

SDR 15/2016

10 February 2016

Assistance for Housing Improvement by Local Authorities, 2014-15

This annual statistical release presents information about assistance provided by local authorities for housing improvement for the 2014-15 financial year. It covers the financial help provided by local authorities, to owners and tenants, for home improvement and repair under the [Regulatory Reform \(Housing Assistance\) \(England and Wales\) Order 2002](#). The assistance is also provided for social housing via local authority housing renewal schemes, but it is primarily aimed at improving private sector housing. The release also presents detailed information on mandatory disabled 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. The final section of the release covers renewal areas, which are established to improve housing and general amenities of an area where social and environmental problems are combined with poor housing.

The information shown in this release is used by the Welsh Government to establish and monitor the amount spent annually across Wales on assistance for housing improvement, the number of dwellings improved and trends in activity undertaken by local authorities to improve the quality of housing stock within their area.

More details on the quality of the information presented, and definitions of all terms used, can be found at the end of this release. A full set of data on assistance for housing improvement can be found on [StatsWales](#).

Key results:

- During 2014-15 expenditure on assistance for housing improvement continued to fall, though the overall spending (including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)) was only down slightly (less than 1 per cent) on the previous year to £47.5 million (Table 1).
- Excluding Disabled Facilities Grants, around £14.8 million was spent on home improvement and repair during 2014-15, with the majority (76 per cent) via direct assistance by authorities in the form of grants and loans (Chart 2).
- Expenditure on Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) decreased by 3 per cent during 2014-15 to £31.7 million (Table 4).
- The number of renewal areas in operation and the dwellings within these areas decreased during 2014-15, (by 32 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively) and overall expenditure in these areas decreased to £20.9 million (Table 5).

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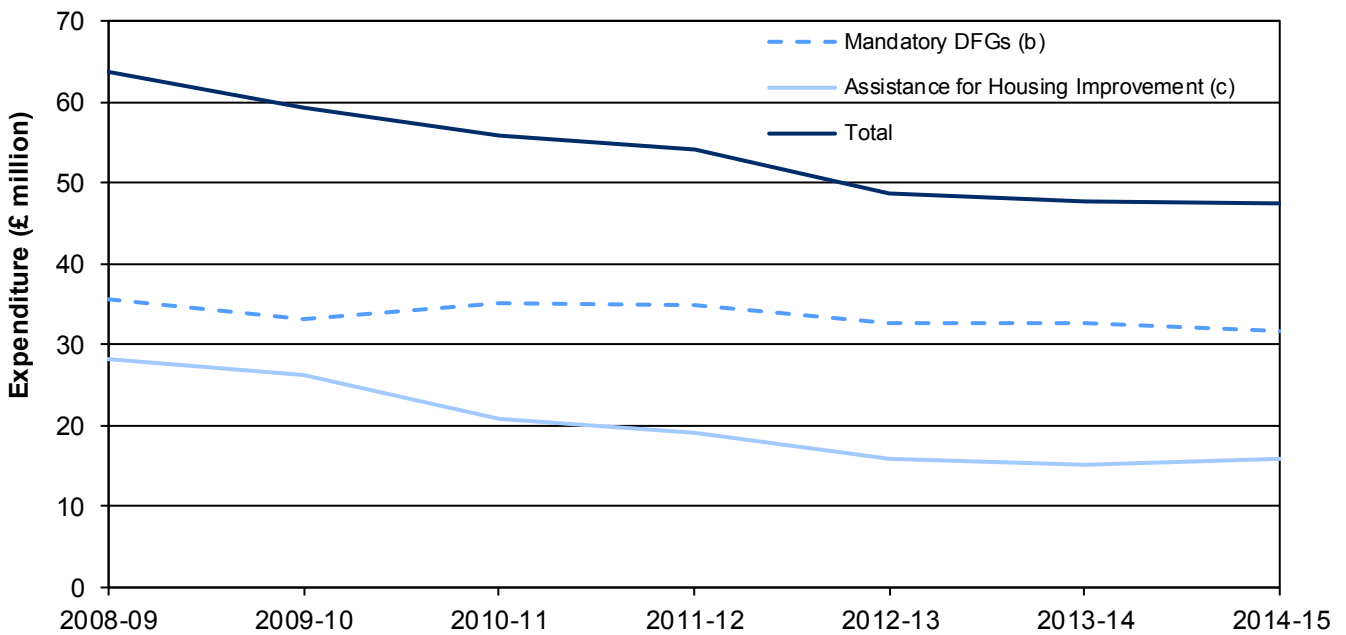
1. Overall Expenditure on All Assistance for Housing Improvement by Local Authorities, including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

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 DFGs. 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.

Chart 1 and Table 1 show the overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement, which includes mandatory and non-mandatory DFGs.

- The overall expenditure on assistance for housing improvement has been decreasing since 2008-09. During 2014-15, an overall total of £47.5 million was spent on all types of home improvement and repair, which is down by less than 1 per cent on the £47.8 million spent during the previous year. The decrease in expenditure by local authorities over recent years may have been affected by economic factors (Chart 1).

Chart 1 - Expenditure on Assistance for Housing Improvement, including DFGs (a)



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

- (a) Expenditure at current prices, no allowance has been made for inflation.
- (b) Only includes expenditure on completed grants where final payments have been made on the grant and certified.
- (c) Includes local authority grants and loans, additional non-mandatory DFG assistance, third party assistance facilitated by the local authority and residents' contributions. It does not include Specific Capital Grants (SCGs) although some SCGs may have been included prior to 2007-08.

- Since 2008-09, mandatory DFGs have contributed more to the total expenditure than other types of assistance for housing improvement. During 2014-15, mandatory DFGs accounted for over two thirds (67 per cent) of all spending, with non-mandatory DFGs accounting for a further 2 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 19 per cent in 2014-15. Over the same period, expenditure on loans increased from less than 1 per cent of all local authority expenditure on housing improvement to 5 per cent.
- Non-local authority expenditure, in the form of third party assistance, loans and the financial contributions made by individual residents, accounted for 7 per cent of overall spend during 2014-15, which is up from 5 per cent in 2013-14.

