



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Housing hazards and licences: April 2021 to March 2022

Information on the condition of residential properties assessed by local authorities under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) between April 2021 and March 2022, and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) at 31 March 2022.

First published: 23 March 2023

Last updated: 23 March 2023

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Contents

Introduction

Main points

Assessments

Hazards found in HMOs

Hazards found in non-HMOs

Enforcement action

HMO licensing

Quality and methodology information

Contact details

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Introduction

The **Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** was introduced in 2006 to evaluate potential risks to the health and safety of an occupant from any deficiencies identified in a dwelling. This release presents information on dwellings in which HHSRS assessments were carried out between April 2021 and March 2022 (not all residential dwellings). Headline information about the HHSRS across all residential dwellings is available for 2017-18 in the **Welsh Housing Condition Survey headline results**.

This release also presents information on houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) at 31 March 2022. All information presented in this release has been collected in the annual Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities. More details about the data presented in this release can be found in the **Housing hazards and licenses quality report**.

Main points

- In 2021-22, 4,363 HHSRS assessments were carried out, more than double the number carried out in 2020-21 (a period heavily affected by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic).
- Of the 4,363 assessments, 2,012 were carried out in HMOs (46.1%).
- Category 1 hazards were found in 1,283 of the assessments made (29.4%).
- The most common Category 1 hazard found in HMOs and non-HMOs was 'excess cold'.
- Action by local authorities resulted in the resolution of 797 Category 1 hazards.
- At 31 March 2022, there were 7,286 licensed HMOs, of which 2,592 (35.6%) were under mandatory licensing.

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Assessments

The HHSRS is a risk-based evaluation tool which helps local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety. It is used to determine whether residential premises are safe to live in. Whilst it covers all residential premises, it is more commonly used to assess standards in private sector housing.

The HHSRS assesses 29 types of housing hazard and provides a rating for each one. Hazards which score highly on the scale (and pose the greatest risk) are referred to as Category 1 hazards. If a dwelling is found to contain a Category 1 hazard, the local authority has a duty to take appropriate enforcement action. Hazards which score lower on the scale (and pose a lesser risk) are referred to as Category 2 hazards. When a Category 2 hazard is identified, the local authority may take enforcement action. Local authorities base all enforcement decisions, in respect of residential premises, on HHSRS assessments. Any dwelling found to contain a Category 1 Hazard would automatically 'fail' the **Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS)**.

HHSRS assessments may be carried out for a number of reasons, including when an HMO is licensed, or when a complaint about a property is received from the occupier or a neighbour.

The **Fitness for human habitation (FFHH) Regulations** were introduced in December 2022 (following the period covered in this release) under **Section 91 of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 (UK legislation website)**. The FFHH Regulations aim to ensure landlords maintain dwellings to prevent them becoming unfit for human habitation. Please note that whether or not a dwelling is found to contain a hazard under the HHSRS does not pre-determine whether it is unfit for human habitation under the FFHH Regulations. For example, while a slight variation of floor surface may be considered a hazard under the HHSRS, it would be highly unlikely on its own to result in a determination that the dwelling

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

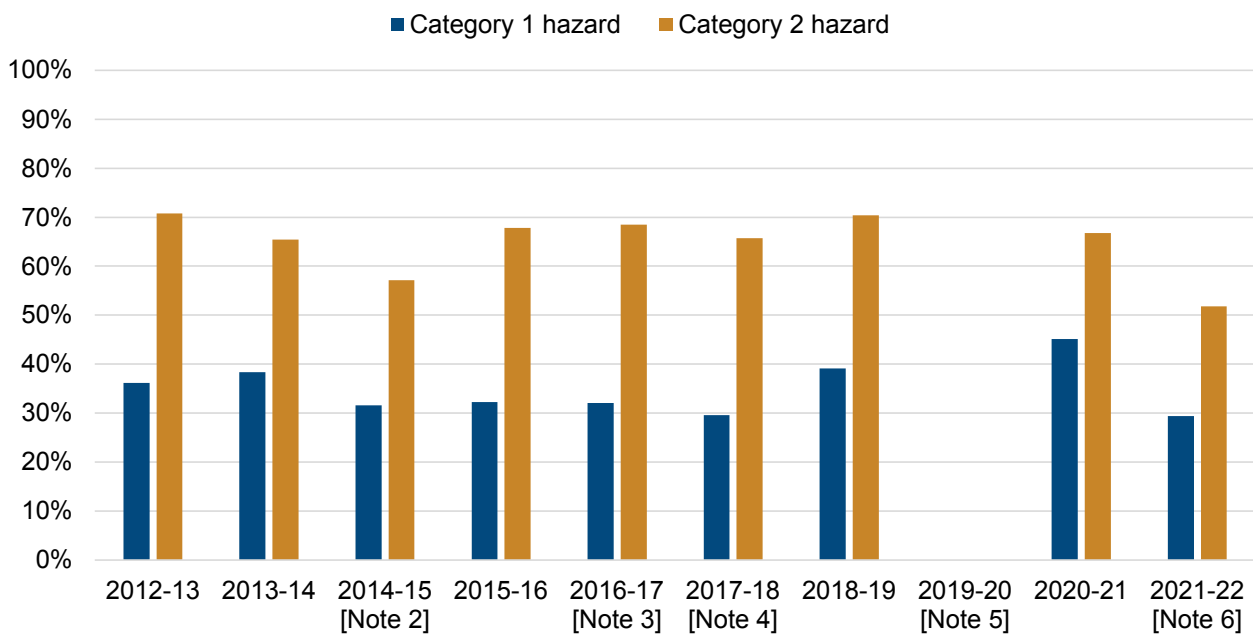
is unfit for human habitation.

