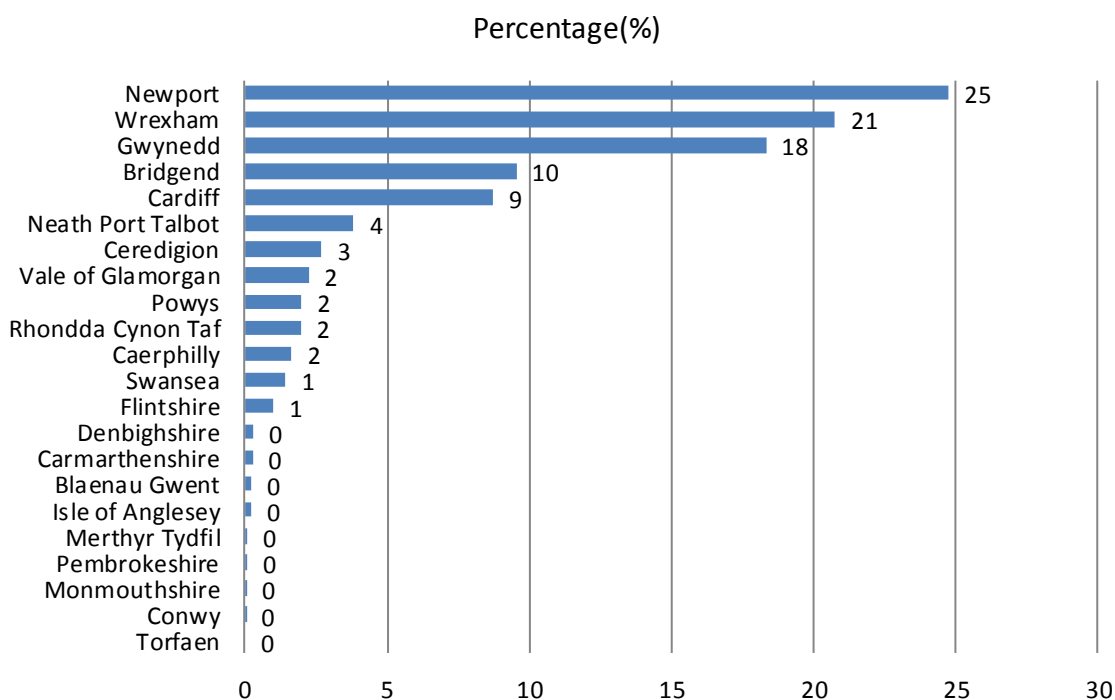
The number of dwellings improved for each type of recipient saw a decrease during 2015-16 compared to the previous year. The number of dwellings improved where the recipient was elderly however fell less than those where the recipient was disabled or where there were other types of recipients.

Therefore whilst around half of the dwellings improved continued to be for disabled residents, the proportion for those who were elderly rose from 32 per cent in 2014-15 to 35 per cent in 2015-16 (Chart 3).

The number of dwellings improved where the type of recipient was unknown fell by almost a quarter (23 per cent) during 2015-16 and accounted for 12 per cent of all dwellings improved, compared with 13 per cent in 2014-15.



**Chart 4 Total dwellings improved by local authority (percentage), 2015-16 (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 82 per cent of all the dwellings improved due to expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs). Newport contained the highest proportion at 25 per cent, followed by Wrexham with 21 per cent and Gwynedd with 18 per cent. Bridgend and Cardiff accounted for 10 and 9 per cent respectively.

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, Torfaen reported no expenditure on housing improvement assistance and no dwellings improved during 2015-16 whilst Pembrokeshire reported expenditure of £3,000 with 4 dwellings improved and Conwy reported expenditure of £22,000 with 1 dwelling improved.

### 3. Disabled facilities grants (DFGs)

This section of the release looks specifically at the number of, and expenditure on, Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants up to 2015-16. It also covers 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 2015-16, 4,454 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), with a total value of £33.5 million, were completed by local authorities in Wales. This represents over two thirds (68 per cent) of the overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement.

In 2013-14, information was collected, for the first time, 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 2015-16, a total of 5,179 dwellings were improved across Wales, compared with a total of 4,454 completed Mandatory DFGs.