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	Mandatory DFGs	Non- Mandatory DFGs	Total expenditure (including DFGs)
	Grants	Loans	Total					
2008-09	26,776	321	27,097	.	989	35,708	.	63,794
2009-10	22,011	347	22,358	2,097	243	33,191	1,395	59,285
2010-11	16,517	1,307	17,824	1,617	492	35,077	882	55,893
2011-12	13,645	2,139	15,785	2,420	225	34,851	721	54,002
2012-13	12,055	1,511	13,566	952	422	32,700	982	48,622
2013-14	9,841	1,598	11,439	1,349	1,192	32,726	1,050	47,757
2014-15	9,004	2,284	11,288	875	2,599	31,694	1,017	47,473

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

(a) see point 6 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

- At a local authority level, 12 of the 22 local authorities reported decreases, ranging from 42 per cent in Powys to just 1 per cent in Caerphilly (Table 2).
- 10 of the 22 local authorities reported an increase in overall expenditure compared with the previous year. The largest increase was seen in Monmouthshire where expenditure more than doubled compared with the previous year.

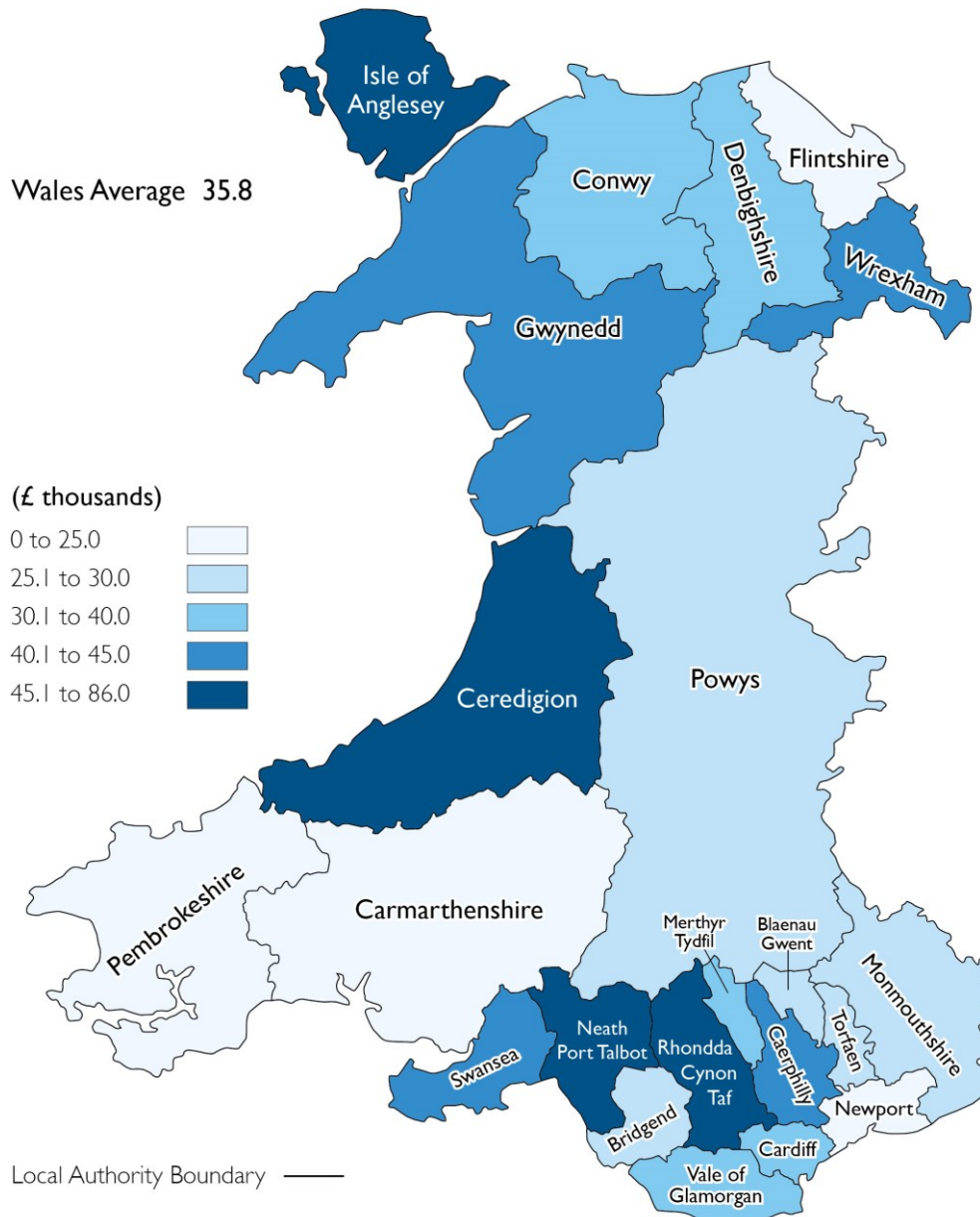
Table 2 – Overall Expenditure on Assistance for Housing Improvement, including DFGs, by Local Authority Area (a)

