

C. RURAL PROOFING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Describe and explain the impact of the proposal on rural people, businesses and communities.

The Bill will introduce a new building safety regime covering the occupation and ongoing management of multi-occupied residential buildings in Wales.

The new regime will include, with some exceptions, all residential buildings that contain two or more residential units, including the residential parts of mixed-use buildings.

The new building safety regime will impact positively on residents of multi-occupied buildings wherever they are in Wales.

We have engaged local authorities and fire and rescue authorities in developing proposals for the Bill. None has reported differential impacts of our proposals as a result of rurality.

The Bill will have little impact on

- ♦ Service users, workers or consumers.
- ♦ Specifically rural people e.g. older population, lack of affordable housing, language requirements
- ♦ Narrow roads and steep mountains
- ♦ It is not relevant to SMEs or micro-enterprises
- ♦ The proposal does not depend on infrastructure such as good road/rail connections or fast broadband or good mobile connectivity
- ♦ The proposal does not impact poverty in rural areas, however, should benefit residents all over the country regardless, if they live in rural or urban areas.

Welsh Government commissioned IFF Research [Fire safety in multi-occupied buildings: residents research](#) to conduct research among residents of all types and from all tenure groups, living in buildings defined as in scope of the new building safety regime. The objectives were to explore residents' knowledge, understanding and behaviour towards fire safety and how they engage with their building managers, in order to produce typologies of residents that can be used to tailor fire safety interventions and communication. An online survey of 1,562 residents of multi-occupied buildings in Wales was conducted, followed by 24 qualitative in-depth interviews, with residents selected from the survey respondents.

Table 1. shows that a large majority of flats are found in urban areas (86%).

Table 1: Dwelling type by urban/rural classification, 2017-18

Dwelling type	Urban (%)	Town & Fringe (%)	Village (%)	Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling (%)
House or bungalow	65	11	16	8
Flat	86	-	12	-

Source: Welsh Housing Conditions Survey

[Welsh Housing Conditions Survey: results viewer | GOV.WALES](#)

Table 2. shows that flats are more numerous in south east Wales, than in mid and south west Wales or north Wales.

Table 2: Dwelling type by region of Wales, 2021 Census estimates

Region	House or bungalow (%)	Flat (%)
North Wales	23	19
Mid and south west Wales	30	25
South east Wales	47	56
Total	100%	100%

Source: Census 2021, ONS

Another way to explore the impact on rural areas is to look at the number of in-scope buildings in rural and non-rural (valleys, urban and other) local authorities. Of course, all Welsh local authorities are a mix of rural and urban parts. For example, rural Carmarthenshire includes the town of Llanelli, while urban Swansea includes the

rural Gower Peninsula. Even so, a Statistical Focus on Rural Wales¹ identifies 9 local authorities as being rural, based on below average population density.

Table 3. shows that a large majority of category 1 buildings are found in Cardiff and Swansea (83%). Only 5% of Category 1 buildings in Wales are found in rural local authorities.

Table 4. shows that only 15% of all category 2 buildings are found in rural local authorities, with more than half (55%) found in Cardiff and Swansea. However, 30% of category 3 buildings are found in rural local authorities. This closely matches the population share of rural authorities (32%).

Data from StatsWales, table 5., shows that 23% of known HMO (House of Multiple Occupation) and an estimated 30% of all HMOs in Wales are found in rural local authorities. This is slightly lower than the population share of rural local authorities (32%).

Data from ONS, table 6., shows that although 35% of all dwellings are in rural local authorities, only 16% of HMOs are in rural local authorities.

The Welsh Government HMO figures are higher than the Census 2021 HMO figures due to different definitions of HMO being used. In the Welsh Government data, an HMO is defined as "a building or part of a building occupied by persons forming at least two households sharing at least one basic amenity", whilst the ONS define an HMO as "a dwelling where at least three unrelated tenants rent their home from a private landlord".

Since the data show that multi-occupied residential buildings are less common in rural local authorities than in non-rural local authorities, we conclude that the impact on rural areas is likely to be minimal.

¹ A Statistical Focus on Rural Wales

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/080515-statistical-focus-rural-wales-08-en.pdf>

Table 3. Category 1 buildings by local authority

	Local Authority	Category 1 Buildings	Population
Valleys, Urban and Other Local Authorities	Cardiff	99	383,536
	Swansea	50	246,742
	Newport	7	163,628
	Vale of Glamorgan	6	134,733
	Flintshire	3	155,812
	Torfaen	3	93,419
	Wrexham	2	136,149
	Merthyr Tydfil	1	58,593
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	0	241,178
	Caerphilly	0	176,437
	Bridgend	0	146,743
	Neath Port Talbot	0	142,898
	Blaenau Gwent	0	67,356
	Total	171	2,147,224
Rural Local Authorities	Gwynedd	4	119,173
	Isle of Anglesey	3	69,291
	Pembrokeshire	1	125,006
	Conwy	1	114,410
	Carmarthenshire	0	190,083
	Powys	0	134,439
	Denbighshire	0	97,156
	Monmouthshire	0	94,572
	Ceredigion	0	73,050
	Total	9	1,017,180
All Authorities	Total	180	3,164,404

Data: Data Map Wales

Stats Wales: [Population estimates by local authority and year, 2023](#)

