

# Public Document Pack



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To: Cllr Ian Dunbar (Chairman)

Councillors: Sian Braun, David Cox, Jean Davies, Ron Davies, Adele Davies-Cooke, Rosetta Dolphin, Mared Eastwood, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Ted Palmer, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger

7 March 2019

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 13th March, 2019 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

## **A G E N D A**

### **1 APOLOGIES**

**Purpose:** To receive any apologies.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

**Purpose:** To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

### **3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)**

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 18 February 2019.

### **4 UPDATE REPORT FOLLOWING THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017 (Pages 9 - 142)**

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing

**Purpose:** To provide an update on progress in relation to the service control action plan.

5 **QUARTER 3 COUNCIL PLAN 2018/19 MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 143 - 172)

Report of Chief Officer (Housing and Assets), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) - Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing

**Purpose:** To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities, performance levels and current risk levels as identified in the Council Plan 2018/19.

6 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 173 - 180)

Report of Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

**Purpose:** To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely



Robert Robins  
Democratic Services Manager

## **COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **18 FEBRUARY 2019**

Minutes of the meeting of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Wednesday 18 February, 2019

### **PRESENT: Councillor Ian Dunbar (Chairman)**

Councillors: Ron Davies, Rosetta Dolphin, George Hardcastle, Ray Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Mike Reece, Paul Shotton and David Wisinger

**SUBSTITUTION:** Councillor David Hughes (for Ted Palmer)

**APOLOGY:** Councillor Jean Davies

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors: Helen Brown, Patrick Heesom and Christine Jones attended as observers

**CONTRIBUTORS:** Councillor Bernie Attridge, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing; Chief Officer (Housing & Assets); Team Leader – Income; Revenues Manager and Housing Strategy Manager

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

### **55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were received.

### **56. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2019 were submitted.

Minute number 51: Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2019/20 – Councillor Shotton asked if a copy of the area based programme for the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) was available for Members and also if arrangements had been made for a drop-in session for Members. The Facilitator explained that she had spoken to the Capital Works Team Manager who was in the process of compiling the information requested by Members at the last meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **57. HOUSING STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

The Chief Officer (Housing & Assets) introduced a report which outlined the Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan for 2019-2024. The Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan set out the vision for how the Council, with its partners, would deliver

affordable housing needs, provide relevant support to residents and ensured the creation of sustainable homes.

The Chief Officer outlined the number of achievements of the previous Housing Strategy, as detailed within the report and explained that the current Strategy would build on the previous achievements within the context of the current challenges faced, such as, welfare reform, the increase in 'hidden' homelessness and limited resources. The report summarised the 3 priorities identified with key areas for action within each priority.

A workshop was due to be held in February 2019 with key stakeholders, the Council's Housing Association Partners and other groups, to review the action plan, so as to: ensure the actions identified under each of the priorities were comprehensive, deliverable and affordable; identify any gaps in terms of the actions listed and identify outcomes/outputs and lead organisations. The final version of the Housing Strategy and Action Plan would be available in Spring 2019.

Councillor Shotton commended the officers for the report. He commented on the social enterprise in Anglesey which were providing modular buildings and asked whether consideration would be given to building similar homes in order to speed up the house build programme and meet the growing demand. The Chief Officer responded that consideration was being given to a number of different house building concepts currently on the market.

Councillor Wisinger commented on the need to improve access to the private rented sector, and asked how local landlords were being encouraged to rent out their properties. Councillor Attridge recognised the difficulties in engaging with local landlords and outlined his concerns that a greater number of landlords were not accepting applications from people in receipt of Universal Credit. The Housing Strategy Manager advised that a meeting with local landlord was being planned to better understand their concerns and improve the Council's working relationship with them.

John Ennis, Chair of the Tenant's Federation, informed the Committee that he had attended a conference in Cardiff which had discussed alternative building methods and asked if the Council had received any feedback from this conference. The Chief Officer said that Welsh Government were currently considering alternative building options and that the Council were awaiting information on grant funding being made available for this.

Following a suggestion from Councillor Hughes, the Chief Officer agreed to provide the Committee with a report on the concept and options available in using modular homes to increase the supply of Council properties, to a future meeting.

In response to concerns raised by Councillor Hutchinson regarding timber framed housing and increased fire risk, the Chief Officer advised that he did not concur with the views, noting that standards of fire safety were equal to those in traditionally constructed homes and constructed in compliance of current Building Regulations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee support the Housing Strategy and draft Action Plan for 2019/2024; and

- (b) That a report on the concept and options available in using modular homes to increase the supply of Council properties be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

## **58. HOUSING RENT INCOME**

The Revenues Manager introduced a report which provided a further operational update on the latest position for rent income collection following the recent report to the Committee in November 2018. Despite the ongoing challenges of increasing numbers of tenants migrating away from Housing Benefit to the Universal Credit (UC) system, the latest collection position showed that by implementing measures through increased resources, early intervention and adopting a 'rent first' approach, collection of rent was starting to stabilise with total rent arrears reducing from £2.22m to £2.14m.

To mitigate the financial challenges for the Council, the work of the Housing Intervention Teams continued and additional resources were being deployed to ensure tenants who fell into arrears received help and support at an early stage through a 'fast tracked' approach. A copy of the latest rent arrears position for those tenants in receipt of UC and Housing Benefit was circulated to the Committee.

The Revenues Manager explained that to ensure Council resources were targeted to those tenants who need most help to ensure rent was paid on time, a further initiative was being implemented to improve the supporting software systems that guide the work of Rent Enforcement Officers. Feasibility work had been undertaken with a software supplier whose 'Rent Sense' solution was rapidly becoming the housing industry standard for analysing payment variations, risk and escalating which tenants to contact and when. The software used algorithms to analyse payment patterns, highlight risk and provided predictive intelligence to support a more focused and targeted approach to rent arrears recovery work.

The development of this software would modernise the work in the Rent service and help the service to more intelligently focus on those tenants who were more at risk of falling into arrears, free up internal resource capacity which meant that housing interventions could be put in place quickly and before arrears escalated.

Councillor Hardcastle thanked the Revenues Manager for the report and update. He said that he had recently requested information on current Council Tax arrears which had been provided by the Revenues Manager and which showed current arrears of £3.3m and asked if an increase in Council Tax would have a knock on affect to rent arrears. The Revenues Manager explained that the £3.3m arrears would continually reduce as residents in Flintshire had a number of different days within the month that they could opt to pay their Council Tax. He commented that the Council remained the best performing Council in collecting Council Tax with a collection rate of over 99%, which was above the welsh average of 98%.

Councillor Hardcastle also referred to two emergency cases which he had dealt with within his ward over the weekend and said that the helpline for the out of hour's service was based in London. Whilst the service he received had been very good, he asked if the service could be brought back in house in order to reduce costs for the

Council. Councillor Attridge explained that the organisation had been appointed to take calls following a procurement exercise. He said that he often used the service which he felt was an improvement on the previous service and provided better value for money.

In response to a question from Councillor Hutchinson, the Revenues Manager explained the intervention options available to the Council and that the work undertaken to assist vulnerable residents with complex needs could be intensive. Councillor Hutchinson thanked the officers for the transparent report.

Councillor Shotton commended officers for the assistance and advice given to vulnerable tenants and asked that his thanks be passed to all officers involved. He commented on the recent concessions made by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions around UC which he felt showed there were problems with the current system.

Councillor Dolphin raised concerns around the length of time tenants had to wait to move to managed payments and the arrears which build up during this time. The Revenues Manager agreed with the concerns and said that he would like to see this time reduced.

In response to a question from Councillor Wisinger, Councillor Attridge explained that the collection of rent was done in-house by the Rent Enforcement Officers and there had been a great improvement in the service which had been previously provided by an external company.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the latest financial position for rent arrears in 2018-19, which shows collection of rent was starting to stabilise, be noted; and
- (b) That the measures being taken to improve rent collection during 2019-20, through the development of specialised software to support a targeted approach to rent recovery, be endorsed.

**59. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration and the following changes were agreed:

- The specialist housing report be moved back from March to the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May.
- That a report on the concept and options available in using modular homes to increase the supply of Council properties be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted; and

- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

**60. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There was one member of the press and one member of the public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.17 am)

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**Chairman**

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## COMMUNITY AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
<b>Report Subject</b>	Update Report following the Disabled Facilities Grant Internal Audit Report 2017
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the report to Scrutiny on the findings of the Internal Audit Report which was issued in May 2018, this report provides an update on progress and management actions taken to address the issues raised.

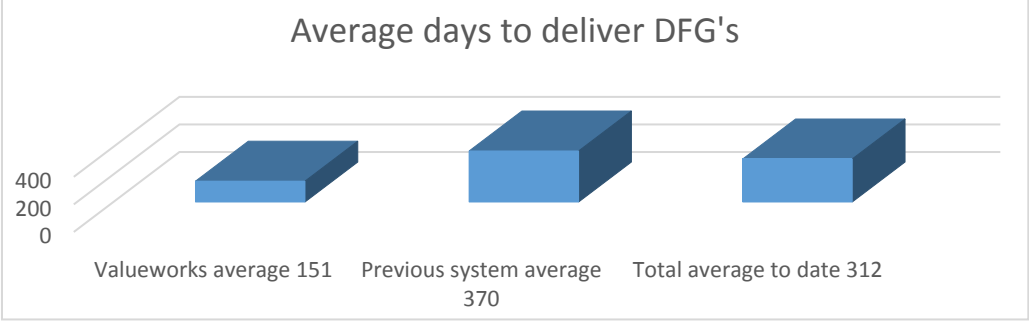
### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the content of the report and the action taken to date.
2	Members support the ongoing work in the service to improve service delivery to our customers.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT</b>
1.01	A Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) is a mandatory grant to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence.
1.02	The administration of DFG is carried out within the Housing and Asset portfolio following a referral from an Occupational Therapist once the appropriate considerations have determined that the best option for the individual is to have an adaptation to the property they live in.
1.03	DFG is available to owner occupiers and private tenants, for Local Authority tenants and tenants in social housing there are separate arrangements in place with their housing provider.
1.04	The maximum amount of grant available in Wales is £36,000
1.05	Where the application is for a child, or the applicant is in receipt of certain qualifying benefits, there is no means test and the cost of the adaptation up to the maximum grant will awarded.
1.06	For other applications the amount of the grant will vary from zero to maximum grant depending on the cost of the approved works and the financial circumstances of the applicant. A means test will be carried out to establish, based on the financial circumstances of the applicant, whether the applicant will be required to make a financial contribution to the adaptation costs.
1.07	As part of the 2016/17 internal audit scheduled programme an audit of the DFG service was undertaken with the following brief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with relevant policies, procedures and regulations;</li> <li>• Administration of the DFG scheme;</li> <li>• Third party service level agreements and protocols; and</li> <li>• Performance monitoring</li> </ul>
1.08	The Internal Audit report was issued in May 2018 (appendix 1) and concluded that an urgent system revision was required with key controls absent or rarely applied and, as a result, a limited (red) assurance level was given.
1.09	In order to ensure there was an adequate and urgent improvement to the delivery of the DFG an oversight board was established in July 2018.
1.10	Since then work has been ongoing to address and implement the recommendations contained within the audit report and to review service delivery in order to make improvements.
1.11	An updated action plan is attached at appendix 2 and provides information

	<p>and details the progress made to date.</p> <p>Some of the improvements and changes are detailed below:</p>
1.12	<p>In May 2018 the financial assessment element of the DFG process was integrated into the benefits service in order to enable the cross referencing of data already held to speed up processes and enhance the overall service delivery.</p> <p>In late Autumn 2018 the remainder of the service transferred to the Benefits Manager</p>
1.13	<p>To help understand how other Local Authorities manage the process and in an attempt to learn from others, Denbighshire County Council invited the team to visit them to understand their processes and approach to DFG service delivery.</p> <p>This has led to a significant amount of work being carried out between SPOA (single point of access), Social Services Occupational Therapy teams and the benefits service, to streamline the process prior to the adaptation request being made to ensure that as much information and evidence is captured at the outset to prevent duplication and customers being asked for information several times over.</p>
1.14	<p>Processes within the services have been mapped and streamlined and procedures for process and quality assurance have now been developed and are in place.</p>
1.15	<p>The performance monitoring of contractors has been strengthened and a framework for measuring this has now been introduced. All contractors have been informed that there are now key indicators by which they will be measured.</p>
1.16	<p>DFG work was suspended in Autumn 2017 due to budget pressures and the cases were put on hold until April 2018.</p> <p>This has had an impact on overall performance reporting for 2018/19 as some of those cases were on hold for as long as 4 months.</p> <p>This backlog of work has largely been completed, however, there are still a few cases ongoing due to the size and complexity of the adaptation required.</p>
1.17	<p>Due to the revision of processes and the launch of a new contractor framework during the year we have been in a position to do a direct comparison between new and old ways of working (based on data April to December 2018):</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Average days to deliver DFG's</b></p>  <p>This should provide an element of assurance that moving forward into the new financial year performance should significantly improve when the legacy cases are all complete.</p>
1.18	<p>Work will continue into 2019/20 to further improve service delivery times and quality and bring the service into line with the recommendations following the Wales Audit Office Housing Adaptations Report and the Welsh Government Housing Adaptations service standards. A copy of both of these reports are attached for information at Appendix 3 and Appendix 4.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None associated with this report