	<i>£ thousands</i>						
Local Authority	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Isle of Anglesey	1,110	1,263	1,112	1,018	812	988	1,829
Gwynedd	2,131	2,450	1,632	1,295	1,213	1,453	2,308
Conwy	3,479	1,843	1,843	1,200	1,344	1,162	1,638
Denbighshire	1,754	1,705	1,525	1,663	1,539	1,550	1,523
Flintshire	2,447	3,078	2,273	2,777	2,516	1,839	1,098
Wrexham	3,614	3,944	3,068	3,209	3,331	2,883	2,468
Powys	2,020	2,806	2,754	3,561	2,525	3,017	1,738
Ceredigion	3,360	2,834	2,697	2,947	1,303	1,395	2,694
Pembrokeshire	2,967	2,569	2,220	1,429	1,081	1,105	1,303
Carmarthenshire	2,697	2,417	2,542	2,330	2,401	1,830	1,256
Swansea	3,662	3,156	4,442	4,698	3,671	4,411	4,494
Neath Port Talbot	3,546	2,319	3,545	2,920	2,873	2,748	2,773
Bridgend	3,433	2,824	2,276	2,025	2,394	2,167	1,711
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,791	2,122	2,515	1,609	1,303	2,103	1,929
Cardiff	8,053	6,571	6,504	5,384	5,404	4,940	4,702
Rhondda Cynon Taf	7,975	8,843	6,789	6,881	6,769	5,306	5,507
Merthyr Tydfil	639	805	629	1,060	1,149	1,270	869
Caerphilly	3,170	3,257	3,250	4,080	3,205	3,278	3,255
Blaenau Gwent	1,400	1,195	1,113	999	735	759	850
Torfaen	1,252	1,246	977	1,139	858	1,148	1,117
Monmouthshire	332	524	511	460	510	526	1,111
Newport	2,960	1,513	1,674	1,318	1,686	1,877	1,302
Wales	63,794	59,285	55,893	54,002	48,622	47,757	47,473

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

(a) See point 6 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

Map I: Total overall expenditure (including mandatory DFGs) during 2014-15, per 1,000 dwellings (£ thousands)



Cartographics ML/167/15.16 (Feb 2016)

- Rhondda Cynon Taf reported the highest amount of overall spending on assistance for housing improvement during 2014-15 (£5.5 million). However, taking into account the number of dwellings in each area, Ceredigion was the local authority with the highest rate of spending (£85,200 per 1,000 dwellings), followed by the Isle of Anglesey (£59,100 per 1,000 dwellings).
- In contrast, Blaenau Gwent reported the lowest overall spending on assistance for housing improvement (£850,000) and Carmarthenshire had the lowest rate of spending at just £15,700 per 1,000 dwellings.

2. Expenditure on Assistance for Housing Improvement by Local Authorities, Excluding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

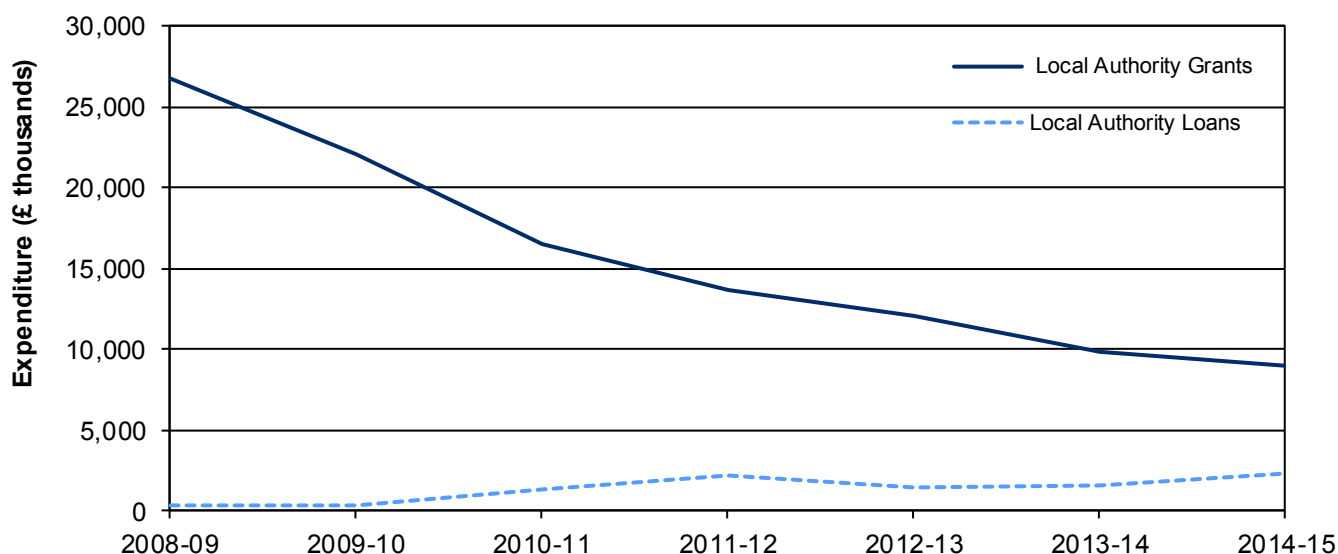
This section of the release looks at the expenditure by both local authorities and others on home improvement and repair, but excludes spending on mandatory DFGs and any additional non-mandatory DFG assistance. Assistance is available in three forms; direct assistance by the local authority in the form 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 following the same trend as seen for overall expenditure (including DFGs) in Chart 1. During 2014-15, however, expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs) was around £14.8 million, which is an increase of 6 per cent on the £14.0 million spent during the previous year. The increase was mainly due to the increases seen in expenditure on local authority loans and on third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authorities compared to 2013-14.

2.1 Expenditure by Type of Assistance

- The majority of the expenditure, £11.3 million (76 per cent), continued to be via direct assistance by authorities in the form of grants and loans. In recent years, there has been a gradual move away from grants, towards loans (Chart 2).

Chart 2 – 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 point 7 in Key Quality Information for details of expenditure included.

(r) Data for 2012-13 revised during the 2013-14 data validation process.

- Residents' contributions have fluctuated since information was collected in 2009-10. During 2014-15, around 6 per cent (£0.9 million) of expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs) was provided by residents' contributions, compared to 10 per cent (£1.3 million) during 2013-14. The 2014-15 figure is down by over a third on the 2013-14 figure.
- Third party loans and other third party assistance, which has also fluctuated since 2008-09, more than doubled during 2014-15 to 2.6 million and accounted for 18 per cent of all expenditure (excluding DFGs).