In 2021-2022, 4,363 HHSRS assessments were carried out, more than double that carried out in the previous year. The number of assessments carried out in 2020-21 was heavily impacted by the pandemic, as public health measures limited the ability of local authorities to carry out assessments. Despite an increase in the most recent year, the number of assessments carried out remains lower than that observed in the years prior to the pandemic (5,652 in 2018-19).

The number of assessments carried out in each local authority varied, with some authorities reporting that the pandemic continued to affect their typical operations. For example, Torfaen reported that fewer assessments were carried out in 2021-22 to minimise the risk of transmission to staff and clients (39 assessments were carried out in 2018-19 compared to 6 in 2021-22), whilst Denbighshire reported an increase in the number of assessments carried out due to the backlog acquired from the previous years (381 assessments were carried out in 2018-19 compared to 557 in 2021-22).

In 2021-22, the greatest number of assessments were carried out in Denbighshire and Swansea (557 and 542 assessments respectively). Fewer than 100 assessments were carried out in this year in 9 of 22 local authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Ceredigion, Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Torfaen, Wrexham and Vale of Glamorgan).

Figure 1: Percentage of all assessments found to contain at least one Category 1 or Category 2 hazard, 2012-13 to 2021-22 [Note 1]



Description of Figure 1: Clustered column chart showing the percentage of HHSRS assessments which contained a Category 1 or Category 2 hazard in the past 10 years. Each year, a higher percentage of assessments have found a Category 2 hazard.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Assessments may contain both Category 1 and Category 2 hazards.

[Note 2] Includes estimated figures for Flintshire.

[Note 3] Includes estimated figures for Denbighshire and Wrexham.

[Note 4] Includes estimated figures for Cardiff.

[Note 5] Data not collected for 2019-20 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Note 6] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

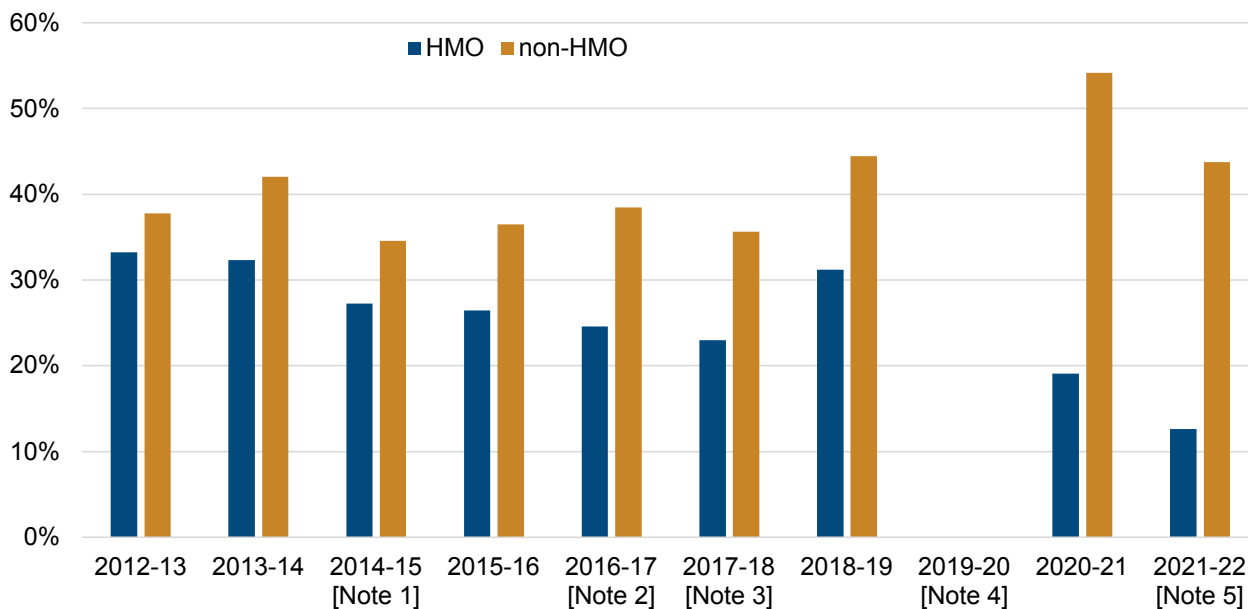
In 2021-22, 29.4% of assessments were found to contain at least one Category 1 hazard. This proportion is substantially lower than that recorded in 2020-21 (45.1%) due to the focus of limited resources on high-risk premises in this year. The proportion of assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard in 2021-22 was lower than that recorded in 2018-19 (39.1%) but similar to that recorded in 2017-18 (29.6%).