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	An Equality Impact Assessment will be required during Spring 2019 when the current policy is revised.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	The current risk register for DFG is attached at appendix 5.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Report May 2018  Appendix 2 – Audit Action Plan  Appendix 3 – Wales Audit Office Housing Adaptations Report February 2018  Appendix 4 – Welsh Government Housing Adaptations Service Standards February 2018  Appendix 5 - DFG risk register February 2019</p>

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p><a href="https://www.audit.wales/publication/housing-adaptations">https://www.audit.wales/publication/housing-adaptations</a></p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Jen Griffiths – Benefits Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702929  <b>E-mail:</b> jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)</b> – A statutory grant of up to £36,000 to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence.</p> <p><b>DFG Top Up Grant</b> – a discretionary grant which can be awarded where the cost of the adaptation exceeds the £36,000 grant limit up to an amount of £39,000</p> <p><b>DFG Top Up Loan</b> – a discretionary loan, secured against the value of the property, that can be issued to meet the costs of the adaptation in excess of the DFG Grant cap and the DFG top up grant</p> <p><b>Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant</b> – a discretionary grant of up to £20,000 to cover the costs of a disabled person’s move to a more appropriate property.</p> <p><b>Land Charges</b> – these allow the Council to register interest in a property so that should the property be sold or transferred to another person, the Council has the ability, once the appropriate conditions are met, to reclaim the value of the charge.</p> <p><b>Means Test</b> – A review of a person’s financial circumstances to determine eligibility for assistance.</p>

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# Flintshire Internal Audit

## Audit Report

**Title:** Disabled Facilities Grants  
**Portfolio:** Planning, Environment & Economy  
**Issued Dated:** May 2018  
**Report No:** 16-2017/18  
**Report Status:** FINAL

Internal Audit engagements are conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

### Audit Opinion



# 1 Executive Summary:

## Introduction and Scope:

An audit of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) was undertaken as part of the approved Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2016/17. The audit reviewed and considered:

- Compliance with relevant policies, procedures and regulations;
- Administration of DFG scheme;
- Third parties service level agreements and protocols; and
- Performance monitoring.

A DFG is a mandatory grant to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence. The administration of the DFG is performed by the Council's Regeneration team following a referral from an Occupational Therapist. The amount of grant will depend on the cost of the approved works and where applicable an applicant's financial circumstances. A means test will be carried out on applications with the exception of child applicants and where the adult applicant is in receipt of Council Tax Reduction and/or Housing Benefit. Depending on the outcome of this assessment the amount of grant payable offered may vary from zero to 100 per cent of the cost. The maximum grant payable in Wales is £36,000.

A Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top up loan will be considered in exceptional circumstances where the required works for the adaptations exceed the statutory limit of £36k. This loan is only provided to owner occupiers and the loan amount is registered as a financial charge against the property at the Land Registry. Additionally, where the adaptations required are unsuitable at the applicant's current residence, a Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant is available to cover the expenses of a disabled persons' move to a more appropriate property. This grant covers expenses such as removal costs and connection of services as well as bridging the affordability gap between the value of the applicant's existing

## Audit Opinion:

In each report we provide management with an overall assurance opinion on how effectively risks are being managed within the area reviewed. Appendix A of the report details our assurance levels:

Assurance:	Explanation
<b>Red - Limited</b>	<p>Urgent system revision required (one or more of the following)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Key controls are absent or rarely applied</li> <li>•Key management information does not exist</li> <li>•System/process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls.</p>

The table below highlights the number and priority of agreed actions to be implemented.

Priority	High (Red)	Medium (Amber)	Low (Green)	Total
No.	2	8	2	12



home and the property to be purchased.

The 2017/18 DFG budget was £1 million. At the time of the review, a budget pressure had been submitted due to the rising costs of adoptions relating to inflationary increase in construction costs and the increase in complex cases. A decision was later made to postpone non-emergency applications. Any emergency adaptation work would be considered via the Capital Asset programme board. Enhancements are to be made to improve budget tracking to ensure the service is not underfunded and the Council meets its statutory duty.

Overall yearly performance data for 2016/17 showed the service performance had improved over the previous year as reflected by the National Performance Indicator for DFG however quarterly performance for 2016/17 was volatile. Currently this is the only performance indicator utilised by the service to monitor DFG performance and it is not effective to support management of service delivery and overall customer satisfaction.

The service has also identified that the nature of the DFG works required are increasingly more complex and thus impacting delivery timescales. The Welsh Government is in the process of consulting on the adequacy of this performance indicator and the Council have requested clarity and guidance on the DFG national PI measurement to ensure performance data comparison with other councils' is fair and accurate.

The review has highlighted a number of opportunities for control improvements relating to the holistic review of service and contract performance in order to reduce delivery timescales and deliver value for money. The DFG Adaptation Framework was devised and due to be implemented in February 2017. This framework set out the procedure for ordering works, the main terms and conditions for the provision of the Works and the obligations of the Supplier. A total of nine contractors form part of this framework. The service was unable to roll out the aforementioned framework due to two related investigations. In both

instances the investigations were conducted internally with the first receiving external independent examination. In both instances, the outcome of the review was there was no case to answer however some opportunities to improve working practices were identified and these have been included within this report. During this interim period the service is currently inviting these contractors to tender for the various DFG work.

The service is in the process of fully implementing the adaptation work framework as this will address the tendering issue relating to the process for work allocation identified in the review. Those DFG cases deferred during 2017/18 will be considered in quarters 1 and 2 of 2018/19 under the new framework agreement.

There have been a number of changes to the management structure within the service over the last year and this combined with a number of open positions within the adaptation team has led to some areas for improvement identified throughout the review and mentioned above. It should be acknowledged that some of the DFG processes are currently under review since the audit commenced by the Regeneration Programme Lead who was recently appointed in July 2017. Due to his time in role, his knowledge of the systems and processes were still developing at the time of the audit.

## 2 Summary Findings:

Areas Managed Well	Areas for Further Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adaptation referral forms submitted by Occupational Health were available for all approved DFG applications.</li> <li>• Evidence was available to support the approval of the DFG applications based on the current financial criteria and means test.</li> <li>• The Housing and Regenerations Programme Board meetings are being held as per the agreed frequency to provide oversight over the DFG delivery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management oversight of the work completed by staff relating to the full end to end grant process is not undertaken. Additionally there are limited controls to ensure contractors invited to tender are rotated under the current process.</li> <li>• Land charges are not always being placed against the property as per the Disabled Facilities Grant conditions. Also, there are limited controls to demonstrate the conditions of the Disabled Facilities Grant, Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant and the Disabled Facilities Top up loan are met.</li> <li>• The Private Sector Housing Renewal and Improvement policy was last reviewed in 2015. The policy is also not fully aligned to current practices in operation within the service.</li> <li>• A process has not been defined to deal with applications where the work amount exceeds the DFG statutory limit and below the minimum for the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top up Loan.</li> <li>• Income eligibility amount for child tax credit and working tax credit within the DFG application form is out of date which is issued to assess the affordability of the application. Additionally, the privacy notices contained within the application form are not compliant with the current Data Protection Act and future GDPR requirements.</li> <li>• Documented procedures for the current DFG processes is not in place to assist new staff in dealing with the complex DFG process. Inconsistencies in process delivery have been identified through the testing.</li> <li>• Management information is not maintained to review contractor performance.</li> <li>• The DFG spreadsheet utilised to track application progress and budget spend is not complete and up to date. Also, the current national performance indicator utilised by the service to monitor performance of DFG delivery is not sufficient to assist with the identification of delivery</li> </ul>

**Areas Managed Well**

**Areas for Further Improvement**

issues.

- Not all DFG Top Up Loan applications had been signed and dated.
- Means test data is not always available to support the decline of a DFG application.
- The Stannah Lift Services Framework Agreement was not available for review to demonstrate value for money.
- Grant approval letters including grant amount and client contributions are not always being sent to the client.

### 3 Action Plan:

Priority	Description
High (Red)	Action is imperative to ensure that the objectives of the area under review are met.
Medium (Amber)	Requires action to avoid exposure to significant risks in achieving the objectives of the area.
Low (Green)	Action encouraged to enhance control or improve operational efficiency.

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
1 (R)	<p>Since 2016/17, the staffing costs within the adaptations team has a reduction of £95k. Consequently there are key officers within the team whom are responsible for the majority of stages involved in an adaptation process.</p> <p>Although the review has not identified inappropriate practice, management oversight is not undertaken of the work completed by staff relating to the end to end grant allocation process.</p> <p>Where monitoring in place to track the rotation of contractors invited to tender as part of the current process, this was found to be incomplete and had not been adhered to since 2015. It is recognised the latter will be addressed with the implementation of the new DFG framework as long as the process is being adhered to and compliance monitoring is reintroduced.</p> <p>In January 2017 the Regeneration Manager left the Council and the role remains vacant. A Regeneration Programme Lead was assigned to post six months after the departure of the Regeneration Manager. This contributed to both of these issues and prevented the facilitation of a handover between managers to ensure controls operated effectively.</p> <p>This poses a risk that the Council does not obtain value for money by utilising the DFG Adaptation framework and through the rotation or selection of contractors.</p>	<p>Instigate documented review process of individual cases to monitor system compliance and progress.</p> <p>Full implementation of the new DFG Framework and continuous monitoring to demonstrate procedural adherence whilst monitoring budget spend and value for money.</p> <p>URN 02075</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>Land charges are not always being placed against the property at the time of work completion as stipulated in the conditions for the Disabled Facilities Grant and DFG Top Up Loan. One of the conditions of the DFG grant is the repayment of grant if the applicant chooses to move within 10 years of the completion date for any grant above £5,000, up to a maximum repayment of £10,000.</p>	<p>Controls to be introduced to verify the conditions stipulated for the Disabled Facilities Grant, Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant and the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top Up Loan in line with policy review.</p>	<p>Niall Waller</p>	<p>30 July 2018</p>
	<p>The DFG Top Up Loan amount is also registered as a financial charge against the property at the land registry to ensure the Top Up Loan is repaid in the event of a sale or property transfer. From a sample of 5 applications, it was identified in all cases land changes had not been placed against the respective properties totalling £107K.</p>	<p>A review to be completed of all DFGs and DFG Top Up Loan which have been completed to ensure land charges have been placed against the relevant properties, where required.</p>	<p>Joseph Muxlow</p>	<p>30 June 2018</p>
	<p>Additionally, there are limited controls to ensure all Disabled Facility Grant, Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant and Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top up Loan conditions are met. Testing has identified limited controls are in place to meet the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation Grant - a condition of the grant is that the purchased property must have no category 1 hazards present. Testing has identified that there is no evidence on file to demonstrate this is being checked this is largely due to the grant being awarded prior to the purchase of the property. It is acknowledged the volume of relocation grants is minimal (only 3 have ever been awarded).</li> <li>• Discretionary top up loan - one of the loan conditions is that the property must be covered by buildings insurance until the loan is repaid. A process is not in place to check this information.</li> </ul>	<p>Check list for all DFGs to be put in place to ensure all process controls used and recorded on FLARE.</p> <p>URN 02066</p>	<p>Joseph Muxlow</p>	<p>31 May 2018</p>
	<p>Whilst these grant conditions need to be verified, the grant application form does not stipulate these requirements and</p>			

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
3 (A)	<p>the applicant's responsibility to adhere to these terms and conditions. As a consequence it may be difficult to enforce compliance or seek reimbursement.</p> <p>The current Private Sector Housing Renewal and Improvement Policy is out of date and was due for review by 30 June 2015. The policy also does not align to current practices in operation within the service. An example of this is the condition of the DFG Relocation Grant where the property must be occupied by the applicant as their main residence for a period of 5 years. Currently there is no process to facilitate the measurement or assessment of this condition.</p>	<p>The policy context remains unchanged. However, the details of each programme of work changes frequently as funding programmes change. A simple programme summary with eligibility criteria will be created and approved to replace this section of the policy.</p> <p>URN 02024</p>	Niall Waller	30 June 2018
4 (A)	<p>A process has not been defined to deal with clients where the value of the eligible work exceeds the DFG amount and is below the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top Up Loan value.</p> <p>Although these cases are reviewed on a case by case basis, this may lead to an inconsistent approach to clients' needs and a potential reputation impact for the Council should it be challenged.</p>	<p>A process to be defined on how to deal with client cases which exceed the DFG grant (36K) amount but are below the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top Up Loan (Minimum loan amount of £3K). Officers will have discretion to manage these cases within new guidelines.</p> <p>URN 02028</p>	Niall Waller	30 June 2018
5 (A)	<p>The income eligibility amount for child tax credit and working tax credit within the DFG application form is out of date. Specifically, the eligibility amount is understated by £1055 and used to determine eligibility. This poses a risk that applicants may be declined due to the incorrect criteria.</p> <p>Additionally, the privacy notice on the Disabled Facilities Grant application is not compliant with current Data Protection Act and future GDPR. Specifically it does not advise the applicant on why and how the Council will be processing their information, the legal basis for processing the information, the retention period for the personal information, and whether the provision of personal data is</p>	<p>A review to be completed of the application form to ensure it is in line with all current regulatory and legal requirements.</p> <p>URN 02055</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018