Detailed data tables on expenditure by type of assistance can be found on [StatsWales](http://StatsWales.gov.uk).

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 – Dwelling Improvement Activity, by Tenure and Type of Recipient (a)

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

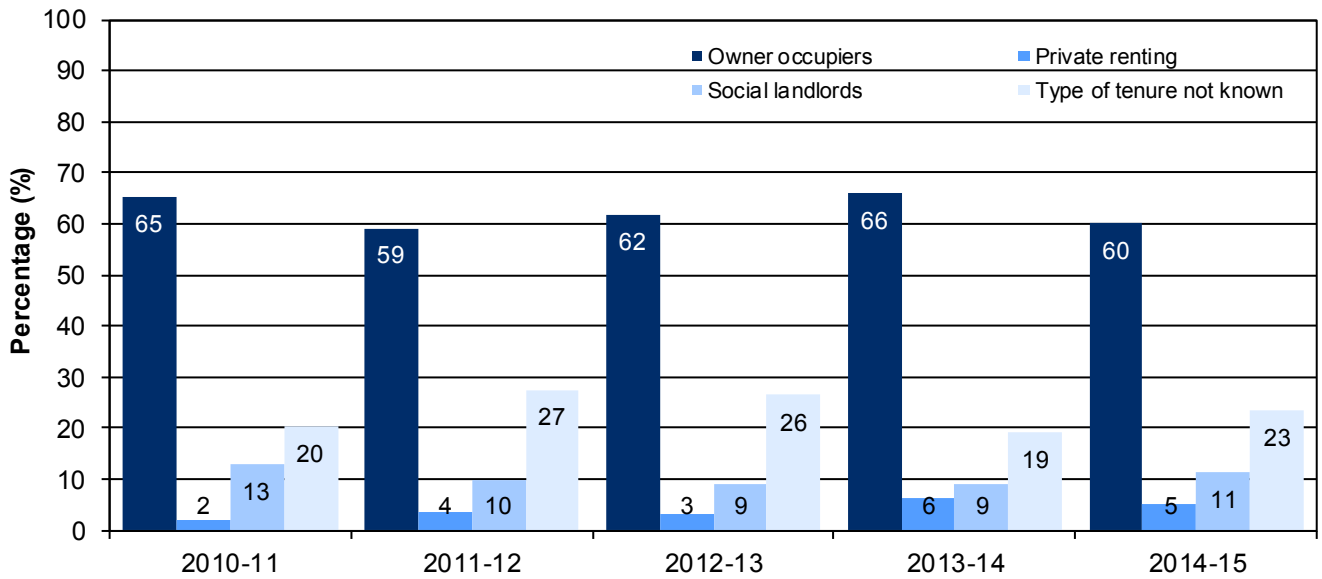
Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

(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.

(c) 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.

- The number of dwellings improved annually increased between 2010-11 and 2012-13, whilst overall expenditure (excluding DFGs) decreased over the same period. During 2013-14 both the number of dwellings improved and overall expenditure (excluding DFGs) were down on the previous year whilst during 2014-15 the number of dwellings improved continued to decrease but there was an increase in overall expenditure (excluding DFGS).
- During 2014-15, 7,126 dwellings were improved which is a decrease of over a fifth (21 per cent) compared with the previous year. Over the same period overall expenditure (excluding DFGs) increased by 6 per cent. This may be due to higher amounts being spent per dwelling. There can be considerable variation in the amount spent per dwelling across the different local authorities depending on the type of assistance provided.

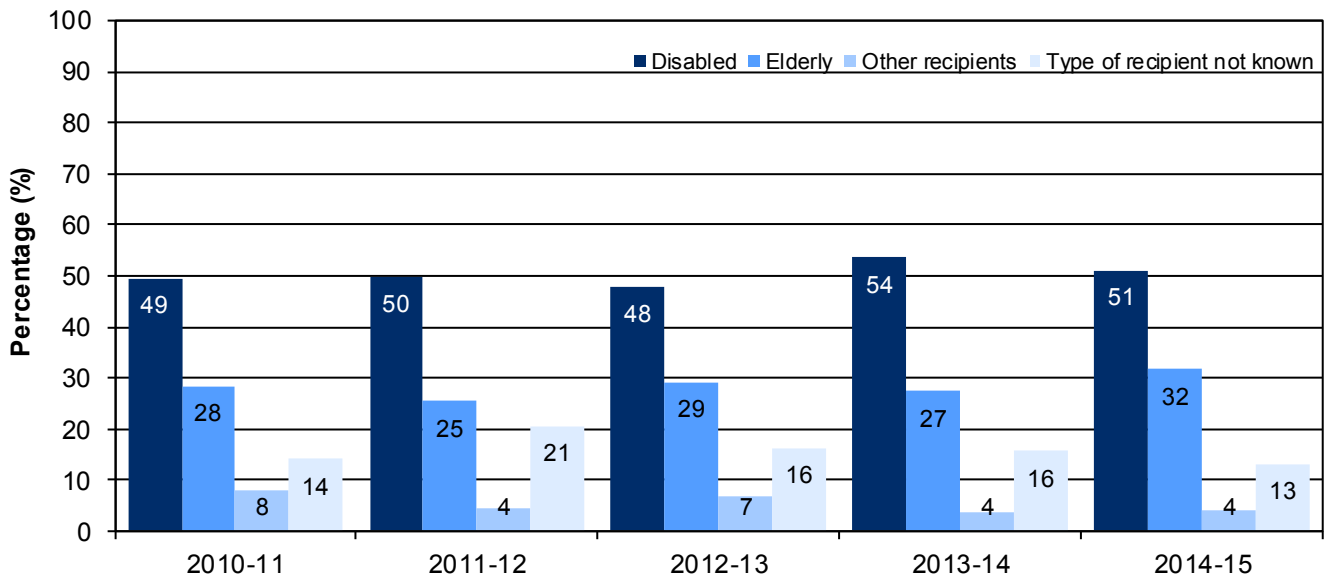
Chart 3 – Percentage of Total Dwellings Improved, by Tenure (a)



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).
- The majority of dwellings improved continued to be in the private sector (owner occupied and privately rented), most of which were owner occupied. During 2014-15, around 65 per cent of the dwellings improved were owner occupied or privately rented dwellings down from 72 per cent in 2013-14 (Chart 3).
 - 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, 804 social sector dwellings were improved, accounting for around 11 per cent of all dwellings improved compared with 9 per cent during the previous year.
 - During 2014-15, the tenure was unknown for 23 per cent of the dwellings improved, which is higher than the 19 per cent during 2013-14, but lower than the previous two years.