In 2021-22, just over half of all assessments contained at least one Category 2 hazard (51.8%). Again, this was lower than the proportion recorded in the previous year (66.8%) and lower than that observed in the years prior to the pandemic (70.4% in 2018-19).

At a local authority level, the proportion of assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard ranged from 3.0% in Swansea to 74.8% in Powys ^[Note 7]. By way of contrast, the proportion of assessments found to contain a Category 2 hazard ranged from 15.3% in Denbighshire to 98.4% in Cardiff ^[Note 7].

[Note 7] Excludes 9 local authorities with fewer than 100 assessments.

Figure 2: Percentage of assessments found to contain at least one Category 1 hazard by dwelling type, 2012-13 to 2021-22



Description of Figure 2: Clustered bar chart showing the percentage of assessments in HMOs and non-HMOs containing a Category 1 hazard. In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the percentage of Category 1 hazards found in HMOs has decreased.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Flintshire.

[Note 2] Includes estimated figures for Denbighshire and Wrexham.

[Note 3] Includes estimated figures for Cardiff.

[Note 4] Data not collected for 2019-20 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

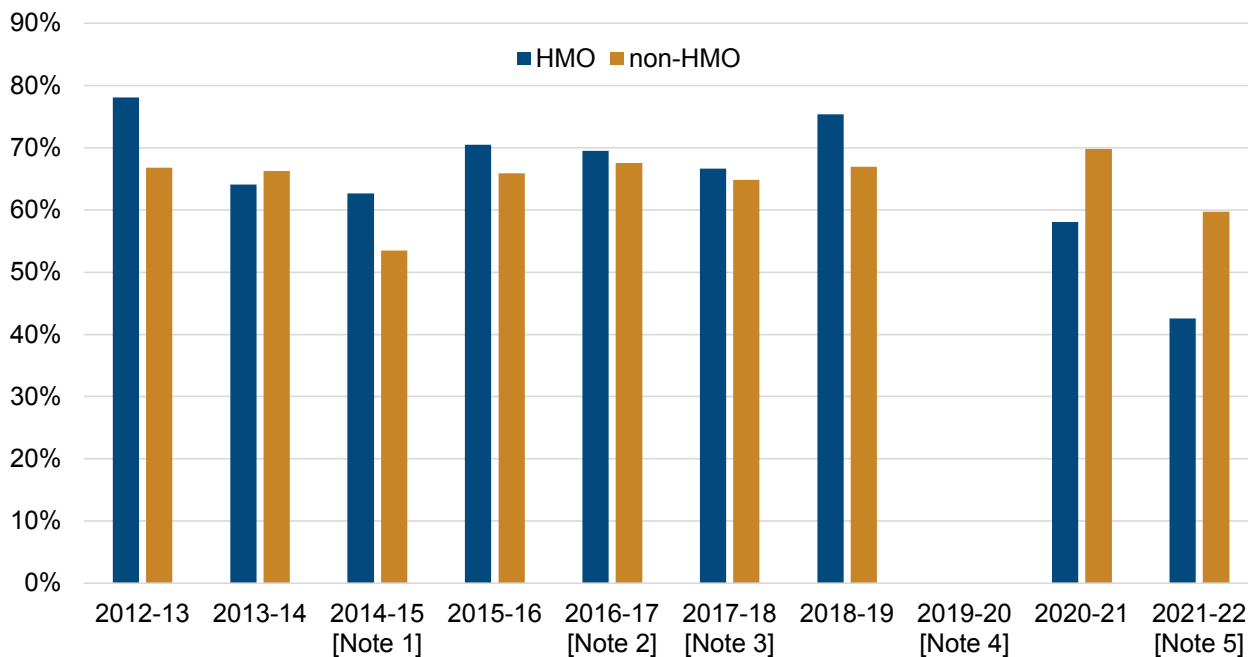
[Note 5] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

In 2021-22, 2,012 assessments were carried out in HMOs (accounting for 46.1% of all assessments). This was a substantial increase on the previous year (482 HMO assessments, accounting for 25.7% of all assessments). In Denbighshire, the number of assessments carried out in HMOs increased from 2 in 2020-21 to 520 in 2021-22.

Since the introduction of the HHSRS in 2006, the percentage of assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard has been higher in non-HMOs compared to HMOs. In 2020-21, the disparity between HMO and non-HMO assessments grew, as the percentage of assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard increased to 54.1% in non-HMOs (from 44.5% in 2018-19) and decreased to 19.1% in HMOs (from 31.2% in 2018-19).

In 2021-22, the percentage of non-HMO assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard decreased to 43.8%, falling within the range observed prior to the pandemic. Meanwhile, the percentage of HMO assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard fell to a record low (12.6%). This decrease appears to largely be accounted for by Denbighshire, with an increase in the number of HMO assessments carried out in this authority (from 226 in 2018-19 to 520 in 2021-22) and a decrease in the number of Category 1 hazards found (from 80 to 20). This has led to a substantial decrease in the percentage of HMO assessments in Denbighshire found to contain a Category 1 hazard (from 35.4% in 2018-19 to 3.8% in 2021-22).