Internal Audit Report – Disabled Facilities Grants

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
6 (A)	<p>part of a statutory or contractual requirement. The consequence to the Council of non-compliance will be greater with the introduction of GDPR in May as the Council may be subject to fines.</p> <p>There are currently 24 stages within the current DFG process. Documented procedures are not in place to provide guidance on the various DFG processes such as tendering, means test documentation, variation of orders, payments, etc. This has led to inconsistencies in approach and documentation retained for the various DFG applications processed.</p>	<p>A process review should be completed to identify areas where improvements can be made or the process could be streamlined.</p> <p>Documented procedures (desk instructions) for all DFG processes to be drafted.</p> <p>URN 02078</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018
7 (A)	<p>Contractors are monitored on a case by case basis, however management information is not maintained to provide oversight of all contractor performance including variation of work and costs, timescales for completion, customer satisfaction survey, etc. Manual spreadsheets have been subsequently developed as the current Flare system does not support reporting capability.</p> <p>Control improvements would assist in identifying poor contractor performance, emerging trends in variation costs and evaluating whether value for money is achieved and service delivery improved.</p>	<p>Management information to be developed to report on contractor performance.</p> <p>Management to investigate system requirements to eliminate the need for manual spreadsheets and the potential to use Proactis, the Councils' contracts management system.</p> <p>URN 02079</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018
8 (A)	<p>Not all DFG applications which have been approved are reflected in the DFG spreadsheet which is utilised to track application progress and budget spend. Internal audit were provided with a list of all approved DFGs which was generated from the FLARE system. This list formed the basis for the sample testing selection.</p> <p>Sample testing identified that some applications which had been approved had not been reflected in the DFG</p>	<p>Monthly reconciliation to be completed between DFG spreadsheet with the information provided by finance to ensure budget spend is accurately reported and managed as well as providing an accurate overview of all grants in process.</p> <p>Following the review of the current process in an attempt to streamline, target dates to</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018



No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
	<p>spreadsheet. This spreadsheet was recently introduced by the Regeneration Programme Lead as the current Flare system are not adequate to track application progress. This spreadsheet is populated with data extracted from 2 main sources: P2P and FLARE.</p> <p>There are currently 24 steps within the current process to deliver a DFG. Reporting is not available to demonstrate the volume of applications at each stage of the process. The current national performance indicator utilised by the service to monitor performance of DFG delivery is not sufficient and there are no internal indicators to assist with the identification of issues leading to delay in service delivery and contributing to customer dissatisfaction. Additionally, agreed time frames have not been defined for each step of the delivery process for which delivery can then be measured against.</p> <p>The service is missing an opportunity to measure service performance, manage budget spend and identify service process improvements.</p>	<p>be assigned to all process steps.</p> <p>Monthly reporting to be generated to review progress of delivery against agreed SLAs.</p> <p>Review of cases where SLAs have not been achieved to understand reasons for delay and opportunities for process improvements.</p> <p>Internal KPIs to be established to monitor DFG delivery.</p> <p>URN 02058</p>	<p>Joseph Muxlow</p> <p>Joseph Muxlow</p> <p>Joseph Muxlow</p>	<p>31 May 2018</p> <p>31 May 2018</p> <p>31 May 2018</p>
9 (A)	<p>Not all DFG Top Up Loan applications were complete. From a total of 17 DFG Top Up Loans, 5 applications were sample tested. Of the 5 applications tested, 4 (80%) had not been signed and dated by the applicant.</p> <p>As such, the Council may not be able to evidence the applicant has agreed to the terms and conditions of the grant.</p>	<p>A completed DFG application form to be required in all instances to evidence agreement by the service user to the terms and conditions of the grant.</p> <p>URN 02060</p>	<p>Joseph Muxlow</p>	<p>31 May 2018</p>
10 (A)	<p>Means test data is not always available to support the decline of Disabled Facilities Grant Application. Of a sample of 10 applications tested, 3 (30%) did not have the means test data available. A decline letter to advise the applicant they have been unsuccessful is not always sent. The</p>	<p>Means test data to be retained on file to evidence the decline of a Disabled Facilities Grant Application.</p>	<p>Joseph Muxlow</p>	<p>31 May 2018</p>

Internal Audit Report – Disabled Facilities Grants

No.	Findings and Implications	Agreed Action	Who	When
11 (G)	<p>Council may be unable to evidence a DFG decision has been communicated to the applicant including the reason for the decline.</p> <p>Grant approval and amount letter is not always sent to applicant; although no instances have been identified where contributions had not been made as a result of this. Of a sample of 9 applications tested, one (11%) was not sent the grant approval letter with the agreed amount.</p> <p>In the event of a dispute, the Council is unable to evidence what contribution had been agreed with the applicant and the terms of repayment.</p>	<p>URN 02061</p> <p>DFG approval letter to be sent to the client to inform of the grant approval amount, client contribution if applicable and the terms and conditions of the grant.</p> <p>URN 02063</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018
12 (G)	<p>Whilst it has been confirmed that the contract for the Stannah Lift Services is part of a Framework Agreement procured by another authority, a copy of the contract could not be provided to Audit to demonstrate value for money.</p> <p>As such, the current agreement may be out of date or not in line with CPR procedures.</p>	<p>Stannah Lift Services Framework agreement to be reviewed for adequacy in line with the Council's CPR procedures.</p> <p>URN 02071</p>	Joseph Muxlow	31 May 2018

## 4 Additional Audit Comments:

The purpose of this section is to inform Managers of those areas where:

- A finding has been discussed but which has not been included within the overall audit opinion.
- Value for money has been considered and areas of opportunity for further improvement have been identified.

VFM Findings/Suggestions		Management Comment
<b>Value for Money:</b>		
1	<p>There is a significant variation in cost between the various approved contractors as part of the new DFG Adaptation Framework Agreement for the provision of adaptation work through Flintshire. By allocating work on a rotation basis, there is a risk that the council may not be able to demonstrate value for money and the higher costs will have an impact on the Councils' ability to fulfil a larger number of DFG requests.</p> <p>The new framework to be rolled out and value for money/ impact to DFG to be monitored and amendments made to comply with Terms and Conditions of the Grant.</p>	<p>The service will maintain detailed records of work allocated to contractors, the cost of completed works and any variations from contract price. These will be analysed and benchmarked against historic costs and also costs from other services and areas wherever relevant.</p>
<b>Suggestion:</b>		
2	<p>The Council does not independently validate the financial information provided by a DFG applicant. The service have advised the validation of the DFG financial information provided to support the application will now be conducted by the Housing Benefits team from the beginning of the financial year. As a consequence, Disabled Facilities Grants may be offered to individuals who have the means to pay for the work required.</p>	<p>The DFG application data validation will be completed by the Housing Benefits Team from 1 April 2018.</p>

## 5 Distribution List:

Name	Title
Andrew Farrow	Accountable Officer Responsible for the Implementation of Agreed Actions
Colin Everett	Chief Executive
Andrew Farrow	Chief Officer – Planning and Environment
Niall Waller	Service Manager- Enterprise and Regeneration
Joseph Muxlow	Regeneration Manager

## Appendix A – Audit Opinion:

The audit opinion is the level of assurance that Internal Audit can give to management and all other stakeholders on the adequacy and effectiveness of controls within the area audited. It is assessed following the completion of the audit and is based on the findings from the audit. Progress on the implementation of agreed actions will be monitored. Findings from **Some** or **Limited** assurance audits will be reported to the Audit Committee.

Assurance	Explanation
Green - Substantial	<p><b>Strong controls in place (all or most of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key controls exist and are applied consistently and effectively</li> <li>• Objectives achieved in a pragmatic and cost effective manner</li> <li>• Compliance with relevant regulations and procedures</li> <li>• Assets safeguarded</li> <li>• Information reliable</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion: key controls have been adequately designed and are operating effectively to deliver the key objectives of the system, process, function or service.</p>
Amber Green – Reasonable	<p><b>Key Controls in place but some fine tuning required (one or more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key controls exist but there are weaknesses and / or inconsistencies in application though no evidence of any significant impact</li> <li>• Some refinement or addition of controls would enhance the control environment</li> <li>• Key objectives could be better achieved with some relatively minor adjustments</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion: key controls generally operating effectively.</p>
Amber Red – Some	<p><b>Significant improvement in control environment required (one or more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key controls exist but fail to address all risks identified and / or are not applied consistently and effectively</li> <li>• Evidence of (or the potential for) financial / other loss</li> <li>• Key management information exists but is unreliable</li> <li>• System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at an unnecessary cost or use of resources.</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion: key controls are generally inadequate or ineffective.</p>
Red – Limited	<p><b>Urgent system revision required (one or more of the following)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key controls are absent or rarely applied</li> <li>• Evidence of (or the potential for) significant financial / other losses</li> <li>• Key management information does not exist</li> <li>• System / process objectives are not being met, or are being met at a significant and unnecessary cost or use of resources.</li> </ul> <p>Conclusion: a lack of adequate or effective controls.</p>

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Action number	Finding Detail	Agreed Action	Update
2075	<p>Management oversight is not undertaken of the work completed by staff relating to the end to end grant allocation process.</p> <p>Where monitoring in place to track the rotation of contractors invited to tender as part of the current process, this was found to be incomplete and had not been adhered to since 2015. It is recognised the latter will be addressed with the implementation of the new DFG framework as long as the process is being adhered to and compliance monitoring is reintroduced.</p>	<p>1. Instigate documented review process of individual cases to monitor system compliance and progress.</p> <p>2. Full implementation of the new DFG Framework and continuous monitoring to demonstrate procedural adherence whilst monitoring budget spend and value for money.</p>	<b>Complete</b>
2066	<p>Land charges are not always being placed against the property at the time of work completion as stipulated in the conditions for the Disabled Facilities Grant and DFG Top Up Loan.</p> <p>Additionally, there are limited controls to ensure all Disabled Facility Grant, Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant and Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top up Loan conditions are met. Testing has identified limited controls are in place to meet the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation Grant - a condition of the grant is that the purchased property must have no category 1 hazards present. Testing has identified that there is no evidence on file to demonstrate this is being checked this is largely due to the</li> </ul>	<p>1. Controls to be introduced to verify the conditions stipulated for the Disabled Facilities Grant, Disabled Facilities Relocation Grant and the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top Up Loan in line with policy review.</p> <p>2. A review to be completed of all DFGs and DFG Top Up Loan which have been completed to ensure land charges have been placed against the relevant properties, where required.</p>	<b>Complete</b>
2024	<p>The current Private Sector Housing Renewal and Improvement Policy is out of date and was due for review by 30 June 2015. The policy also does not align to current practices in operation within the service. An example of this is the condition of the DFG Relocation Grant where the property must be occupied by the applicant as their main residence for a period of 5 years. Currently there is no process to facilitate the measurement or assessment of this condition.</p>	<p>The policy context remains unchanged. However, the details of each programme of work changes frequently as funding programmes change. A simple programme summary with eligibility criteria will be created and approved to replace this section of the policy.</p>	<b>Policy to be adjusted in line with the welsh government guidance. Date to be extended until 31 March 2019.</b>
2028	<p>A process has not been defined to deal with clients where the value of the eligible work exceeds the DFG amount and is below the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top Up Loan value.</p> <p>Although these cases are reviewed on a case by case basis, this may lead to an inconsistent approach to clients' needs and a potential reputation impact for the Council should it be challenged.</p>	<p>A process to be defined on how to deal with client cases which exceed the DFG grant (36K) amount but are below the Disabled Facilities Discretionary Top Up Loan (Minimum loan amount of £3K). Officers will have discretion to manage these cases within new guidelines.</p>	<b>Complete</b>