Chart 4 – Percentage of Total Dwellings Improved, by Recipient (a)



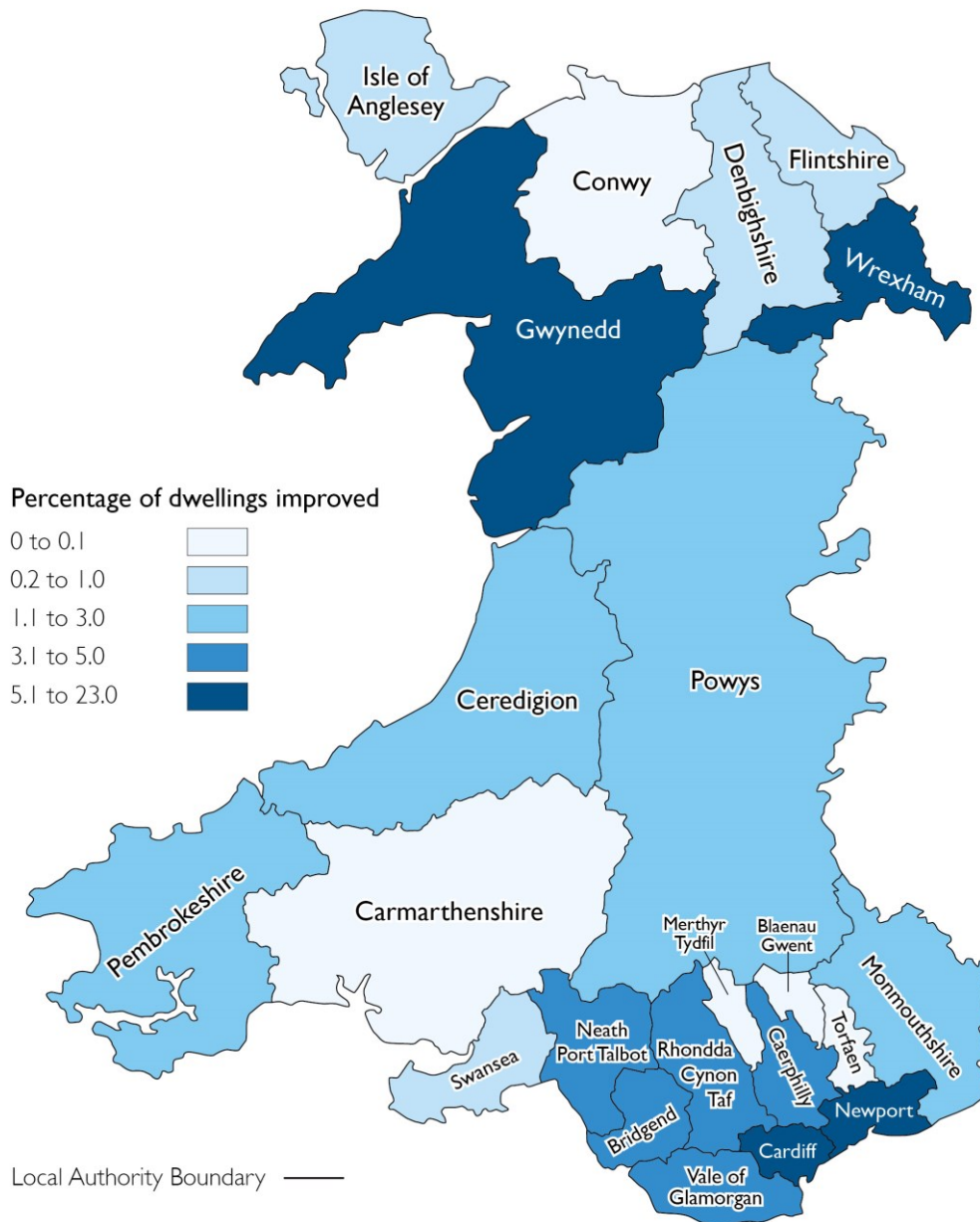
Source: Annual returns covering assistance for housing improvement

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

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

- More of the dwellings improved contained a disabled recipient than any other type of recipient though there was a decrease in both the number and proportion compared with the previous year. During 2014-15, 3,640 dwellings improved contained a disabled recipient down by a quarter on the previous year and accounted for 51 per cent of all dwellings improved compared with 54 per cent during 2013-14.
- There was also a decrease in the number of dwellings improved that contained elderly recipients during 2014-15, compared with the previous year. During 2014-15, a total of 2,253 dwellings improved contained elderly recipients, down by 9 per cent on the previous year, though as a proportion of all dwellings improved this increased to 32 per cent from 27 per cent in 2013-14.
- The number of dwellings improved where the type of recipient was unknown fell by a third during 2014-15 and accounted for 13 per cent of all dwellings improved, compared with 16 per cent in 2013-14.