Figure 3: Percentage of assessments found to contain at least one Category 2 hazard by dwelling type, 2012-13 to 2021-22



Description of Figure 3: Clustered bar chart showing the percentage of Category 2 hazards found in HMO and non-HMO assessments in the past 10 years. Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, a higher percentage of Category 2 hazards was found in HMO assessments, however, in 2020-21 and 2021-22, a higher percentage was found in non-HMO assessments.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Flintshire.

[Note 2] Includes estimated figures for Denbighshire and Wrexham.

[Note 3] Includes estimated figures for Cardiff.

[Note 4] Data not collected for 2019-20 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

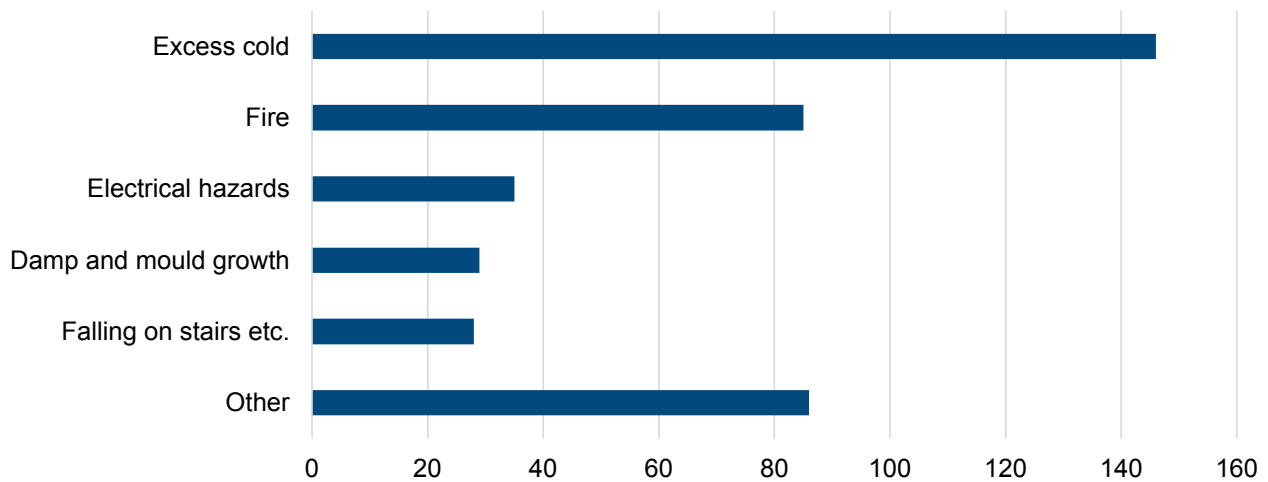
[Note 5] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

Between 2014-15 and 2018-19, a higher percentage of Category 2 hazards were found in HMO assessments compared to non-HMO assessments. In the most recent two years, the percentage of HMO assessments found to contain a Category 2 hazard has rapidly decreased, falling below that recorded in non-HMO assessments. In the most recent year, this difference may also be largely accounted for by Denbighshire as, whilst the number of HMO assessments has increased (as noted above), the number of assessments found to contain a Category 2 hazards has decreased (from 140 in 2018-19 to 61 in 2021-22). This has led to a drop in the proportion of HMO assessments found to contain a Category 2 hazard (from 61.9% to 11.7%).

Hazards found in HMOs

HMOs cover a wide range of housing types in the private rented sector. They are often occupied by younger, lower-income single people and some vulnerable/disadvantaged groups.

Figure 4: Number of Category 1 hazards found in HMO assessments by hazard type, 2021-22 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 4: Horizontal bar chart showing the breakdown of Category 1 hazards found in HMO assessments in 2021-22. The most commonly found hazard was 'excess cold', followed by 'fire' and 'electrical hazards'.