2055	<p>The income eligibility amount for child tax credit and working tax credit within the DFG application form is out of date. Specifically, the eligibility amount is understated by £1055 and used to determine eligibility. This poses a risk that applicants may be declined due to the incorrect criteria.</p> <p>Additionally, the privacy notice on the Disabled Facilities Grant application is not compliant with current Data Protection Act and future GDPR. Specifically it does not advise the applicant on why and how the Council will be processing their information, the legal basis for processing the information, the retention period for the personal information, and whether the provision of personal data is part of a statutory or contractual requirement. The consequence to the Council of non-compliance will be greater with the introduction of GDPR in May as the Council may be subject to fines.</p>	A review to be completed of the application form to ensure it is in line with all current regulatory and legal requirements.	Complete
2078	There are currently 24 stages within the current DFG process. Documented procedures are not in place to provide guidance on the various DFG processes such as tendering, means test documentation, variation of orders, payments, etc. This has led to inconsistencies in approach and documentation retained for the various DFG applications processed.	<p>1. A process review should be completed to identify areas where improvements can be made or the process could be streamlined.</p> <p><b>2. Documented procedures (desk instructions) for all DFG processes to be drafted.</b></p>	Complete
2079	<p>Contractors are monitored on a case by case basis, however management information is not maintained to provide oversight of all contractor performance including variation of work and costs, timescales for completion, customer satisfaction survey, etc. Manual spreadsheets have been subsequently developed as the current Flare system does not support reporting capability.</p> <p>Control improvements would assist in identifying poor contractor performance, emerging trends in variation costs and evaluating whether value for money is achieved and service delivery improved.</p>	<p>1. Management information to be developed to report on contractor performance.</p> <p>2. Management to investigate system requirements to eliminate the need for manual spreadsheets and the potential to use Proactis, the Councils' contracts management system.</p>	<b>Self assessment checklist to be developed. Date to be extended until the end of March.</b>



2058	<p>Not all DFG applications which have been approved are reflected in the DFG spreadsheet which is utilised to track application progress and budget spend. Internal audit were provided with a list of all approved DFGs which was generated from the FLARE system. This list formed the basis for the sample testing selection.</p> <p>There are currently 24 steps within the current process to deliver a DFG. Reporting is not available to demonstrate the volume of applications at each stage of the process. The current national performance indicator utilised by the service to monitor performance of DFG delivery is not sufficient and there are no internal indicators to assist with the identification of issues leading to delay in service delivery and contributing to customer dissatisfaction. Additionally, agreed time frames have not been defined for each step of the delivery process for which delivery can then be measured against.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monthly reconciliation to be completed between DFG spreadsheet with the information provided by finance to ensure budget spend is accurately reported and managed as well as providing an accurate overview of all grants in process.</li> <li>2. Following the review of the current process in an attempt to streamline, target dates to be assigned to all process steps.</li> <li>3. Monthly reporting to be generated to review progress of delivery against agreed SLAs.</li> <li>4. Review of cases where SLAs have not been achieved to understand reasons for delay and opportunities for process improvements.</li> <li>5. Internal KPIs to be established to monitor DFG delivery.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Further options for recording and tracking performance and management information are being explored on the basis that the current IT system is due to be changed. Extension of date requested for the 31st of March 2019.</b></p>
2060	<p>Not all DFG Top Up Loan applications were complete. From a total of 17 DFG Top Up Loans, 5 applications were sample tested. Of the 5 applications tested, 4 (80%) had not been signed and dated by the applicant.</p>	<p>A completed DFG application form to be required in all instances to evidence agreement by the service user to the terms and conditions of the grant.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
2061	<p>Means test data is not always available to support the decline of Disabled Facilities Grant Application. Of a sample of 10 applications tested, 3 (30%) did not have the means test data available. A decline letter to advise the applicant they have been unsuccessful is not always sent.</p>	<p>Means test data to be retained on file to evidence the decline of a Disabled Facilities Grant Application</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
2063	<p>Grant approval and amount letter is not always sent to applicant; although no instances have been identified where contributions had not been made as a result of this. Of a sample of 9 applications tested, one (11%) was not sent the grant approval letter with the agreed amount.</p>	<p>DFG approval letter to be sent to the client to inform of the grant approval amount, client contribution if applicable and the terms and conditions of the grant.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
2071	<p>Whilst it has been confirmed that the contract for the Stannah Lift Services is part of a Framework Agreement procured by another authority, a copy of the contract could not be provided to Audit to demonstrate value for money.</p>	<p>Stannah Lift Services Framework agreement to be reviewed for adequacy in line with the Council's CPR procedures.</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>

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Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru  
Auditor General for Wales

# Housing Adaptations



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU



I have prepared and published this report in accordance with the  
Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

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The Auditor General also audits local government bodies in Wales, conducts local government value for money studies and inspects for compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

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**Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.**



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# Summary report

## User satisfaction with housing adaptations masks a hugely complicated, reactive and inequitable system that is not delivering for all those who may need it, and public bodies are not taking opportunities to improve value for money

- 1 With an expanding population of older people, public bodies – Welsh Government, local authorities and housing associations – need to ensure they provide housing for older and disabled people to both to allow them to live a healthy and active lifestyle, but to also continue to contribute to society and the economy. Part of achieving this is to ensure both the development of new specialist housing, such as SMART homes<sup>1</sup>, and also making better use of the existing housing stock through adaptations.
- 2 Adaptations are intended to change disabling environments in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families. Adaptations are not just about the provision of equipment or modifying a dwelling, but providing an individualised solution to the problems of people experiencing a disabling environment<sup>2</sup>. Adaptations can range from relatively inexpensive items such as ramps and handrails to largescale extensions with specialist equipment. A suitable, well-adapted home can make the difference to someone's ability to live well and independently. Adaptations offer an efficient and effective way of making the best use of resources in the current climate of financial constraints.
- 3 Increasingly, adaptations are recognised as key to delivering better outcomes for health services as opposed to solely being the domain of housing and social care. In meeting the future challenges of a rapidly ageing society and in addressing any potential care gap that could arise, adaptations will increasingly be an important contribution in complementing personal care. To achieve the necessary improvement requires public bodies to work seamlessly and provide joined-up services that respond to need and deliver timely, cost effective solutions.

1 Smart Homes use electronic networking technology to integrate various devices and appliances found in most homes, plus building environment systems more common in offices, so that the entire home can be controlled centrally or remotely in its entirety. This technology offers the prospect of significant improvements in the living standards of older and disabled people who, without automated support, would be reliant on home care.

2 This approach is often referred to as reflecting the social model of disability.

- 4 This review has focussed on assessing whether public bodies with responsibilities for delivering housing adaptations in Wales have an effective strategic approach to housing adaptations that delivers value for money and assures the continued wellbeing of older and disabled people. Our study methods are set out in [Appendix 1](#). These include audit fieldwork at five local authorities and four housing associations; a commissioned survey of citizens who have received adaptations; a detailed analysis of data and expenditure on current services; website and document reviews; and interviews with a range of national organisations. Based on the findings of this review, the Auditor General has concluded that user satisfaction with housing adaptations masks a hugely complicated, reactive and inequitable system that is not delivering for all those who may need it, and public bodies are not taking opportunities to improve value for money.

## Summary of our findings

- 5 Roughly 70 organisations deliver adaptations in Wales, every year collectively spending approximately £60 million and assisting over 32,000 people. The funding arrangements for adaptations is complex and has helped to create an inefficient delivery system. One of the consequences of this complexity is that people with similar needs often receive very different standards of service simply because of where they live and which public body provides the adaptation.
- 6 The majority of public bodies with responsibility for adaptations – local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies (‘delivery organisations’) – have seen demand for adaptations increase in recent years and expect this trend to continue. Census data<sup>3</sup> highlights that a higher proportion of the Welsh population consider themselves to be in poor health than is the case in England. Welsh Government projections<sup>4</sup> anticipate that the number of people in Wales who will experience mobility problems and difficulties undertaking daily domestic tasks will increase significantly in the next 20 years.

3 Office for National Statistics, **General Health in England and Wales: 2011 and comparison with 2001**, January 2013

4 Taken from Daffodil, a web-based system developed by the Institute of Public Care for the Welsh Government which pulls together in one place the information needed to plan care, support and housing services over the next 20 years for children, adults and older people.

- 7 The speed and efficiency of the provision of adaptations can make the difference between disabled or older people staying in the comfort and security of their own homes or moving into specialist or residential care. However, assessment processes are neither streamlined nor efficient and often contribute to delays. The lack of co-ordination between delivery organisations, interruptions due to problems arising from the unavailability of staff or funding, and poor standards of communication characterise the experience of a small number of service users.
- 8 Most public bodies recognise how adaptations can reduce the risk of falls and other accidents in the home and prevent hospital admissions and speed up discharge. However, health professionals often find the different local-authority and housing-association systems for administering, approving and delivering adaptations difficult to navigate. Complex delivery arrangements reduce the opportunities for health bodies to make better use of adaptations.
- 9 Given the wide number of routes available to access adaptations, delivery organisations need to ensure they have robust systems to deal effectively and quickly with applications. However, many authorities and housing associations do not have application processes that consistently and effectively meet the needs of people. Accessible information in a range of appropriate formats, such as large fonts for visually impaired users or audio versions for people with hearing difficulties, is often unavailable.
- 10 Delivery organisations must balance carrying out building works quickly to meet the needs and wishes of the disabled or older person, and ensuring value for money in terms of cost and quality. Most local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies have established appropriate processes to oversee and manage performance of those carrying out building work, most usually through regular meetings and dialogue in respect of individual grants. However, few delivery organisations are working strategically with contractors to streamline and improve performance, and current arrangements for contracting builders have some shortcomings. In addition, delivery organisations do not always have effective arrangements to monitor, review and evaluate the performance of builders and contractors in delivering individual grants.

- 11 Whilst public bodies are clear on the role of their housing-adaptation services in changing the home environment to enable or restore independent living, there are opportunities to better address needs and avoid and reduce demand and costs in health and social care services. Few delivery organisations have comprehensive and integrated Housing Renewal Policies that link decisions on investment with better use of existing adapted housing. Policies are often property focussed rather client focussed, and rarely make the strategic link to other organisations and the wider needs of disabled and older people.
- 12 Delivery organisations do not always take a ‘whole resources’<sup>5</sup> view of their adaptations work and consider the availability and use of all monies from all delivery organisations within an area. Only seven local authorities pool funds with Care and Repair and no pooling of funding takes place between local authorities and housing associations. A small number of local authorities have developed integrated approaches to housing adaptations drawing together grants, building surveyors and Occupational Therapists into single teams. However, too many organisations work in isolation focussing on their individual responsibilities, rather than working collaboratively to better address people’s housing and health needs.
- 13 Nevertheless, approximately three-quarters of people we surveyed who recently received housing adaptations have a positive experience with their housing adaptations. Just over 90% are satisfied with the time taken to deliver their adaptations, and the majority felt the work to their home allowed them to undertake everyday tasks, improving both their confidence and independence. Generally, owner-occupiers are more satisfied than those who rent from housing associations, but most disabled and older people we surveyed had little influence or choice in the adaptations made to their home.

5 By whole resources, we mean all the resources available for all public bodies providing adaptations in a defined local-authority area.

- 14 Accountability and transparency in delivery of adaptations have long been poor<sup>6</sup>. Despite the different sources of funding for housing adaptations, only performance in respect of local-authority Disabled Facilities Grants is publicly reported. However, by only reporting performance on Disabled Facilities Grants, the Welsh Government is currently only publishing data that covers 55% of all expenditure on adaptations and 14% of those disabled and older people who receive adaptations. The Welsh Government collates some performance data from housing associations and Care and Repair agencies but does not make this information available to the public. Weaknesses in current oversight arrangements mean that effective scrutiny to understand the efficiency and impact of the 'whole' adaptation system is not possible. This makes it difficult to judge how well organisations are performing and the positive impact of adaptations on disabled and older people's lives.
- 15 The Welsh Government is seeking to address some of these gaps by introducing new systems to monitor and report performance in delivering housing adaptations (the 'Enable' review). Whilst this addresses some of the long-standing weaknesses in current arrangements, gaps remain. Monitoring continues to focus too much on the mechanics of delivering adaptations and not enough on impact, wellbeing and the wider benefits of each public body's investment. Despite highlighting equality as a key policy objective, we found that few delivery organisations collect and evaluate a sufficient range of data to demonstrate and ensure fair access to services.