Map 2: Number of dwellings improved as a percentage of all dwellings improved across Wales, 2014-15



Cartographics ML/167/15.16 (Feb 2016)

- At a local authority level, 4 local authorities contained around 70 per cent of all the dwellings improved due to expenditure on assistance for housing improvement (excluding DFGs). Newport contained the highest proportion at 23 per cent, followed by Gwynedd with 18 per cent, Wrexham with 16 per cent and Cardiff with 13 per cent.
- Both the number of dwellings improved and the amount spent per dwelling varies considerably across the different authorities, depending on the type of assistance provided. This is a reflection of the different housing improvement assistance policies and grant schemes operated by each local authority. For example, other than expenditure on DFGs, both Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen reported no expenditure on housing improvement assistance and no dwellings improved during 2014-15.

3. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

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. Further detail is provided in the Key Quality Information section of this release.

This section of the release looks specifically at the number of, and expenditure on, Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants up to 2014-15. 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.

- During 2014-15, 4,182 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), with a total value of £31.7 million, were completed by local authorities in Wales. This represents over two thirds (67 per cent) of the overall expenditure on private sector renewal.
- 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 2014-15, a total of 4,770 dwellings were improved across Wales, compared with a total of 4,182 completed Mandatory DFGs.

Table 4 – Expenditure on all Disabled Facilities Grants and Assistance (a)(b)

DFG	<i>£ thousands</i>					
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Mandatory DFGs approved under the 1996 Act.	33,191	35,077	34,851	32,700	32,726	31,694
Additional non-mandatory DFG assistance (including top-up loans and grants)	1,395	882	721	982	1,050	1,017
Total DFG expenditure	34,586	35,959	35,572	33,682	33,776	32,711

Source: Disabled Facility Grants return

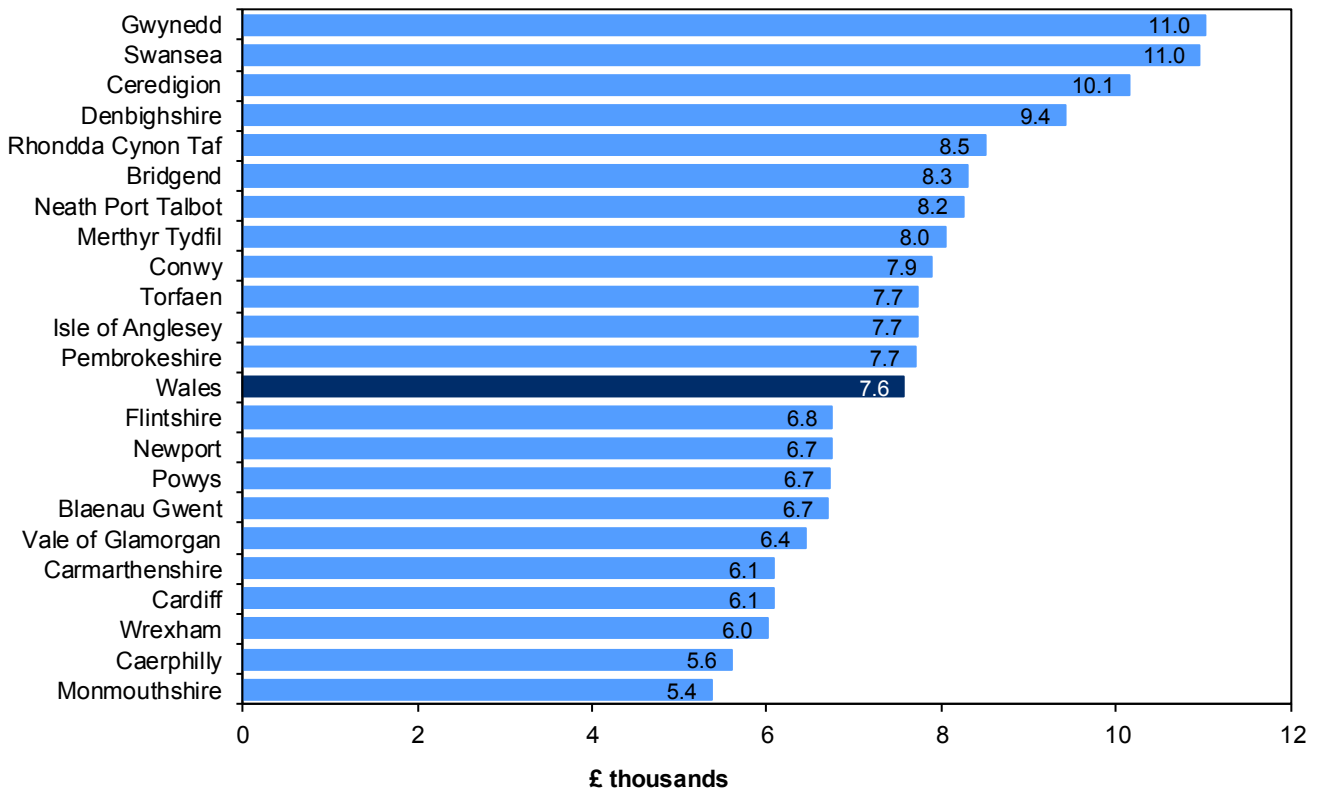
(a) Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

(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.

- At a Wales level, expenditure on mandatory DFGs has remained fairly constant, with only slight fluctuations over the last 4 years. Expenditure on additional non-mandatory DFG assistance is generally at a much lower level across Wales. Following increases in expenditure on non-mandatory DFG assistance during the previous two years, during 2014-15 there was a decrease of 3 per cent compared with 2013-14 (Table 4).
- During 2014-15, local authorities across Wales spent £1.02 million on non-mandatory DFG assistance, representing around 3 per cent of all DFG expenditure.
- At a local authority level, half of the authorities reported an increase in their spending on mandatory DFGs over the past year. The largest increase was recorded in Blaenau Gwent with an increase of 58 per cent, followed by Caerphilly with an increase of 27 per cent. In Blaenau Gwent the average grant received has increased due to more complex adaptations and fewer low cost adaptations. In Caerphilly the increased spending reflects an increase in demand and higher average costs.

