



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Assistance for housing improvement: quality report

This report covers the general principles and processes leading up to the production of our statistics.

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Glossary

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.

Disabled facilities grants (DFGs)

DFGs 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
- 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 (UK legislation) as amended by the **Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (UK legislation)**. 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.

This release presents information on completed DFGs only (where final payment has been made on the grant and it has been certified).

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 (UK legislation)**. 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.

'Group repair' scheme

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.

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. 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
- increase confidence in the future of an area, and through this help reverse any process of decline

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.

Third party assistance

This includes any assistance to renewal activity from other sources. In local authority facilitated loans, local authorities may provide the funding for the third party to give the loan.

Background

Policy and operational context

This information is used to monitor the effectiveness of current policy for households in Wales to have the opportunity to live in good quality homes and for future policy development. The [Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014 \(UK legislation\)](#) 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 Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 which came into force on 1 December 2022 changed the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties. The new law will make renting easier and provide greater security.

Quality information

Users and uses

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. The information on both mandatory and non-mandatory DFGs helps provide a picture of the number and types of DFGs and the costs of adaptations at a local and national level. Local authorities use the information for a number of reasons, including strategic planning for housing and completing Local Housing Market Assessments. More generally the information is used for:

- monitoring housing trends
- policy development
- advice to Ministers
- informing debate in the Senedd Cymru and beyond
- geographic profiling, comparisons and benchmarking

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](#).

Accuracy

Data for 2020-21 has been revised due to an error found in the data returned for Cardiff. This also impacted the Wales totals which have also been revised.

Data for 2019-20 was not collected due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please note that disruption to local authority services may have continued to impact the figures reported for 2020-21 and 2021-22. This should be kept in mind when comparing recent data to earlier years.

Data source and coverage

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 2021-22 financial year (April 2021 to March 2022). The data shown in this release are collected via three separate returns, covering:

- **Assistance for housing improvement**
- **DFGs**
- **Renewal areas**

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 2021-22, therefore there has been no imputation of data. The information shown includes activity under **the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (UK legislation)**, the **Housing Grants (UK legislation)**,

Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (UK legislation) and the **Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (UK legislations)**.

Validation and verification

Local authorities complete data collection forms with built in guidance and primary validation which allows them to validate some data before sending to the Welsh Government. 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. Copies of the data collection forms can be found on the Welsh Government website:

- **[Assistance for Housing Improvement: data collection](#)**
- **[Disabled facilities grants for housing: data collection](#)**
- **[Housing renewal areas activity: data collection](#)**

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

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.

Quality assurance

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

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.

Revisions

Revisions can arise for various reasons, such as late returns from a local authority, or when a data supplier notifies the Welsh Government that they have submitted incorrect information. 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.

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.

Revised data is marked with an (r) in the statistical release.

We follow the Welsh Government's **statistical revisions policy**.

National Statistics status

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 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.
- Clarified the scope of the release (i.e., local authority expenditure in a given

12-month period).

Enhanced trustworthiness by reducing/removing pre-release access.

Well-being of Future Generations Act

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](#).

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.

Coherence with other statistics

Housing adaptations

In July 2021 the research report [Housing adaptations: analysis 2019 to 2020](#) was published. The data within this report was collected directly from adaptations providers by the Welsh Government. Submissions were received from all 13 Care & Repair agencies, from all 22 local authorities, and from 29 housing associations. Six housing associations, two of which were the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer bodies which took over the ownership of former council housing, did not submit returns. This report does not therefore provide a complete national picture of the delivery of housing adaptations. However, given the scope of this data collection, we are considering whether it could replace the information currently collected annually from local authorities on assistance for housing improvement as published within this release. We will be reviewing the content and scope of this release in due course and welcome any feedback on these early proposals.

Please provide your comments by email to:

stats.housingconditions@gov.wales

Related statistics for other UK countries

England

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 \(UK legislation\)](#). Comparable information for England on loans, grants and other assistance is collected in Section F of the annual [Local Authority Housing Statistics \(Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities\)](#) data returns.

Scotland

The [Housing \(Scotland\) 2006 Act \(UK legislation\)](#) 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 \(UK legislation\)](#). Information is available in [Housing Statistics for Scotland - Private Sector Housing Improvement and Repair Grants \(Scottish Government\)](#).

Northern Ireland

Information on grants available for home improvement in Northern Ireland is available on the [NIDirect website](#).

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

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