**Table 4 – Expenditure on all disabled facilities grants and assistance (a)(b)**

	<i>£ thousands</i>						
DFG	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Mandatory DFGs approved under the 1996 Act.	33,191	35,077	34,851	32,700	32,726	32,096 r	33,502
Additional non-mandatory DFG assistance (including top-up loans and grants)	1,395	882	721	982	1,050	1,088 r	1,401
<b>Total DFG expenditure</b>	<b>34,586</b>	<b>35,959</b>	<b>35,572</b>	<b>33,682</b>	<b>33,776</b>	<b>33,183 r</b>	<b>34,903</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) One Local authority revised DFG expenditure for 2014-15, and therefore total expenditure

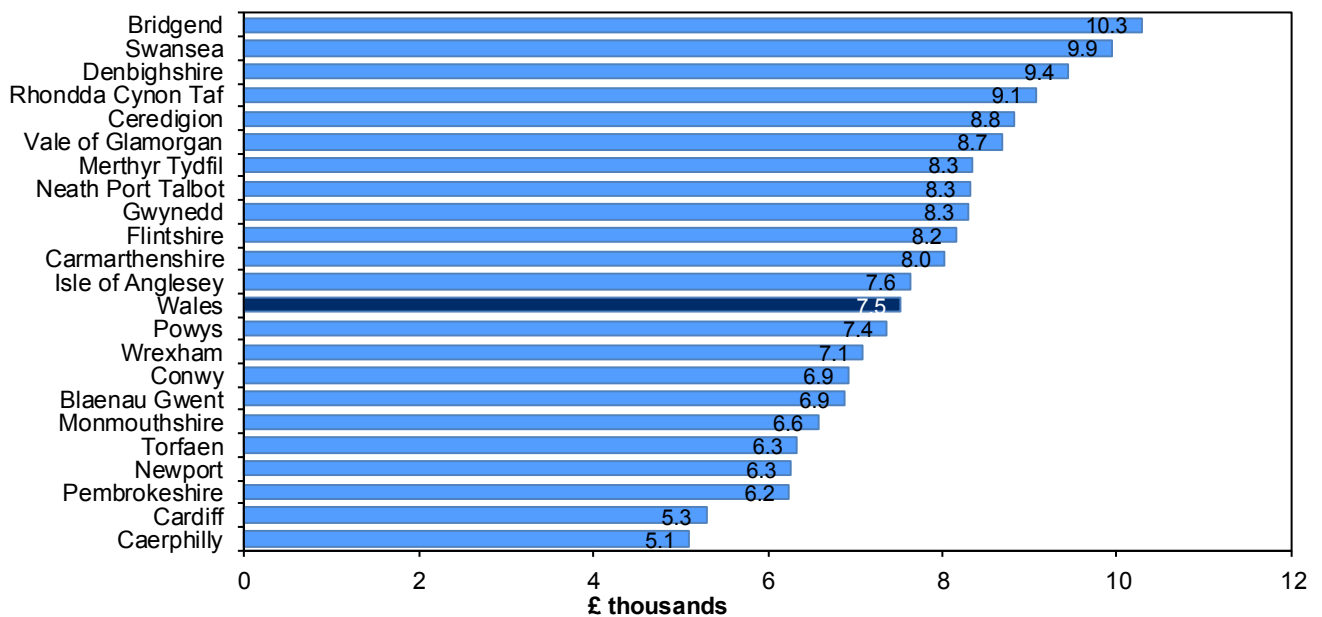
At a Wales level, expenditure on mandatory DFGs has remained fairly constant, with only slight fluctuations over recent years. Across Wales, expenditure on additional non-mandatory DFG assistance is generally at a much lower level than that on mandatory DFGs, however it has generally been increasing since 2011-12.

During 2015-16 expenditure on non-mandatory DFG assistance increased by 29 per cent compared to the previous year to £1.4 million (Table 4). This represented around 4 per cent of all DFG expenditure.

At a local authority level, 10 of the 22 authorities reported an increase in their spending on mandatory DFGs over the past year. The largest increase was recorded in Bridgend with an increase of 83 per cent, followed by Carmarthenshire with an increase of 75 per cent. In Bridgend there was a backlog of referrals reported in 2014-15 which amounted to approximately £1m and which have since been processed, resulting in many more applications and approvals being completed within the 2015-16 financial year. The increase in Carmarthenshire was reported as being due to an increase in resources compared to 2014-15.