- In contrast, the largest reduction in mandatory DFG expenditure was recorded in Bridgend with a fall of 34 per cent. In Bridgend both the number and value of grants completed was lower than the previous year due to a reduced number of occupational therapy referrals being received due to a backlog in the system which has since been resolved.

Chart 5 – Value of Completed Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) per Improved Dwelling, 2014-15



Source: Disabled Facilities Grants return

- During 2014-15, the average spend on mandatory DFGs per improved dwelling in Wales was £7,579 which was similar to the 2013-14 and 2012-13 figure of £7,600 per improved dwelling. However, the amount spent varied considerably between authorities, with Swansea and Gwynedd spending around £11,000 per dwelling compared with just £5,400 per dwelling in Monmouthshire.

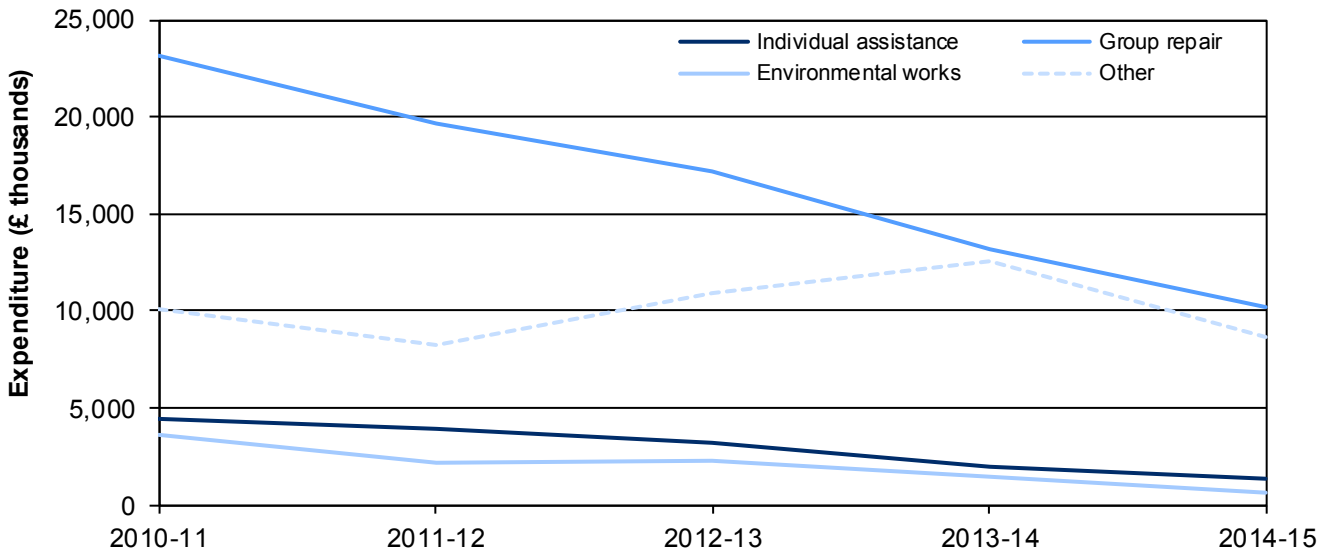
Further data on Local Authority expenditure on mandatory DFGs can be found on [StatsWales](http://StatsWales.gov.uk).

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 2014-15, there were 23 renewal areas in operation in Wales, 11 less than in the previous year, resulting in the number of dwellings within these areas falling to 38,611 in 2014-15 (Table 6).

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 £20.9 million was spent on these areas in 2014-15. As was the case in previous years, most expenditure went on group repair schemes (£10.2 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 2014-15 expenditure on individual assistance accounted for 7 per cent (£1.4 million) compared with 3 per cent (£0.6 million) for environmental works.

Table 5 – Renewal Area Expenditure, 2013-14 and 2014-15 (a)(b)

Local Authority	2013-14			2014-15		
	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	.
Gwynedd	872	2	3,064	872	2	1,884
Conwy	550	2	103	250	1	2,699
Denbighshire	1,413	2	1,141	657	1	468
Flintshire	4,624	1	794	4,624	1	2,339
Wrexham	2,250	2	1,184	2,250	1	1,071
Powys	2,401	1	590	0	0	.
Ceredigion	9,538	3	1,542	7,636	2	607
Pembrokeshire	3,357	2	773	3,357	2	527
Carmarthenshire	3,513	2	1,046	2,577	1	639
Swansea	1,038	1	744	1,038	1	157
Neath Port Talbot	3,875	2	1,246	3,875	2	1,145
Bridgend	2,868	1	180	2,868	1	858
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,292	1	2,048	1,292	1	717
Cardiff	2,134	2	722	2,134	2	1,064
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1,251	1	1,331	0	0	.
Merthyr Tydfil	3,048	2	10,023	1,494	1	5,048
Caerphilly	2,521	2	1,223	1,035	1	839
Blaenau Gwent (c)	390	1	692	0	0	205
Torfaen	4,723	4	694	2,652	3	664
Monmouthshire	0	0	.	0	0	.
Newport	0	0	.	0	0	.
Wales	51,658	34	29,140	38,611	23	20,932

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 2014-15, the last Group repair scheme was still operational in the Six Bells renewal area, with the remaining works being funded through 'General Capital Funding'.

- During 2014-15, the number of renewal areas in operation across Wales decreased to 23, with a reduction in the number of renewal areas in 11 authorities. As a result, the overall expenditure in all renewal areas decreased to £20.9 million.
- 13 of the 17 local authorities where renewal areas were in operation during 2014-15 reported a decrease in overall expenditure. In 8 of these 13 authorities there has also been a decrease in the number of renewal areas. The largest percentage decreases within these 8 authorities were seen in Blaenau Gwent and Ceredigion, where the overall expenditure dropped by 70 and 61 per cent, respectively. In Blaenau Gwent the renewal area was no longer in operation during 2014-15 however there was some residual spending on a group repair scheme.