Table 4. Category 2 and 3 buildings by local authority

	Local Authority	Category 2 Buildings	Category 3 Buildings	Population
Valleys, Urban and Other Local Authorities	Cardiff	136	9,671	383,536
	Swansea	114	4,413	246,742
	Vale of Glamorgan	62	2,458	134,733
	Newport	19	3,142	163,628
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	14	3,272	241,178
	Blaenau Gwent	13	902	67,356
	Neath Port Talbot	8	2,352	142,898
	Bridgend	4	1,725	146,743
	Wrexham	3	2,316	136,149
	Caerphilly	2	2,286	176,437
	Flintshire	2	1,160	155,812
	Torfaen	2	1,465	93,419
	Merthyr Tydfil	1	358	58,593
	Total	380	35,520	2,147,224
Rural Local Authorities	Carmarthenshire	28	1,767	190,083
	Pembrokeshire	12	2,006	125,006
	Denbighshire	8	1,248	97,156
	Isle of Anglesey	7	919	69,291
	Conwy	6	2,846	114,410
	Gwynedd	4	2,025	119,173
	Ceredigion	3	1,457	73,050
	Powys	1	1,847	134,439
	Monmouthshire	0	1,195	94,572
	Total	69	15,310	1,017,180
All Authorities	Total	449	50,830	3,164,404

Data: Data Map Wales

Stats Wales: [Population estimates by local authority and year, 2023](#)

Table 5. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by local authority

	Local Authority	Known HMOs in local authority area	Estimate of all HMOs in local authority area	Population
Valleys, Urban and Other Local Authorities	Cardiff	6,418	7,000	383,536
	Swansea	1,863	2,100	246,742
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	567	634	241,178
	Bridgend	512	550	146,743
	Vale of Glamorgan	488	520	134,733
	Neath Port Talbot	444	444	142,898
	Newport	311	416	163,628
	Wrexham	256	420	136,149
	Caerphilly	145	160	176,437
	Merthyr Tydfil	50	50	58,593
	Flintshire	46	400	155,812
	Blaenau Gwent	46	68	67,356
	Torfaen	38	60	93,419
	Total	11,184	12,822	2,147,224
Rural Local Authorities	Gwynedd	808	1,000	119,173
	Conwy	723	850	114,410
	Ceredigion	613	690	73,050
	Carmarthenshire	434	434	190,083
	Powys	223	571	134,439
	Denbighshire	218	1,345	97,156
	Isle of Anglesey	94	250	69,291
	Monmouthshire	73	200	94,572
	Pembrokeshire	64	90	125,006
	Total	3,250	5,430	1,017,180
All Authorities	Total	14,434	18,252	3,164,404

Data: StatsWales – [Houses in multiple occupation by local authority](#), 2022-23

Stats Wales: [Population estimates by local authority and year](#), 2023

Table 6. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Non-HMO Dwellings by local authority

	Local Authority	HMOs	Dwellings
Valleys, Urban and Other Local Authorities	Cardiff	3,673	152,266
	Swansea	1,299	113,162
	Rhondda Cynon Taf	356	110,394
	Newport	108	69,611
	Wrexham	74	61,182
	Flintshire	63	70,490
	Bridgend	43	65,509
	Caerphilly	39	80,173
	Vale of Glamorgan	29	60,580
	Torfaen	28	42,728
	Neath Port Talbot	26	66,378
	Blaenau Gwent	17	32,847
	Merthyr Tydfil	6	27,486
	Total	5,761	952,806
Rural Local Authorities	Gwynedd	482	62,739
	Ceredigion	414	36,330
	Carmarthenshire	77	89,327
	Pembrokeshire	31	64,371
	Powys	28	66,838
	Denbighshire	26	50,300
	Isle of Anglesey	25	36,192
	Conwy	24	57,960
	Monmouthshire	23	43,434
	Total	1,130	507,491
All Authorities	Total	6,891	1,460,297

Source: ONS - [Number of dwellings that are houses in multiple occupation \(HMO\)](#)

Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Impact Assessment

This Sustainable Land Management (SLM) Impact Assessment is a separate requirement to the Rural Proofing Impact Assessment and is specifically about support or regulation which impacts Agriculture, other activities carried out on land used for agriculture, or ancillary activities, as legislated under the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023.

Since the 17 October 2023, there has been a legal requirement that, whenever Welsh Ministers provide support for, or regulate, agriculture, other activities carried out on land used for agriculture, or ancillary activities², they must do so in accordance with the SLM duty. It is essential, therefore, that relevant policy is developed and implemented in accordance with the SLM objectives and duty.

Questions to consider when determining whether you need to consider and / or complete an SLM Impact Assessment:

1. Does your policy / activity impact Agriculture? **No**
2. Is the policy / activity related to support for agriculture, other activities carried out on land used for agriculture, or ancillary activities? **No**
3. Is the policy / activity related to the regulation of agriculture, other activities carried out on land used for agriculture, or ancillary activities? **No**

If the answer is yes to any of the above, you will need to consider the impact of your policy (support or regulation) in line with the SLM objectives and the SLM duty of the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023.

SLM Impact Assessment: No Assessment Necessary

² It is important to note that “agriculture” and “ancillary activities” have specific meanings as defined at sections 51 and 52 of the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023, respectively. They are also provided within the SLM Impact Assessment Guidance for ease of reference.