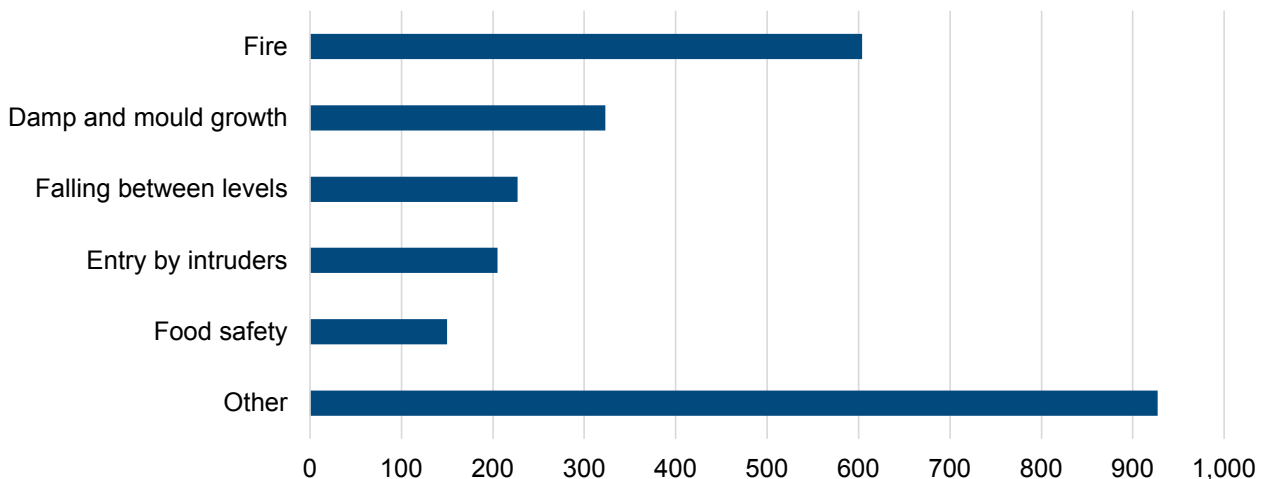
Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

[Note 2] Assessments may contain more than one Category 1 hazard.

Since 2012-13, 'excess cold' has been the most common Category 1 hazard found in HMOs. In 2021-22, 'excess cold' accounted for 146 (35.7%) of Category 1 hazards found in this type of dwelling.

Figure 5: Number of Category 2 hazards found in HMO assessments by hazard type, 2021-22 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 5: Horizontal bar chart showing the breakdown of Category 2 hazards found in HMO assessments in 2021-22. The most commonly found hazard was 'fire', followed by 'damp and mould growth' and 'falling between levels'.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

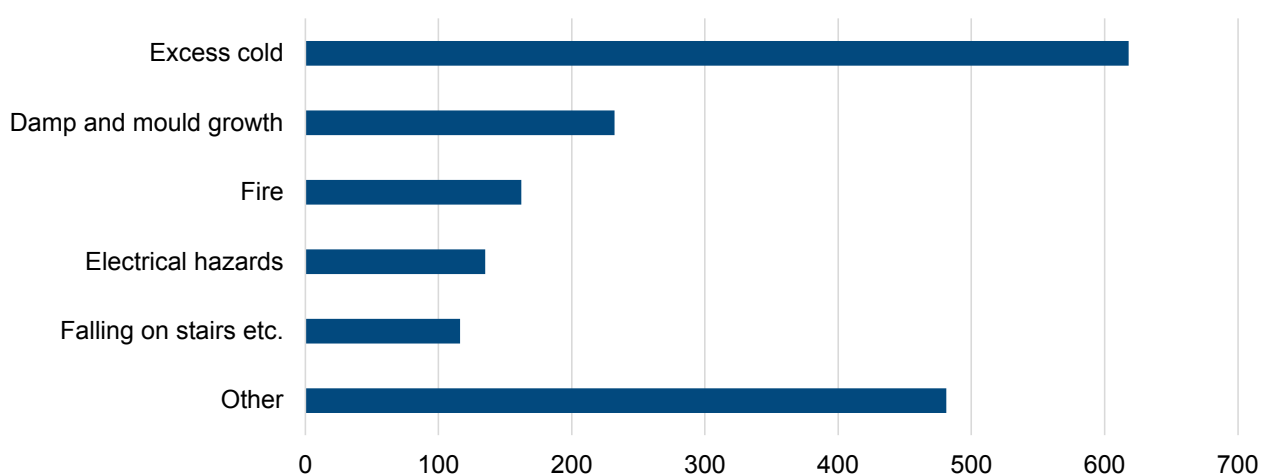
[Note 2] Assessments may contain more than one Category 2 hazard.

Since 2008-09, the most common Category 2 hazard found in HMO assessments (outside of 'other') has been 'fire'. Risk of 'fire' accounted for 604 Category 2 hazards found in this type of dwelling in 2021-22 (24.8%).

Hazards found in non-HMOs

Single household dwellings are known as non-HMOS.

Figure 6: Number of Category 1 hazards found in non-HMO assessments by hazard type, 2021-22 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 6: Horizontal bar chart showing the breakdown of Category 1 hazards found in non-HMO assessments in 2021-22. The most commonly found hazard was 'excess cold', followed by 'damp and mould growth' and 'fire'.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