6 For example, Welsh Government, **Review of Housing Adaptations including Disabled Facilities Grants – Wales: A Report by Chris Jones For the Housing Directorate**, March 2005; and Welsh Government Social Research (on the Shelter Cymru website), **A Review of Independent Living Adaptations**, January 2015

## Recommendations

16 Our work has identified a series of recommendations for improvement and these are set out below.

### Recommendations for improvement

Recommendations	
R1	There are many sources of funding and policies for adaptations, which results in disabled and older people receiving very different standards of service (paragraphs 1.5 to 1.9). To address these discrepancies <b>we recommend that the Welsh Government set standards for all adaptations to ensure disabled and older people receive the same standard of service irrespective of where they live, who their landlord is and whether they own their own home.</b>
R2	Most public bodies are clear on how their work on adaptations can positively impact on disabled and older people, and have set suitable aims that provide focus for action. For adaptations, having the right strategic goals also establishes a clear basis for decision-making on who should be prioritised for services and how and where to use resources. However, we found that current policy arrangements have a number of deficiencies and public bodies are not maximising the benefit of their investment (paragraphs 3.8 to 3.15). <b>We recommend that local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to strengthen their strategic focus for the provision of adaptations by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence;</b></li><li>• <b>improving the quality of information on the demand for adaptations by using a wide range of data to assess need including drawing on and using information from partners who work in the local-authority area; and</b></li><li>• <b>linking the system for managing and delivering adaptations with adapted housing policies and registers to make best use of already adapted homes.</b></li></ul>

## Recommendations

- R3 Ensuring that all those who might need an adaptation have all the information they need in order to apply for and receive an adaptation is important. Good-quality and accessible information is therefore essential for delivery organisations to demonstrate fair access and transparency. However, we identified weaknesses in the quality and coverage of public information relating to housing adaptations (paragraphs 2.6 to 2.15). **We recommend that delivery organisations provide information on housing adaptations in both Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. Information should be promoted widely via a range of media including social media, websites and published information, and also through key partners. Preferably, information should be produced jointly and policies aligned between delivery bodies to improve coverage and usage.**
- R4 Given the wide number of routes into services, delivery organisations need to ensure they have robust systems to deal effectively and quickly with applications. However, we found that the processes used by delivery organisations vary widely and often create difficulties for disabled and older people seeking assistance (paragraphs 2.16 to 2.19). **We recommend that delivery organisations streamline applications by creating single comprehensive application forms covering all organisations within a local-authority area that are available via partners and online.**
- R5 Delivery of adaptations can be delayed by a variety of factors (paragraphs 2.20 to 2.33). To improve timeliness in delivery **we recommend that:**
- **the Welsh Government reviews whether local authorities should continue to use the means test for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs);**
  - **local authorities provide or use home improvement agency services to support disabled and older people to progress their DFG applications efficiently;**
  - **delivery organisations work with planning authorities to fast track and streamline adaptations that require approvals;**
  - **delivery organisations use Trusted Assessors to undertake less complex adaptation assessments; and**
  - **the Welsh Government streamlines its approval processes for Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs).**

## Recommendations

R6 Most local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies have established processes to appoint, oversee and manage builder and/or contractor performance. However, we found wide variations in how delivery organisations arrange, contract and deliver building works ([paragraphs 2.37 to 2.44](#)). **We recommend that delivery organisations:**

- **introduce formal systems for accrediting contractors to undertake adaptations. These should include:**
  - standards of customer care such as keeping to appointments, keeping the site tidy, controlling noise etc;
  - vetting of financial standing, tax and VAT status;
  - promoting good health and safety practices;
  - requiring the use of warranty schemes;
  - ensuring that adequate insurance is held; and
  - requiring references.
- **use framework agreements and partnered contracts to deliver adaptations.**
- **address weaknesses in the contracting of adaptations, updating Schedule of Rates used to tender work and undertaking competitive tendering to support value for money in contracting.**
- **develop effective systems to manage and evaluate contractor performance by:**
  - setting an appropriate range of information to judge performance and delivery of works covering timeliness of work; quality of work; applicant/tenant feedback; cost of work (including variations); health and safety record; and customer feedback;
  - regularly reporting and evaluating performance to identify opportunities to improve services; and
  - providing formal feedback to contractors on their performance covering key issues such as client satisfaction, level and acceptability of variations, right first-time work, post-inspection assessment and completion within budget and on time.



## Recommendations

- R7 Maximising impact and value for money in provision of adaptations requires effective joint working between housing organisations and health and social care services to ensure the needs of often very vulnerable people can be met, and their quality of life improved. However, our findings highlight that delivery organisations continue to have a limited strategic focus on adaptations, concentrating on organisational specific responses rather than how best collectively to meet the needs of disabled or older people (paragraphs 3.16 to 3.21). **We recommend that local authorities work with partner agencies (health bodies, housing associations and Care and Repair) to develop and improve joint working to maximise both take-up and the benefits of adaptations in supporting independence by pooling of resources, co-locating staff and creating integrated delivery teams.**
- R8 Most public bodies recognise the value of adaptations in reducing the risk of falls, preventing hospital admissions and speeding up discharge from hospital. However, the importance of adaptations is not always reflected in local partnership arrangements and outside of Occupational Therapists, health professionals noted that the different local-authority and housing-association systems for administering, approving and delivering adaptations are difficult to navigate (paragraphs 3.22 to 3.24). **To enhance take-up and usage of adaptations with health bodies we recommend that delivery organisations jointly agree and publish joint service standards for delivery of adaptations within each local-authority area. The service standards should clearly set out how each agency approaches delivery of adaptations and how they will provide services to ensure people know what they are entitled to receive. Service Standards should:**
- be written in plain accessible language;
  - be precise about what people can and cannot expect to receive;
  - be produced collaboratively to cover all adaptations services within an area;
  - set out the eligibility for the different funding streams, application and assessment processes, timescales and review processes; and
  - offer the viable options and alternatives for adaptations including linking with adapted housing registers to maximise use of already adapted homes.

## Recommendations

- R9 Having the right performance indicators and regularly reporting performance against these are important for public bodies to manage operational performance, identify areas of improvement and evaluating the positive impact of services. We found that the current range of performance indicator data is extremely limited and not sufficient to enable a full evaluation of performance (paragraphs 4.5 to 4.20). **To effectively manage performance and be able to judge the impact of adaptations, we recommend that the Welsh Government and delivery organisations:**
- **set appropriate measures to judge both the effectiveness and efficiency of the different systems for delivering adaptations and the impact on wellbeing and independence of those who receive adaptations;**
  - **ensure delivery organisations report against their responsibilities in respect of the Equalities Act 2010;**
  - **ensure performance information captures the work of all delivery organisations – local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies; and**
  - **annually publish performance for all delivery organisations to enable a whole systems view of delivery and impact to support improvement to be taken.**

## Part 1

The current system for delivering adaptations reinforces inequalities for some disabled and older people, and addressing need is complicated by the different sources of funding



- 1.1 People who need a housing adaptation can access the funding for such adaptations based on their housing tenure. The key organisations who deliver housing adaptations in Wales are as follows:
- 22 local authorities;
  - 22 traditional housing associations;
  - 11 Large Scale Voluntary Stock Transfer (LSVT) housing associations; and
  - 13 Care and Repair agencies.

(Appendix 2 sets out the definitions for housing associations, LSVT associations and Care and Repair agencies and their coverage in Wales).































- 1.2 As well as different delivery organisations with responsibilities for providing adaptations, the funding programmes used vary widely. In this section of the report, we consider the complexity of current funding arrangements, the levels of expenditure and the numbers of people assisted, highlighting some significant inequities in how adaptations are paid for and made available.

## National and local policy choices have resulted in an overly complicated system which reinforces, rather than addresses, inequality in provision of adaptations

- 1.3 In total, there are five different funding streams used by delivery organisations, as well as monies invested by individual people who require an adaptation. The different funding streams are as follows (Appendix 3 summarises the major policy elements of each of these funding streams):
- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for owner occupiers, private rented tenants/landlords and some social housing tenants
  - Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs) for tenants of traditional and community based housing associations
  - Rapid Response Adaptation Programme for owner occupiers and private rented tenants/landlords
  - Adaptations for local-authority and LSVT housing-association tenants funded from their maintenance programmes
  - Adaptations for some housing-association tenants funded by their landlord from their maintenance programme to supplement PAGs

- 1.4 In **Exhibit 1** below, we set out who is eligible for receipt of funding under each of the different funding schemes and the current coverage across Wales.

Exhibit 1: current provision of adaptations by funding, tenure and landlord in Wales in 2015-16 and 2016-17

Tenure	Disabled Facilities Grants 	Housing Revenue Account funding of adaptations to local-authority housing <sup>7</sup> 	Physical Adaptation Grants 	Rapid Response Adaptation Programme 	Landlord use of own resources 
Owner occupier	 (provided by all 22 authorities)			 (provided in all 22 authorities)	
Tenant of a local authority	 (provided in 2 of 11 local-authority areas)	 (provided by all 11 local authorities)			
Tenant of an LSVT housing association	 Provided in 6 of 11 local-authority areas				 (provided by all 11 LSVT associations)
Tenant of traditional housing association			 (provided by all 22 housing associations)		 (provided in 10 of 22 housing associations)
Tenant of a private rented landlord	 Provided in 20 of 22 local-authority areas			 (provided in all 22 authorities)	 Not collected

Source: Wales Audit Office survey of local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies.

<sup>7</sup> Local authorities are required to record all income and expenditure in relation to a local authority's own direct provision of housing within the Housing Revenue Account.

- 1.5 The complexities of the current funding regime with different grants, funding sources and recipients are partly a reflection of the choices taken and judgements made on how public bodies will address and meet the needs of disabled or older people. These are policy decisions set out in legislation, in terms of who is eligible to receive funding for DFGs, the Welsh Government policy in respect of PAGs and the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme, and also the delivery organisations responsible for delivering adaptations where elements of local discretion exist. Previous reviews of housing adaptations<sup>8</sup> highlight that the infrequency of Welsh Government guidance to local authorities, since the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, has led to a stark variation in local determination and service provision. The result is a wide variation in systems, policies and approaches across Wales that is resulting in disabled and older people receiving very different services depending upon where they live, who delivers the adaptation, and whether they own or rent their home.
- 1.6 We found that 18 of the 22 authorities have revised their DFG policies and delivery systems to reflect the flexibilities provided by the 2002 Regulatory Reform Order. For instance, through our fieldwork we identified that local authorities have used the 2002 Regulatory Reform Order to fast-track processes for adaptations valued at less than £5,000 with no means test. Powys County Council for instance operates low-value and less-complex adaptation schemes in partnership with Care and Repair agencies to speed up and streamline delivery of minor works. In addition, six of the 11 local authorities who have transferred their social-housing stock to a housing association, and two of the 11 local authorities who retain their social housing stock, permit applications for DFG funding from these social-housing landlords. In these cases, the LSVT and local-authority landlord are required to comply with the local authority's Housing Renewal Policy standards. Twenty of the 22 local authorities also fund DFG adaptations to private-rented properties.
- 1.7 In addition, a number of local authorities deal with adaptation works very differently for local-authority tenants and for homeowners. For example, we found different systems in place for engaging with builders, specifying works, overseeing the performance of contractors and the speed of delivery for works to local-authority housing tenants and owner-occupiers receiving DFGs, despite officers working within the same teams (see **Part 3** below for further details). Because organisations lack measurable service standards for adaptations, disabled and older people with similar needs often receive a very different quality of service.

8 For example, Welsh Government, **Review of Housing Adaptations including Disabled Facilities Grants – Wales: A Report by Chris Jones For the Housing Directorate**, March 2005; and Welsh Government Social Research (on the Shelter Cymru website), **A Review of Independent Living Adaptations**, January 2015

- 1.8 Occupational Therapists who responded to our survey noted particular weaknesses in respect of adaptations delivered by stock-transfer housing associations. They noted inconsistencies and gaps in the range, detail, and quality of information and advice, particularly regarding entitlement and changes to eligibility criteria. In particular, a small number of stock-transfer associations encourage disabled or older people who need housing adaptations to move to an adapted property (which may not always be immediately available), or remain in their existing home and wait until a suitable adapted property becomes available.
- 1.9 The current configuration of delivery and eligibility for housing adaptations means that people's access to adaptations depends upon their tenancy status and the local-authority area they live in, rather than on need. A further confusion is that whilst the legislation determines the work of local authorities in respect of delivering DFGs and Welsh Government guidance to housing associations about the delivery of PAGs, the adaptations to a local authority's own housing stock can take place outside of the legislation and PAG guidance does not apply to the 11 LSVT housing associations. Each of the local-authority and LSVT landlords determine the adaptations work undertaken to their rented housing and how they will deliver adaptations for their tenants, although they can also apply for DFGs as well. The main consequence of these policy decisions is that people with similar needs receive a different response.

**Adaptations are delivered by a large number of organisations who annually assist around 32,000 people, but spending on adaptations in real terms is static and delivery is complicated by the different sources of funding**

- 1.10 Funding for housing adaptations comes from a number of different sources, including the Welsh Government, landlords' own resources and local-authority capital programmes. **Exhibit 2** overleaf shows that whilst the amount of funding invested in adaptations has marginally increased, rising from £58.7 million in 2013-14 to £60.3 million in 2015-16, in real terms, expenditure remains static. In addition, some health bodies are funding adaption work. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board provided £1,255,196 in 2016-17 towards the cost of adaptations work undertaken by local authorities in their area. In addition, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University and Cwm Taf health boards provided monies to Care and Repair; £249,679 in the former case and £36,571 in the latter case.<sup>9</sup> Outside of this funding, no other health body provides resources to support adaptation work in their community.

<sup>9</sup> Information collated as part of the Wales Audit Office review of discharge planning.



1.11 All delivery organisations providing funds for adaptations have increased how many people receive adaptations in the last three years, with the number of people assisted rising by 11.7%, from 28,594 in 2013-14 to 31,941 in 2015-16. The bulk of people assisted receive minor adaptations provided by Care and Repair rather than larger refurbishments to their home. The Rapid Response Adaptations programme delivered by Care and Repair accounts for roughly 50% of all works undertaken in any single year. Our research shows that there are a large number of delivery organisations with responsibilities for funding housing adaptations with 68 different bodies providing adaptations using five different sources of funding. There are significant variations in the different sources of funding. Local-authority funding of DFGs has remained static; traditional housing-association funding and local-authority spending on their own housing stock has increased; LSVT associations and Care and Repair funding has decreased.