- In Swansea and the Vale of Glamorgan, the overall expenditure in renewal areas during 2014-15 dropped by 79 and 65 per cent, respectively, though the number of renewal areas remained the same as the previous year.
- The largest increases in renewal area expenditure between 2013-14 and 2014-15 were seen in Conwy, where expenditure increased from £0.1 million to £2.7 million, Bridgend, where expenditure increased from £0.2 million to £0.9 million and Flintshire, where expenditure increased from £0.8 million to £2.3 million (Table 5). In both Conwy and Flintshire(r) the increased expenditure was due to the introduction of Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places funded schemes during 2014-15. In Bridgend(r) the increased expenditure during 2014-15 was due to a carry over of Specific Capital Grant (SCG) allocation from 2013-14.

(r) revised on 10 February 2016.

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.

Policy and Operational Context

2. 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 [Programme for Government 2011-2016](#), the current government programme, and the '[White Paper for Better Lives and Communities](#)' both outline the Welsh Government commitment to 'improve the quality of existing homes'.

Data Source and Coverage

3. 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 2014-15 financial year. The data shown in this release are collected via three separate returns, covering:
 - [Assistance for housing improvement](#)
 - [Disabled Facilities Grants](#)
 - [Renewal Areas](#)
4. Further information on the data processing cycle can also be found in the [Housing Statistics Quality Report](#).
5. All 22 local authorities responded to the data collection for 2013-14, therefore there has been no imputation of the data.
6. 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](#).
7. 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. During the 2013-14 data collection there was an increase in the amounts reported for 'third party assistance and loans facilitated by the local authority' mainly due to changes in definitions and guidance following a review. Excludes repayments to local authorities including loans and grant recovery.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. 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.
11. Data on disabled facilities grants covers mandatory and non-mandatory grants where the final payments have been made and certified.
12. 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.

Users and Uses

13. 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 [Programme for Government 2011 -2016](#), which is the current government programme, also outlines the Welsh Government commitment to 'Improve the quality of accommodation in the private rented sector'. 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.'
14. Wales' first Housing Bill the [Housing \(Wales\) Act](#) was introduced into the National Assembly for Wales on 18 November 2013, and set out an ambitious programme of action, including taking forward proposals set out in the White Paper. The Act became law on 17 September 2014 and introduces significant improvements across the housing sector to 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.
15. 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.
16. 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. Vibrant and Viable Places is the new Welsh Government regeneration framework which will operate from 2014-2017. Local authorities will 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. The data collected and published on renewal areas provides monitoring information for the Welsh Government and assists with evaluating the effectiveness of the new Welsh Government regeneration framework.

17. 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.
18. 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](#).

Quality

19. 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.

20. 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.
21. 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

22. Data are collected from local authorities via Excel spreadsheets. These are downloaded from the Afon file transfer website which provides a secure method for users to submit data.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.

Validation and Verification

26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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

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

Symbols

31. The following symbols may have been used in this release:
- negligible (less than half the final digit shown)
 - . not applicable
 - .. not available
 - ~ not yet available
 - * disclosive or not sufficiently robust for publication
 - p provisional
 - r revised

Comparability

32. 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.
33. 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.
34. 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.

35. 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.
36. 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.

Accuracy

37. 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.
[Private sector housing renewal activity - Data collection](#)
[Disabled facilities grants for housing - Data collection](#)
[Housing renewal areas activity - Data collection](#)

Revisions

38. This release contains the final data for 2014-15 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.
39. 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.
40. Sometimes local authorities submit revised data for previous years. If this happens, we will update the information in the following year's statistical release.
41. We follow the Welsh Government's [statistical revisions policy](#).

Accessibility

42. 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

43. The National Strategic Indicators for local government also collect information on disabled facilities grants. The denominator for the indicator PSR/002 is equivalent to the total number of completed DFGs during the year. There are some small discrepancies between these two data sets that we have been unable to resolve and validate within the time available. However, these are relatively small differences and do not impact on the Wales level data. The data for the [National Strategic Indicators](#) can be found on the StatsWales website.
44. The Welsh Government publishes statistics showing the total dwelling stock in Wales each year. Estimates of the total dwelling stock are calculated by the Welsh Government and are based on data from the population censuses. To ensure consistency with the 2011 Census figures the dwelling stock

estimates for Wales and the individual local authorities from 2001-02 to 2010-11 have been revised based on the 2011 Census figures. During a census year the total number of dwellings in Wales is taken directly from the Census. Between censuses the total number of dwellings is estimated as follows:

$$\begin{array}{rclcl} \text{Total number of} & = & \text{Number of dwellings} & + & \text{Number of dwellings} & - & \text{Number of} \\ \text{dwellings in Wales} & & \text{in previous year} & & \text{completed during the year} & & \text{residential} \\ & & & & \text{(including conversions)} & & \text{demolitions} \end{array}$$

45. The latest [dwelling stock estimates for Wales are as at 31 March 2014](#) and are available.

Related Statistics for Other UK Countries

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

46. England:

Private sector renewal and DFGs in England are covered by the same legislation as Wales. 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.

47. Scotland:

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](#)

48. Northern Ireland:

[Statistics are published on grants](#) which are payable under the Housing (N.I.) Orders 1992, 1993 and 2003.

6. 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. 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. Further [information on DFGs in Wales](#) is available.

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

'Older 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. Un-hypothecated 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

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 new Welsh Government regeneration framework which will operate from 2014-2017. Local authorities will 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 will go to 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.

7. Further information

Further information is available from the [Housing Statistics web site](#).

More detailed data are available on the StatsWales website.

[Assistance for housing improvement](#)

[Disabled facilities grants](#)

National Housing Strategy – [‘Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales’](#).

[‘Programme for Government 2011 -2016’](#) - current government strategy.

[The White Paper for Better Lives and Communities](#).

[The Housing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#).

We actively encourage feedback from our users. If you have any comments please e-mail us at:

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