In contrast, the largest reduction in mandatory DFG expenditure was recorded in Gwynedd with a fall of 36 per cent. Gwynedd explained this decrease as being due to fewer grants completed in 2015-16 compared to the previous year. There were also a few high cost applications in Gwynedd during 2014-15 which were ongoing prior to the introduction of a £36,000 maximum grant and which increased overall expenditure that year.

**Chart 5 – Value of completed mandatory disabled facilities grants (DFGs) per improved dwelling, 2015-16**



Source: Disabled Facilities Grants return

During 2015-16, the average spend on mandatory DFGs per improved dwelling in Wales was £7,522 which was similar to the 2014-15 figure of £7,662 per improved dwelling. However, the amount spent varied considerably between authorities, with Bridgend and Swansea spending around £10,000 per dwelling compared with just £5,100 per dwelling in Caerphilly.

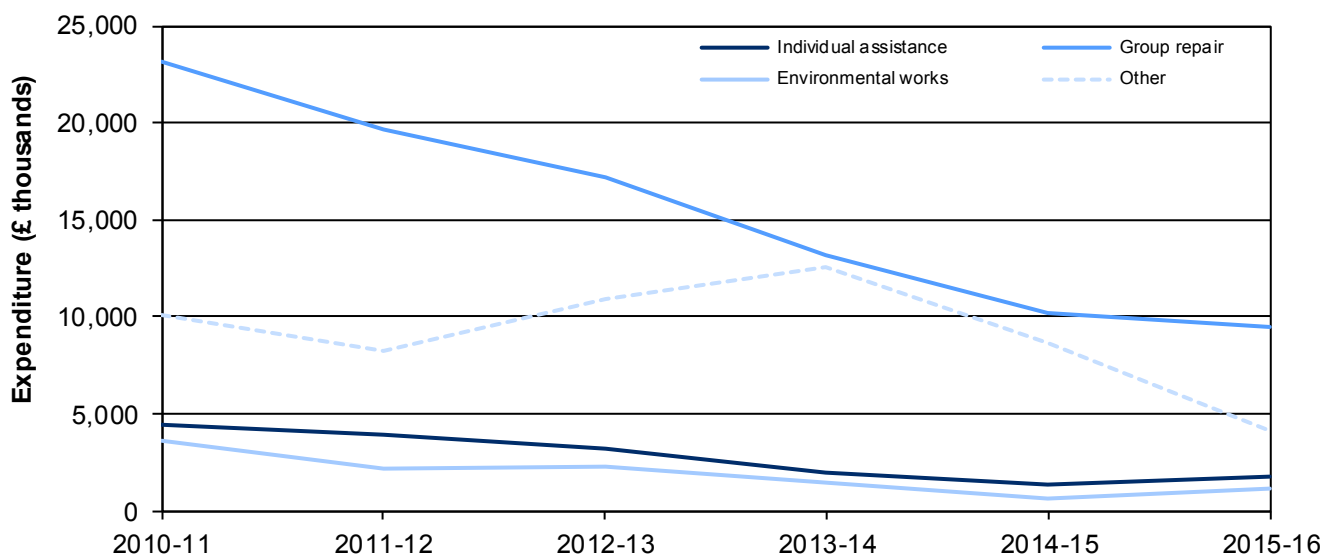
Further data on Local Authority expenditure on mandatory DFGs can be found on [StatsWales](https://stats.wales.gov.uk/).

## 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 2015-16, there were 16 renewal areas in operation in Wales, 7 less than in the previous year, resulting in the number of dwellings within such areas falling to 16,479 compared with 20,932 in 2014-15 (Table 5).

**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 £16.5 million was spent on these areas in 2015-16. As was the case in previous years, most expenditure (58 per cent) went on group repair schemes amounting to £9.5 million.

Since 2010-11 more expenditure in renewal areas has been on individual assistance rather than environmental works, however expenditure on both these areas has been gradually falling. During 2015-16 expenditure on individual assistance accounted for 11 per cent (£1.8 million) compared with 7 per cent (£1.1 million) for environmental works.