**Exhibit 2: cash and real-terms expenditure on adaptations, the basis for delivery organisations' funding and number of households assisted by delivery organisations between 2013-14 and 2015-16**

The exhibit shows that funding of adaptations is complex with a large number of organisations with responsibilities for delivering work who operate largely independent of each other. The amount spent in real terms has remained static and delivery bodies are assisting more people.

Source of funding		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Percentage change over three years
<b>Disabled Facilities Grants taken from the local-authority Capital budget</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	£32,700,271	£32,726,068	£33,502,054	2.4%
	Amount spent in real terms	£33,408,191	£32,950,461	£33,502,054	0.3%
	Numbers assisted	4,393	4,306	4,454	1.4%
<b>Local-authority Housing Revenue Account funding for adaptations to local-authority housing</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	£9,728,758	£9,357,702	£10,224,936	5.1%
	Amount spent in real terms	£10,137,819	£9,609,963	£10,224,936	0.8%
	Numbers assisted	3,847	3,702	4,138	7.5%
<b>Traditional housing associations Physical Adaptation Grants provided by the Welsh Government</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	£6,259,088	£7,176,503	£7,900,051	26.2%
	Amount spent in real terms	£6,394,589	£7,225,710	£7,900,051	23.5%
	Numbers assisted	1,422	1,407	1,686	18.5%

Source of funding		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Percentage change over three years
<b>Traditional housing associations' own resources used to fund adaptation works</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	£129,726	£179,735	£224,482	73%
	Amount spent in real terms	£130,616	£180,968	£224,482	71.8%
	Numbers assisted	541	608	586	8.4%
<b>Large Scale Voluntary Transfer housing associations – own resources used to fund adaptations</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	£7,809,577	£6,890,873	£6,460,578	-17.2%
	Amount spent in real terms	£7,978,644	£6,938,121	£6,460,578	-19%
	Numbers assisted	4,386	4,396	4,656	6.1%
<b>Rapid Response Adaptation Programme provided by the Welsh Government</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	£2,074,312	£2,023,800	£2,036,727	-1.8%
	Amount spent in real terms	£2,119,218	£2,037,676	£2,036,727	-3.9%
	Numbers assisted	14,005	17,739	16,421	17.2%
<b>Total</b>	Amount spent in cash terms	<b>£58,701,732</b>	<b>£58,354,681</b>	<b>£60,348,828</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
	Amount spent in real terms	<b>£60,169,077</b>	<b>£58,942,899</b>	<b>£60,348,828</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
	Numbers assisted	<b>28,594</b>	<b>32,158</b>	<b>31,941</b>	<b>11.7%</b>

Source: Wales Audit Office analysis of Council Revenue Outturn data; data submitted by housing associations to the Welsh Government; Care and Repair spend data from the Welsh Government; and individual organisation returns as part of a Wales Audit Office survey. Housing-association data includes returns from 10 of the 11 Large Scale Voluntary Transfer housing associations. Only 10 of the 22 traditional housing associations who receive Physical Adaptation Grants provided data on how much of their own money is invested in adaptation works.

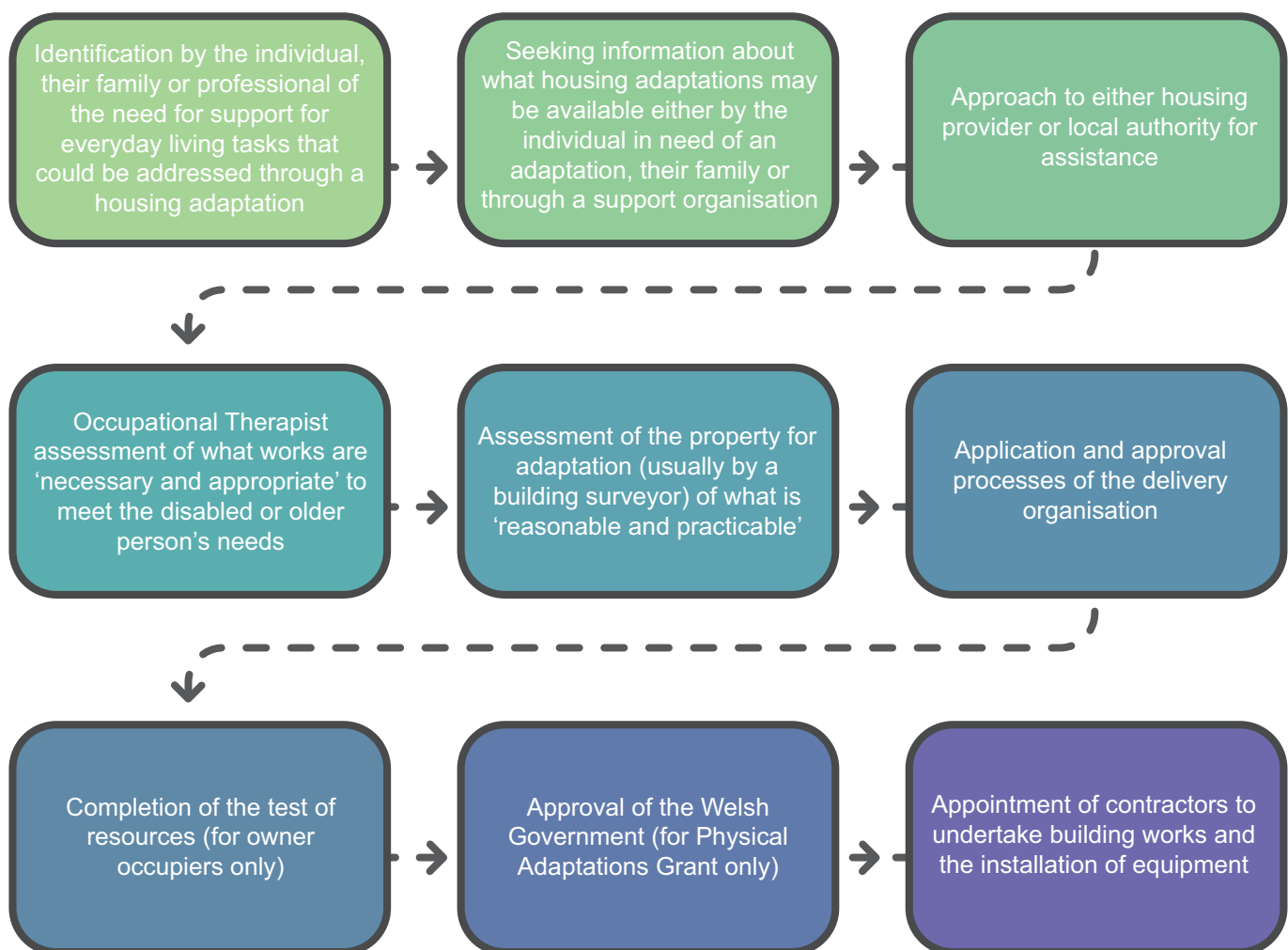
- 1.12 Some of the funding streams are governed by legislation and/or Welsh Government policies whilst money invested by some delivery organisations – LSVT housing associations and local-authority social-housing landlord services – are left to these landlords to determine how to spend. In 2015-16, LSVT associations and local-authority housing landlords invested circa £16 million from their own resources, accounting for 27% of all funding on adaptations in Wales that year. These resources are not subject to Welsh Government oversight, approval or the policy compliance requirements of PAGs, or the statutory framework governing DFGs.
- 1.13 The result of this convoluted system of funding is that disabled and older people are receiving different services because of where they live and who their landlord/local authority is rather than what their needs are. We recognise that local choice is important, and delivery organisations' policies should reflect the wider needs of the community they operate in and the people who receive their services. However, the wide variation in funding means that it is not unusual for people with similar needs to receive very different standards of service simply because of the policy choice of the agency they have to deal with.

## Part 2

Provision of adaptations to people with similar needs is inequitable because of inconsistencies in how delivery organisations provide services

2.1 Delivering adaptations brings together a wide partnership of public bodies including local-authority housing and social services departments; health bodies; Care and Repair; the Welsh Government; and housing associations. Policies and procedures for dealing with requests for adaptations should be sufficiently flexible to encourage usage and take-up. When people apply for a housing adaptation, there are a number of steps to the application process. **Exhibit 3** sets the main stages for adaptations we have identified from our review.

**Exhibit 3: the key stages of the adaptations process**



Source: Wales Audit Office interviews and review of delivery organisations' documentation and policies.

- 2.2 Delivery arrangements can, however, vary widely depending upon where the disabled or older person lives in Wales; and whether they own their home or rent from a private landlord, housing association or local authority. As well as many different sources of funding, the intricate system of assessments and approvals can also add time to the delivery of an adaptation. Given the complexities of the adaptation system, it is important that public bodies seek to streamline delivery wherever possible to:
- avoid a disabled or older person's condition deteriorating;
  - decrease the risk of accidents or falls;
  - reduce stress on carers;
  - diminish the risk of re-admission from an unsatisfactory discharge; and/or
  - minimise a delayed discharge.
- 2.3 In this section of the report, we consider how delivery organisations provide the main stages of adaptations – promotion, information, application, assessment, approval and building works – drawing out the complexities of current arrangements. We highlight how policy choices, intended to create a more equal Wales, have resulted in a system that can reinforce inequalities experienced by disabled and older people.

## **Adaptations are not always effectively promoted to all people who would benefit**

- 2.4 For a service that provides support to some of the most vulnerable people in society, effective promotion is crucial in order to ensure that all those who could benefit from the service are aware of its existence, the opportunities it provides, how they can use it and ultimately, maintain their independence. Information on how to access the service needs to be readily available and be in the right places. It also needs to be easily understandable. The views of people who received housing adaptations during 2015-16 highlight the need for delivery organisations to consider the needs of people who may benefit from the service to ensure promotional information and application processes are designed to meet those needs.

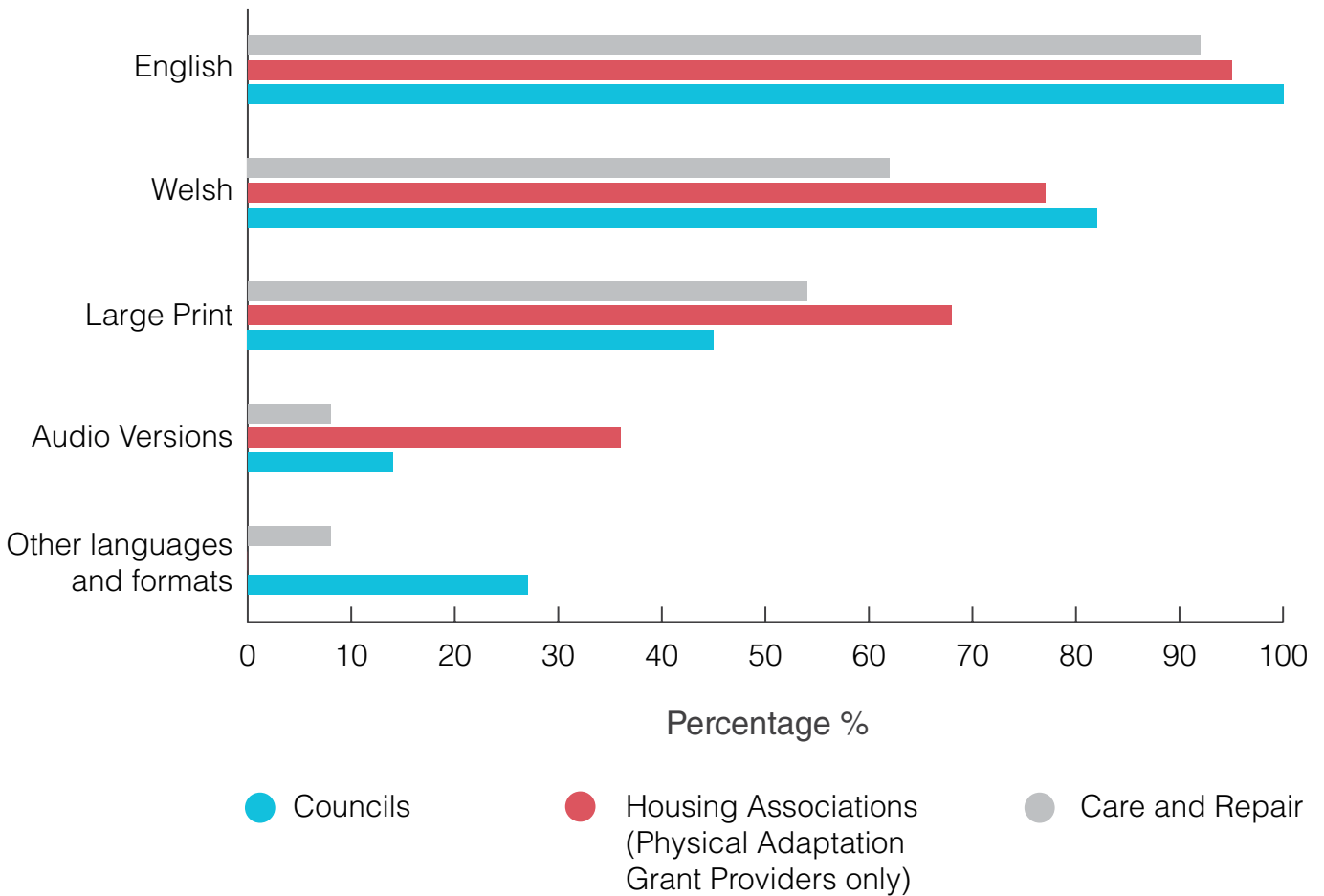
## Information provided by delivery organisations is not always easily accessible or understandable and comes in a variety of formats