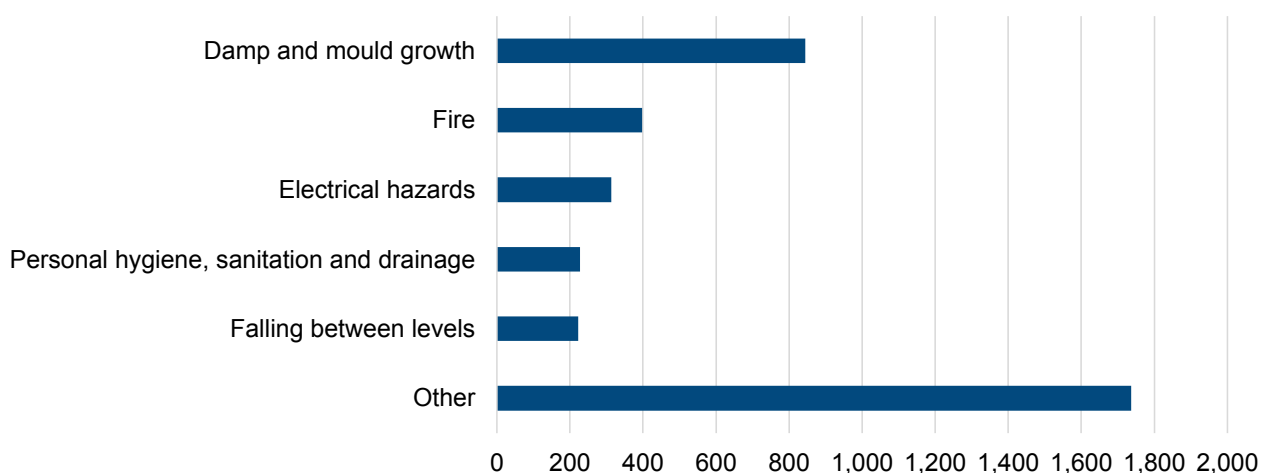
[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

[Note 2] Assessments may contain more than one Category 1 hazard.

In 2021-22, the most common Category 1 hazard found in non-HMO assessments was 'excess cold'. 'Excess cold' accounted for 618 Category 1

hazards found in this dwelling type (35.4%), the largest proportion recorded since 2010-11.

Figure 7: Number of Category 2 hazards found in non-HMO assessments by hazard type, 2021-22 [Note 1] [Note 2]



Description of Figure 7: Horizontal bar chart showing the breakdown of Category 2 hazards found in non-HMO assessments in 2021-22. The most commonly found hazard was 'damp and mould growth', followed by 'fire' and 'electrical hazards'.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

[Note 2] Assessments may contain more than one Category 2 hazard.

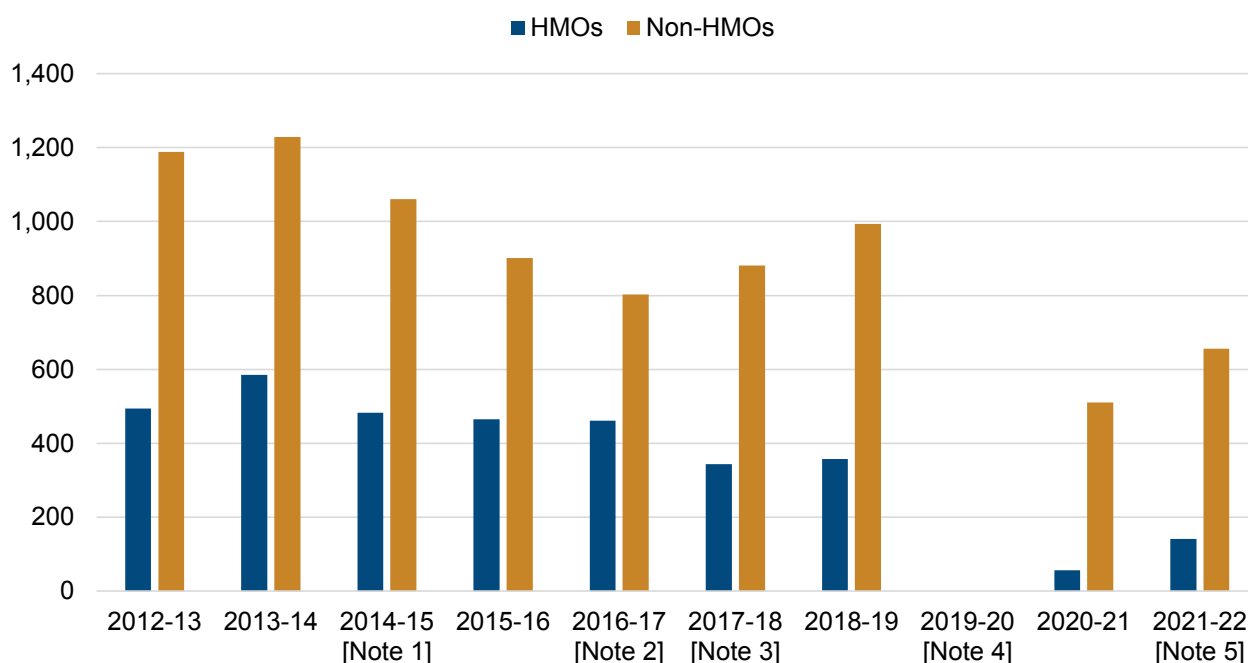
Since 2008-09, the most common Category 2 hazard found in non-HMO assessments (outside of 'other') has been 'damp and mould growth'. In 2021-22, 'damp and mould growth' accounted for 844 Category 2 hazards in this type of

dwelling (22.6%).