**Table 5 – Renewal area expenditure, 2014-15 and 2015-16 (a)(b)**

Local Authority	2014-15			2015-16		
	Number of Dwellings within Renewal Area	Number of Renewal Areas	Expenditure (£ thousands)	Number of Dwellings within Renewal Area	Number of Renewal Areas	Expenditure (£ thousands)
Isle of Anglesey	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gwynedd	872	2	1,884	0	0	812
Conwy	250	1	2,699	0	0	2,093
Denbighshire	657	1	468	657	1	422
Flintshire	4,624	1	2,339	4,624	1	3,065
Wrexham	2,250	1	1,071	1,534	1	1,167
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ceredigion	7,636	2	607	7,636	2	815
Pembrokeshire	3,357	2	527	0	0	215
Carmarthenshire	2,577	1	639	2,577	1	206
Swansea	1,038	1	157	1,038	1	2,796
Neath Port Talbot	3,875	2	1,145	3,875	2	1,176
Bridgend	2,868	1	858	2,868	1	295
The Vale of	1,292	1	717	1,292	1	890
Cardiff	2,134	2	1,064	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	1,494	1	5,048	1,494	1	1,108
Caerphilly	1,035	1	839	1,035	1	711
Blaenau Gwent (c)	0	0	205	0	0	65
Torfaen	2,652	3	664	2,652	3	643
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newport	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Wales</b>	<b>38,611</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20,932</b>	<b>31,282</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16,479</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).

(c) In 2015-16, the last renewal scheme was still operational in the Six Bells renewal area, with all the remaining works being funded through 'General Capital Funding'.

During 2015-16, the number of renewal areas in operation across Wales decreased to 16, with a reduction in the number of renewal areas in 4 authorities. As a result, the overall expenditure in all renewal areas decreased to £16.5 million.

6 of the 12 local authorities where renewal areas were in operation during 2015-16 reported a decrease in overall expenditure though the number of renewal areas in these authorities remained unchanged. The largest percentage decreases in expenditure within these 6 authorities were seen in Merthyr Tydfil, Carmarthenshire and Bridgend, where the overall expenditure dropped by 78 per cent, 68 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively. In 4 local authorities, whilst there were no longer

any renewal areas in operation during 2015-16 there was some residual spending. This varied from £2.1 million in Conwy to £65,500 in Blaenau Gwent.

The largest increases in renewal area expenditure between 2014-15 and 2015-16 were seen in Swansea, where expenditure increased from £0.2 million to £2.8 million, Ceredigion, where expenditure increased from £0.6 million to £0.8 million and Flintshire, where expenditure increased from £2.3 million to £3.1 million (Table 5).

In Swansea, the Renewal Area Programme did not commence until late in the 2014-15 financial year with the majority of activity and related expenditure therefore taking place during 2015-16.

In Ceredigion the increase was due to full spend being required on the Renewal Area funding during 2015-16, as it was the last year. Also during 2015-16 a scheme involving conversion grants and an energy efficiency scheme both proved popular and attracted a large amount of owner contribution.

In Flintshire overall increases in Vibrant and Viable Places funded schemes during 2015-16 accounted for the variation in expenditure compared with the previous year.

## 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 indicators and associated technical information can be found at [How do you measure a nation’s progress? - National Indicators](#)

3. Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).
4. 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

5. 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 Official 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 Official 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

6. 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’.

## **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. This helps 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’](#) which was published in May 2012 also included proposals to ‘improve the quality of existing homes’ and to ‘improve the private rented sector.’
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Housing Renewal Areas are an example of area-based housing-led regeneration programmes, which can deliver significant regeneration impacts. Since March 2013 funding for Renewal Areas has been included in the overall regeneration budget allocations as part of the ‘Vibrant and Viable places regeneration framework’. Specific Renewal Area funding is coming to an end in 2016/17. Vibrant and Viable Places is a Welsh Government regeneration framework which has been in operation between 2014 and 2017. Local authorities share a fund of more than £100m for projects in town centres, coastal communities and Communities First clusters. The aim is to achieve long-lasting economic and social change through investing in people and places.
11. 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.