- 2.5 Disabled and older people often find it difficult to access adaptations, largely due to the complexity of the system as a whole and the various access routes into services. Whilst some examples of preventative and planned approaches exist, these are rare. Very few authorities and housing associations have capitalised on the opportunity to reduce pressures on officers' time by publishing effective, accessible online information, and are therefore not making the most efficient use of their resources.
- 2.6 Local authorities, health bodies, housing associations, Care and Repair and other relevant partners should provide complimentary information on adaptations to inform service users, their advocates, the wider public, other professions and agencies of the services that are available. Information should be in plain English and Welsh, in formats accessible to those with sensory impairments and in additional languages appropriate to all communities within the locality. In response to the potential vulnerability and/or access needs of applicants' delivery organisations should ensure that information is as 'user friendly' as possible. By 'user friendly' we mean that delivery organisations provide:
- key information about adaptations and how to access those in a range of formats including online, hard copy and accessible (large font, audio and range of relevant languages) versions;
  - information to other organisations that may come into contact with people in need of housing adaptations;
  - information to professionals who work with people who may need housing adaptations;
  - assistance with application processes;
  - assessments of need and building suitability at the same time, where possible, to reduce delays to the process; and
  - key timings for the different stages to guide applicants on the likely period the adaptation will take.
- 2.7 From our review, we have identified that public information falls short in a number of areas, and there are opportunities for delivery organisations to improve how they inform disabled or older people of the services that are available and how to access them.



- 2.8 The majority of those surveyed who have recently received an adaptation stated that they had mostly found out about adaptations from professionals. Most usually, these are Occupational Therapists (22%) and social workers (15%). Less than 5% of people find out about adaptations from delivery organisations – local authorities and housing associations or from published information. It is concerning that, with an aging population and the demand for housing adaptations predicted to rise by over 50% between 2015 and 2035, many organisations are still depending on professionals to promote the service directly.
- 2.9 The findings of our survey also highlight weaknesses in the quality and coverage of public information relating to housing adaptations – [Exhibit 4](#) below. We found that whilst delivery organisations' provide information on housing adaptations in both Welsh and English, a significant number of delivery organisations do not provide information in other key accessible formats. For example, in large fonts for visually impaired users, audio versions for people with hearing difficulties and other languages. The findings set out in [Exhibit 4](#) indicate that information about housing adaptations published by delivery organisations is not always tailored to ensure services are accessible to potential service users.

**Exhibit 4: the range and format of information on housing adaptations**



Source: Wales Audit Office survey of local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair bodies.

2.10 Survey findings are echoed in our fieldwork with delivery organisations. Some delivery organisations did not provide a comprehensive range of information on all aspects of their adaptation services in an appropriate and suitable range of formats and media – audio, Braille and large-print formats. We also found that some published information was out of date and did not reflect how delivery organisations provide services. Given the weaknesses in the quality and accessibility of current information on housing adaptations, the Welsh Government through its ‘Enable’ review, is working with delivery organisations to address deficiencies in performance and information management.

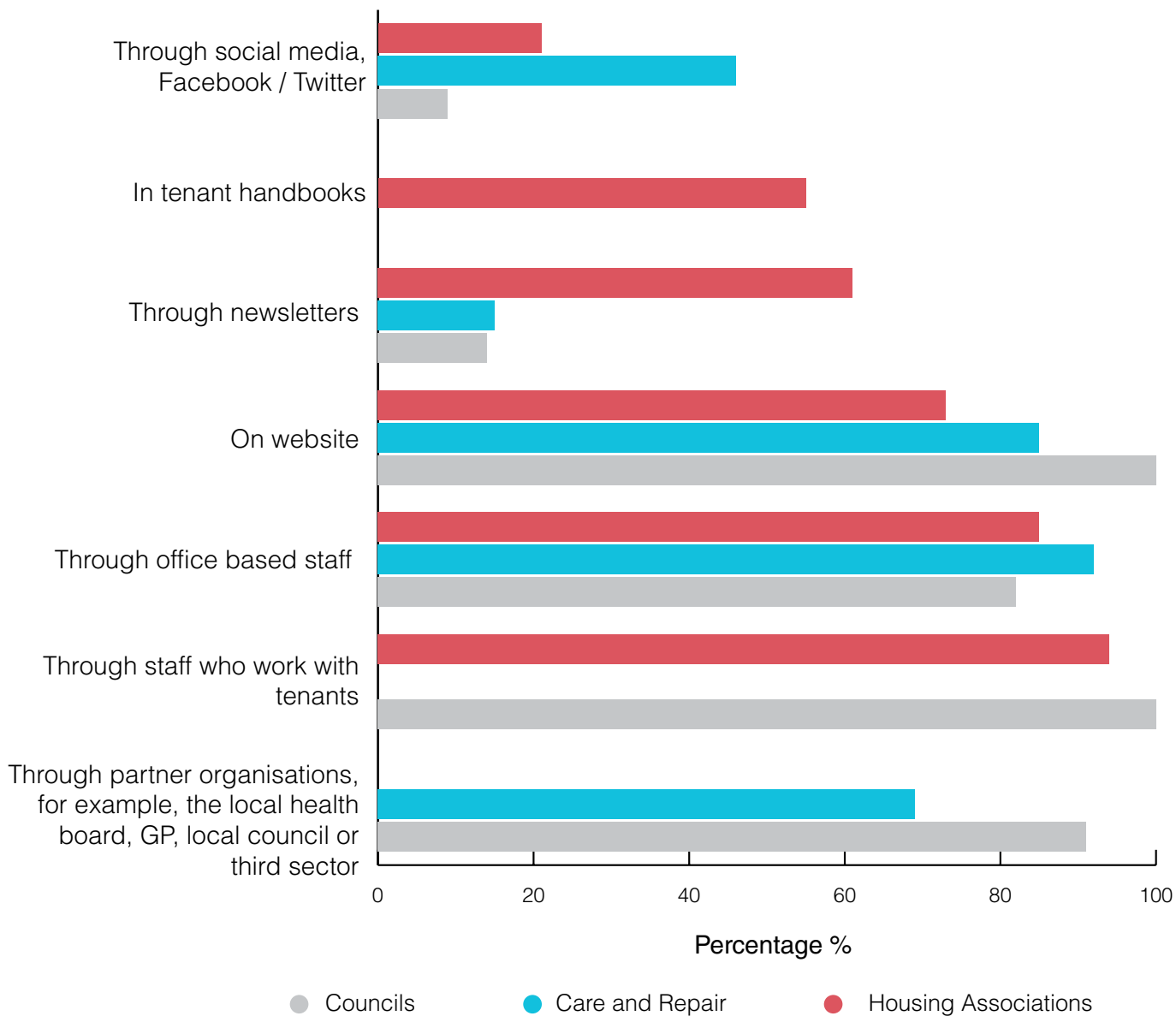
2.11 Whilst health bodies are well aware of benefits of adaptations on avoidable admissions and in supporting discharge, respondents to our surveys noted poor communication, limited knowledge and understanding with GPs, hospital staff and commissioners as major blocks to making better use of adaptations. In particular, the quality and range of information and the sharing of data between the local authority, housing associations, Care and Repair and health bodies to maximise usage, speed up decision-making and strategic planning of services are especially poor. Occupational Therapists who responded to our survey noted wide variations in the quality and coverage of delivery organisations' promotional material. For example, whilst the vast majority of Occupational Therapists (92%) felt that both local authorities and Care and Repair bodies had clearly set out to service users what they can expect to receive, only 65% felt that the housing associations they work with had good-quality and appropriate service-standard information. Ensuring health bodies are maximising the benefits of adaptations remains an ongoing challenge for health professionals.

**The lack of effective promotion means that there is a risk that not all people who would benefit from an adaptation are aware of their availability**

2.12 Access to adaptations come from a wide variety of agencies – for instance, referrals from social workers, housing officers, third-sector partners, supporting people, staff or building maintenance operatives. Consequently, those who directly deal with individuals who could benefit from a housing adaptation need to be aware of how to refer individuals into services. Whilst we found some examples where collaborative and integrated approaches are leading to better delivery of adaptations (for instance, supporting effective discharge from hospitals), these approaches are the exception rather than the norm. We found little evidence of delivery organisations focussing on proactive or preventative work to better meet the needs of disabled and older people, before their individual circumstances deteriorate and require a crisis intervention.

2.13 Our survey of councils, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies allows us to analyse how different organisations tell people about housing adaptations and the options available to them. **Exhibit 5** shows that the majority of local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies rely on office-based staff to disseminate information about housing adaptations, whilst information publicised via social media, newsletters and in tenant handbooks is generally less well developed. No housing association provides information to partners such as health, social workers or third-sector bodies. This is particularly concerning given that most people who receive an adaptation generally access services via third-party referrals. Given these gaps in information provision, there are opportunities for delivery organisations to improve how they promote access to adaptations.

Exhibit 5: the different ways organisations that deliver housing adaptations tell people about options available to them



Source: Wales Audit Office survey of local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair bodies

- 2.14 Controlling and limiting the promotion of adaptations allows some organisations to effectively manage demand and maintain control over expenditure. Whilst we recognise services have finite budgets and are unlikely to be able to meet the demand from all potential applicants who may need an adaptation, reducing access to services for disabled and older people is clearly not acceptable and falls short of the delivery organisations' responsibilities to their communities.

## There is a considerable variation in the application, assessment and approval processes that can create delays in disabled and older people receiving an adaptation

### Application processes are not always streamlined or effective

- 2.15 Many organisations and services are potentially involved in delivering adaptations. The initial contact or referral from a disabled or older person may come via social services, local-authority housing management or maintenance staff, Supporting People officers, private-sector housing or environmental-health staff as well as those who administer DFGs. Given the wide number of routes into services, delivery organisations need to ensure they have robust systems to deal effectively and quickly with applications. The application system should also be sufficiently wide and far ranging to encourage access and take-up, and delivery organisations should offer a variety of media to encourage service users to apply.
- 2.16 Each delivery organisation has designed their own application process for people that request a housing adaptation. The systems and processes used by delivery organisations vary from body to body, despite following national policy requirements, and often create difficulties for disabled and older people seeking assistance. From our surveys and fieldwork, we found that local authorities and housing associations offer a range of application processes, but not all have processes that consistently and effectively meet the needs of people who require housing adaptations.

- 2.17 Only six local authorities offer online application processes for DFGs. Sixteen local authorities work with Care and Repair to complete applications, but only eight work with other third-sector organisations. Sixteen local authorities allow applications by telephone and 19 local authorities provide outreach services where officers go to people's homes to complete applications. A small number of local authorities also proactively seek to overcome the complexity of the application process by appointing 'case officers' who work closely with disabled and older people to guide them through the process at each stage. Disabled and older people value the support offered by case officers, but often applicants are required to pay for this service.
- 2.18 In comparison, just three of the 33 housing associations we surveyed offer online application processes for housing adaptations, although 13 state they work with third-sector organisations to complete applications, and 12 specifically with Care and Repair. Less than half of the 33 housing associations allow applications by telephone or employ officers to visit disabled or older people in their home to assist in completing adaptation applications. Overall, 79% of people who received a DFG rated the application process as excellent or good, compared to 66% of those who received a PAG.

### **Occupational Therapists are critical to the delivery of good-quality adaptations, but assessments and working practices are inefficient and not always timely**

- 2.19 Adaptations are available to anyone who is assessed as needing one. Local authorities and landlords rely on the professional judgement of Occupational Therapists to identify the works that are 'necessary and appropriate' to meet a person's needs. Occupational Therapists may assess people for housing-adaptation needs in hospital or other care settings. Some delivery organisations require several assessments prior to discharging people to return home or to community-based services. Repeating assessments can create duplication within the system and potential confusion for people who may need a housing adaptation. Our Occupational Therapist survey highlights some of the significant shortcomings in the processes used by delivery organisations to assess, manage and deliver adaptations across Wales.

2.20 These are set out in detail in [Exhibit 6](#) and highlight some significant gaps in current working practices. In particular:

- limited use of mobile technology and reliance on more labour-intensive and excessively bureaucratic processes;
- narrow use of joint applications and reliance on single agency approaches, particularly in housing associations, which increases duplication and adds to the time taken to apply, assess and approve adaptations;
- applicants needing to make multiple applications to different organisations for broadly the same service completing the same information with little integration of data or assessment processes;
- site visits not being kept to a minimum and approval systems not being streamlined to speed up delivery; and
- adaptations not integrated with adapted-housing registers.