Enforcement action

Local authorities can implement a range of actions when they identify a hazard, including serving a hazard awareness notice or an improvement notice requiring work to remove or reduce the hazard, making a prohibition order to restrict the use of all or part of the dwelling or taking action themselves where they consider that the hazard needs to be dealt with as an emergency. The enforcement action taken may not always result in the resolution of a hazard.

Figure 8: Number of Category 1 hazards resolved by dwelling type, 2012-13 to 2021-22



This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Description of Figure 8: Clustered bar chart showing the number of Category 1 hazards resolved in HMOs and non-HMOs in the past 10 years. In the most recent two years, the number of hazards resolved has fallen.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Includes estimated figures for Flintshire.

[Note 2] Includes estimated figures for Denbighshire and Wrexham.

[Note 3] Includes estimated figures for Cardiff.

[Note 4] Data not collected for 2019-20 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Note 5] Includes estimated figures for Pembrokeshire.

In 2021-22, action by local authorities resulted in the resolution of 797 Category 1 hazards. This was an increase on the previous year (567) but lower than the number of resolutions achieved in the years prior to the pandemic (1,352 in 2018-19). The majority of resolutions occurred in single household dwellings (non-HMOs, 82.3%). This is to be expected, given that most Category 1 hazards are found in non-HMOs (in 2021-22, 80.2% of assessments found to contain a Category 1 hazard were non-HMOs assessments).

It is important to note that the assessment of some hazards may have been carried out in previous financial years. Some assessments may also identify more than one Category 1 hazard. For these reasons, it is not possible to determine the proportion of Category 1 hazards that have been resolved in a given year.

HMO licensing

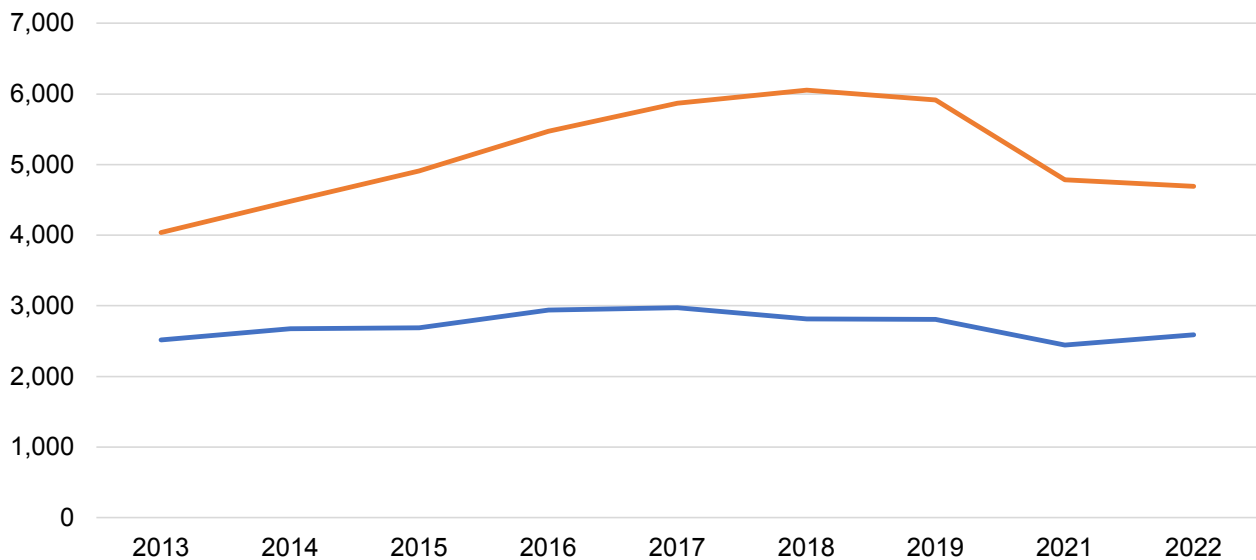
Local authorities are responsible for licensing, which is mandatory for some types of HMO. Mandatory licensing applies to larger, higher risk HMOs of three

or more stories, occupied by 5 or more people. HMO licensing was introduced under the [Housing Act 2004 \(UK legislation website\)](#) to help ensure that HMOs are well managed and aims to improve the physical condition and management of various types of properties in the private rented sector. Local authorities have the discretion to extend licensing to other categories of HMOs. This is known as additional licensing and enables local authorities to address particular problems that may exist in smaller properties or in particular geographical areas.

Between March 2013 and March 2017, the number of mandatory licenses gradually increased (from 2,515 to 2,973). More recently, the number of mandatory licenses has decreased, with 2,592 mandatory licenses recorded at 31 March 2022.

In contrast, the number of additional licenses increased more rapidly between March 2013 and March 2018 (from 4,035 to 6,056). Between March 2019 and March 2022, the number of additional licenses fell by 1,220. This decrease is largely accounted for by Cardiff, with 921 fewer additional licenses recorded in this authority in 2022. This is likely due to a delay in the renewal of [additional licensing in the Cathays community ward \(Shared Regularity Services\)](#) of Cardiff, an area largely populated by students. Additional licensing of this ward is due to return in February 2023.