12. 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

13. 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 2015-16 financial year. The data shown in this release are collected via three separate returns, covering:
- [Assistance for housing improvement](#)
  - [Disabled Facilities Grants](#)
  - [Renewal Areas](#)
14. 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 2015-16 therefore there has been no imputation of the data.
15. 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](#).
16. The figures on overall expenditure on all assistance for housing improvement (Table 1 and Table 2):
- a) Include 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. Do not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs).
  - b) Only include expenditure on completed mandatory disabled facilities grants where final payments have been made on the grant and certified. Do not include the additional cost of eligible works as it is not possible to differentiate between the amount contributed by the local authority from the applicants' contribution and additional fees.
  - c) Include local authority grants and loans, expenditure on completed Mandatory DFGs and additional non-mandatory DFG assistance.
  - d) Include third party assistance facilitated by the local authority and residents' contributions.. Excludes repayments to local authorities including loans and grant recovery.
17. The figures for expenditure on assistance for housing improvement excluding Disabled Facilities Grants (Charts 2 and 3) include (a) and (d) as above but do **not** include expenditure on completed mandatory, or additional non-mandatory, DFGs.
18. The figures on assistance for housing improvement (tables 1, 2 and 3) do not include Specific Capital Grants, but data on renewal areas (Table 5 and 6) does include these grants. Specific Capital Grants are annual grants that are distributed in response to bids from local authorities and can be used for any capital purpose inside a renewal area boundary.

19. Third party assistance is included in assistance for housing improvement data where the local authority is involved in some way, for example by providing the funding for the third party to give the loan.
20. Data on disabled facilities grants covers mandatory and non-mandatory grants where the final payments have been made and certified.
21. Residents' contributions are counted at the point when the grant or assistance is awarded. The amount of contribution is determined by the test of resources set by the local authority.

## **Quality**

22. 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 Official 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.
23. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political reference.
  24. 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**

25. 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.
26. The spreadsheets allow respondents to validate some data before sending to the Welsh Government. Respondents 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.
27. 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.
28. 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

### **Accuracy**

29. Local authorities completed data collection forms with built in guidance and primary validation. On receipt of the data collection forms, the data collection team carried out secondary validation and worked closely with the data providers to ensure information provided was accurate and on a consistent basis. 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](#)

### **Validation and verification**

30. 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.
31. 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.

32. 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**

33. In tables where figures have been rounded, the sum of the individual figures may not equal the total shown.
34. The Welsh Government's [guidance on statistical quality](#) is available.

### **Comparability**

35. Specific Capital Grants (SCGs) are annual grants that are distributed in response to bids from local authorities and can be used for any capital purpose inside a renewal area boundary. From 2007-08, SCGs have been included in renewal area expenditure (but excluded from total private sector renewal expenditure). Caution should be taken if comparing with figures from prior to 2006-07.
36. From the 2013-14 data collection process, 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.
37. Data on non-mandatory DFGs 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.
38. 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.
39. 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**

40. This release contains the final data for 2015-16 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.

41. During the 2015-16 data collection one local authority the Vale of Glamorgan, revised the data previously provided in relation to Disabled Facility Grants. The need for revision was identified by the authority when validating 2015-16 data against 2014-15 data, when completing their data collection form. Therefore the total DFG expenditure for the Vale of Glamorgan has been revised from £993,093 to £1,465,480, increasing the overall DFG expenditure at a Wales level from £32,710,796 to £33,183,183. The revision has also affected corresponding percentages. Revised figures have been marked with an “r”, in the relevant tables, charts and in the related text throughout.
42. 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.
43. Sometimes local authorities submit revised data for previous years. If this happens, we will update the information in the following year’s statistical release.
44. We follow the Welsh Government’s [statistical revisions policy](#).

### **Accessibility**

45. 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**

46. 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:**

47. 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 on the annual ‘Local Authority Housing Statistics’ (LAHS) data returns. Data for 2014-15 are [available](#).

**Scotland:**

48. 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:**

49. [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 has been operating between 2014 and 2017. Local authorities share a fund of more than £100m for projects in town centres, coastal communities and Communities First clusters. The aim is to achieve long-lasting economic and social change through investing in people and places. It aims to increase skills and employment opportunities and improve communities so they are better for people and the environment. An additional £7m is allocated for town centre related projects that tackle poverty. This fund has been 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 has been included in the overall regeneration budget allocations as part of the 'Vibrant and Viable places regeneration framework'. Specific Renewal Area funding is coming 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**

Annual release February 2018.

## **We want your feedback**

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

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

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