Figure 9: Number of licensed HMOs by license type, 31 March 2013 to 31 March 2022 [Note 1]



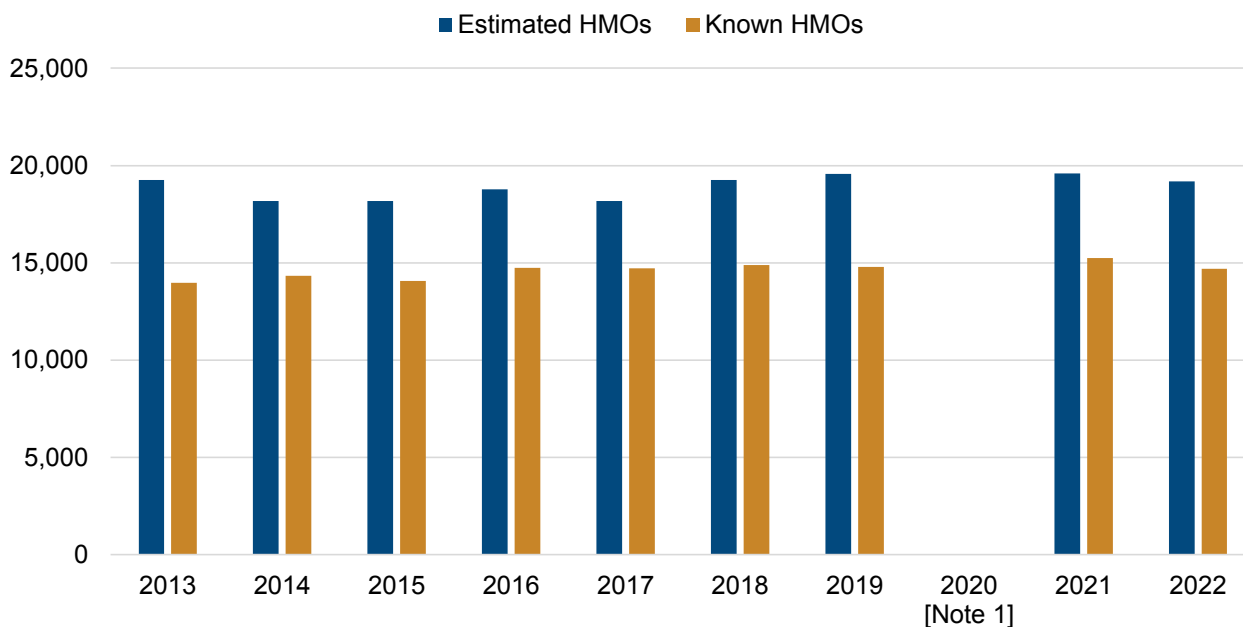
Description of Figure 9: Line graph showing the number of mandatory and additional HMO licenses recorded in the past 10 years. In the most recent two years, there has been an overall decrease in the number of licenses.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Data not collected for March 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At 31 March 2022, the local authorities with the highest number of licensed HMOs were Cardiff (2,488) and Swansea (1,643), both large urban areas with high levels of private rented dwellings and student populations.

Figure 10: Number of estimated and known HMOs, 31 March 2013 to 31 March 2022



Description of Figure 10: Clustered bar chart showing the number of estimated and known HMOs in the past 10 years. The number of estimated HMOs remains considerably higher than the number of known HMOs.

Source: Hazards and Licences returns from local authorities

[Note 1] Data not collected for March 2020 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At 31 March 2022, local authorities estimated there were a total of 19,196 HMOs in Wales, a small decrease on the previous year (2.0%). This was accompanied by a decrease in the number of HMOs known to local authorities (from 15,247 in March 2021 to 14,697 in March 2022). At 31 March 2022, 76.6% of estimated HMOs were known to local authorities.

Cardiff and Swansea reported the highest numbers of estimated HMOs in Wales (7,000 and 2,100 respectively). In Cardiff and Swansea, a high proportion of estimated HMOs were known to the local authority (91.8% in Cardiff and 86.8% in Swansea). In contrast, Denbighshire reported the third highest number of estimated HMOs (1,344) with a much smaller proportion of these HMOs known to the local authority (20.9%).

Quality and methodology information

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.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2012 following **assessment by the Office for Statistics**

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

Regulation.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Expanded commentary to include more policy and operational context.
- Separated Housing hazards and licenses and Demolitions publications to improve accessibility and usability of data.
- Enhanced trustworthiness by reducing/removing pre-release access.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing 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 wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

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

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).

This release includes one contextual indicator, namely '(31) Percentage of dwellings which are free from hazards', which was referenced in the Well-being report in the previous link.

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

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 wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Contact details

Statistician: Holly Flynn

Email: stats.housingconditions@gov.wales

Media: 0300 025 8099

SFR 24/2023



This document may not be fully accessible.

For more information refer to our [accessibility statement](#).

This document was downloaded from GOV.WALES and may not be the latest version.

Go to <https://www.gov.wales/housing-hazards-and-licences-april-2021-march-2022-html> for the latest version.

Get [information on copyright](#).