2.21 Occupational Therapists also noted delays specifically caused by some housing associations querying the need for adaptation and often delaying or refusing permission. Occupational Therapists also noted a growing concern that the length of time taken by the different delivery organisations to process applications is rising, often as a result of financial pressures and reductions in staff numbers. Overall, whilst local-authority assessment processes often have weaknesses in key areas, Occupational Therapists' experience is that authorities have established more effective systems and processes to deliver adaptations than those used by housing associations.



**Exhibit 6: percentage of Occupational Therapists agreeing that delivery organisations take the following steps to improve economy, efficiency and effectiveness when delivering housing adaptations**

The percentage refers to the proportion of Occupational Therapists who agree that the named delivery organisations comply with the efficiency criteria and shows significant shortcomings in application and assessment processes.

Criteria	Percentage complying with the application and assessment standard by delivery organisations as assessed by Occupational Therapists		
	Local Authorities (%)	Housing Associations (%)	Care and Repair (%)
Adapted housing registers are integrated with adaptation systems	43	40	35
Applicants only enquire/apply once to access adaptations	50	39	41
Local initiatives support speedier delivery of housing adaptations	55	33	64
Mobile and on-line technology is used during adaptation process	56	54	50
Jointly agreed application form	59	38	53
Systems for approving an adaptation are streamlined	65	30	63
All applications are processed at a single intake point	67	47	64
Processes are designed to decide on applications quickly	69	43	81
Decision points in assessment process kept to a minimum	71	50	75
Assessment process is client focussed and allows quick progress	73	39	76

**Percentage complying with the application and assessment standard by delivery organisations as assessed by Occupational Therapists**

<b>Criteria</b>			
Roles of all staff involved in assessments are clearly defined	73	57	68
Site visits kept to a minimum and delivered jointly	74	65	70
Approval points in assessment process kept to a minimum	77	48	75
Enquiries screened at a single intake point	84	56	82
Jointly agreed enquiry process	86	74	89

Source: Wales Audit Office survey of local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies.

2.22 Challenges can be exacerbated where Occupational Therapists work in local health-board areas that cover a number of local authorities, because there is often a considerable variation in delivery organisations' application and assessment processes and approval systems. Similarly, for health professionals who work across local-authority boundaries and engage with a wide range of delivery organisations, there is a challenge in managing multiple and often very different systems when planning discharge from hospital or considering options to address the needs of patients.

2.23 For example, whilst half of the 12 NHS organisations we surveyed (a mix of Health Boards and individual hospitals) felt they knew what delivery bodies expected of them and how referral processes operate, only two felt they fully understood what adaptation services were available for them to use and how long it took to assess and approve adaptations. Similarly, just four organisations acknowledged that they knew the full range of services that are available and the eligibility criteria for provision of services. We conclude that overall, the complexity of systems adds to the time taken to assess people and deliver timely solutions. Occupational Therapists and health professionals we spoke to believe that their work would benefit from standardising assessment approaches and forms across delivery organisations.

2.24 Delivery organisations most frequently refer to the demand on Occupational Therapists as the main reason for delays in adaptations being processed and delivered in a timely manner. From our surveys, we found that 95% of local authorities and 86% of housing associations experience delays in occupational therapy assessments for DFGs and PAGs. To address these delays, we found that some delivery organisations are increasing the use of Trusted Assessors<sup>10</sup> to reduce demand on Occupational Therapists. Because a significant proportion of referrals for adaptations are for minor items, the use of Trusted Assessors can speed up assessments and decisions and allow Occupational Therapists to prioritise assessing and specifying adaptations that are more complex. Despite the work of Trusted Assessors leading to quicker decisions, their work is not always viewed positively. Occupational Therapists raised concerns over the impact and quality of referrals, and noted that some Trusted Assessors feared making decisions because of potential liability for poor choices if problems arise. Some assessments have also had to be reviewed and signed off by Occupational Therapists before they are approved, which can delay timely decision-making.

### Equipment demonstration

In early 2015, Cardiff Council opened an Independent Living Centre (ILC). An Occupational Therapist is based in the centre and is able to provide information and assessments to people visiting the ILC. The ILC contains a range of housing adaptations so people can see how those work and can assist their day-to-day lives. Some occupational therapy teams have widened their resource base by purchasing a number of kit ramps and 'pod' shower rooms for people who require adaptations urgently and for a short period of time.

2.25 Some local authorities use single points of access for social services including housing adaptations. Once people who may need a housing adaptation contact the single point of access, their request is passed onto administration staff and co-ordinated centrally resulting in a well-timed assessment of the applicants' personal needs and the suitability of the property.

<sup>10</sup> The Royal College of Occupational Therapists, in response to the pressure on occupational therapists, recognises that a wider range of professionals can assess low-level adaptations. Its written guidance *Minor Adaptations Without Delay* (2006) outlines what adaptations Trusted Assessors can assess. A large number of local authorities and housing associations now use this guidance to speed up assessments for low-level adaptations and therefore release Occupational Therapist capacity to deal with adaptations that are more complex.

## Use of technology

Occupational therapists are using technology to become more efficient. Some Occupational therapists email their recommendations directly to housing associations and local authorities, which reduces reliance on and use of paper-based forms and processes. Some Occupational Therapists use their mobile phone cameras to take photos in properties that are being considered for adaptation to accurately capture information, which can be provided electronically to building surveyors and grants officers and help speed up decisions about adaptations. Occupational therapists are also using technology to engage with potential recipients of adaptations by showing pictures of the range of options that are available and the likely impact they can have on the recipient.

## Processes for approving adaptations regularly cause delays

- 2.26 As well as the complexity of Occupational Therapists' assessment processes, delays to delivery of DFGs and PAGs can be caused by a range of other factors. A number of these are inter-related and often sequential resulting from the timing of approvals and decisions, whilst others rest with choices and decisions of the applicant. From our survey of local authorities and housing associations who deliver DFGs and PAGs, we identified a number of core issues that currently interrupt delivery of adaptations.
- 2.27 Just under half of local authorities noted that completing the test of resources<sup>11</sup> could take considerable time. Delays are frequently a result of the amount of detail DFG applicants are required to provide, such as proof of title and comprehensive financial information. Delivery organisations acknowledged that the means test is also inequitable in relation to other funding options and felt that it is debatable whether the means test represents value for money given the length of time to complete compared to the level of grant provided. Positively, some local authorities speed up the test of resources by linking applications to other authority ICT systems to establish the applicant's financial standing – for example, council tax benefit.

<sup>11</sup> Whilst DFGs are mandatory, they are subject to a means test and an upper grant limit. The test of resources for grant applicants is set out in the Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/2890, as amended). The test largely mirrors the system of calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit. Grant applicants may receive a full grant or may be required to make a contribution towards the cost of the works.

- 2.28 Welsh Government approval processes often delay housing associations delivering PAGs, particularly for larger works, which require approval prior to the commencement of work. The approval process involves Welsh Government officials reviewing the Occupational Therapists' assessment of the need for an adaptation and the suitability of the building, all of which can add many weeks if not months to the process. Eighty-two per cent of landlords stated that they experienced delays because of the Welsh Government requiring associations to provide three quotes and 64% delays as a result of the Welsh Government's approval processes. However, delays can also be caused by incomplete or poor information being submitted to Welsh Government for approval. Nonetheless, given that the bulk of PAGs above £5,000 are approved with little challenge or change, housing associations consider these processes to be unnecessarily burdensome, particularly as the system is entirely paper based and has not been digitised or automated.
- 2.29 To expedite the timeliness of completion of PAGs, the Welsh Government has established a fast-track system for relatively minor and standard works for stair-lifts (£3,500), bathrooms (£6,500) and other access aids (£3,500). It is possible for an application to cover all three which would give a total of £13,500. Under this fast track approach, the Welsh Government retrospectively approves PAG expenditure after the housing association has organised and completed the adaptation. The Welsh Government is also reviewing its guidance on PAGs in partnership with a group of housing-association representatives, and is looking at options to improve timeliness, including formal guidance about the provision of extensions and increasing the upper limits for fast-track applications.
- 2.30 Both local authorities and housing associations also commented on delays resulting from the time needed to gain relevant permissions from utility companies (water in particular) and planning authorities where planning permission is required. These can often result in lengthy delays but are issues over which delivery organisations have little or no control, especially where an applicant is responsible for managing delivery of a DFG. Whilst the onus is normally on an applicant to satisfy planning requirements (for example, in the completion of forms and submission of relevant documentation), delivery organisations should provide as much practical help as required to avoid delays in processing and approving applications. It is important to ensure that planning approval procedures do not add unnecessary delays during the process and that delivery organisations liaise with the relevant local or National Park planning authority to determine the scope of matters which would typically require planning permission, or the scope of exceptional circumstances (for example, when a property lies within a conservation area).

- 2.31 As a final point, decisions taken by applicants or tenants can also result in significant delays. From our surveys, we found that 95% of local authorities stated that applicants often request delays to the adaptation work and 86% of them stated that applicants change their mind and often do not wish to proceed. Whilst housing associations noted that tenants often choose to delay or not proceed with an adaptation, only 40% of landlords experienced these issues. Given the complexity of the system for assessing, approving and delivering adaptations, it is unsurprising that applicants often elect not to proceed, particularly homeowners where DFG processes are especially onerous.
- 2.32 In response to the length of time taken to assess, approve and deliver adaptations, some delivery organisations have sought to streamline their processes to improve efficiency and maximise value for money. These include a number of local authorities, such as Ceredigion County Council and Newport City Council, undertaking an initial assessment of the financial contribution that applicants may need to make for a DFG. Whilst this initial assessment is not binding, it does provide applicants with an understanding of the potential cost they may have to cover. Local authorities using this approach note that identifying the potential cost for applicants as early as possible in the assessment and approval process allows the authority to identify more quickly those who do not intend to progress with their application due to financial cost.
- 2.33 Some local authorities – Powys County Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council and the County and City of Swansea Council – also use ‘case officers’ who work with the different agencies and departments involved in adaptations to ensure that applications are ‘pulled’ through the system and decisions expedited. The use of case officers provides applicants with a single point of contact and ensures that there is oversight of disabled or older persons’ application and assessment. Case officers are well placed to address system blockages and speed up decision-making and approvals, especially where there is limited oversight of the whole adaptation system.

## Delivery organisations take a wide variety of approaches to the engagement and management of building works and these are not always efficient or effective

- 2.34 A central issue in getting building work completed is to ensure that the processes used to secure contractors and deliver works are fit for purpose. This is a careful balance requiring delivery organisations to ensure they deliver works quickly to meet the needs and wishes of the disabled or older person, whilst ensuring that probity in contractor appointments and value for money in terms of the cost and quality of building works. Local authorities and housing associations consequently need to ensure they have established effective and efficient methods to deliver services.
- 2.35 Managing contractors and the expediency of procurement processes are important aspects of ensuring the quality of housing adaptations. Done badly, they can have a dramatic effect on the timeliness, cost and delivery of adaptations. The findings of our survey highlight that half of the housing associations delivering PAGs, and a third of local authorities, experienced difficulties in securing contractors and roughly 20% of both in appointing suitably qualified builders to undertake building works.
- 2.36 Most local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies have established appropriate processes to oversee and manage builder performance, most usually through regular meetings and dialogue in respect of individual grants. However, few delivery organisations are working strategically with contractors to streamline and improve performance. Only two delivery organisations engage with contractors and builders as members of strategic cross-sector groups, which is a 'lost learning opportunity'. Similarly, only two organisations have pooled resources with contractors – for example, joint posts to oversee and co-ordinate and streamline delivery – and only one has co-located staff with contractors and builders.

- 2.37 Half of local authorities use approved contractor lists to procure building works and only work with builders they have approved to undertake adaptation work. This is proportionally much lower than housing associations where 27 of the 33 operate approved contractor lists for adaptations. Other local authorities and housing associations tend to use one-off tendered contracts, usually inviting tender prices against a specification using the same criteria for those on approved contractor lists. In addition, a small number of authorities also operate framework agreements.<sup>12</sup>
- 2.38 Where local authorities plan to establish or review their approved list of builders, they should open the process to all potential contractors who meet their published criteria for inclusion. Selection for approved lists should be comprehensive in coverage and include general and specialist contractors to provide local authorities with adequate assurance that the builders they approve to deliver adaptation works are suitably qualified to undertake this work, covering financial standing, liabilities and indemnification and past performance to judge quality and timeliness of works.
- 2.39 However, we found that the processes for accreditation are often not comprehensive and do not provide assurance that authorities are operating effectively. Often accreditation is not based on a formal assessment. For example, only four local authorities run annual processes for contractors to apply to become members of approved lists, whilst the remainder operate ad hoc systems where contractors can tender or apply for inclusion at any time. Some local authorities use online services such as Construction Line<sup>13</sup> to vet key data such as liabilities and indemnification. However, this is often not undertaken annually or bi-annually and information is often out of date. Consequently, delivery organisations often have limited assurance of a contractor's current financial standing and suitability to undertake adaptations work.

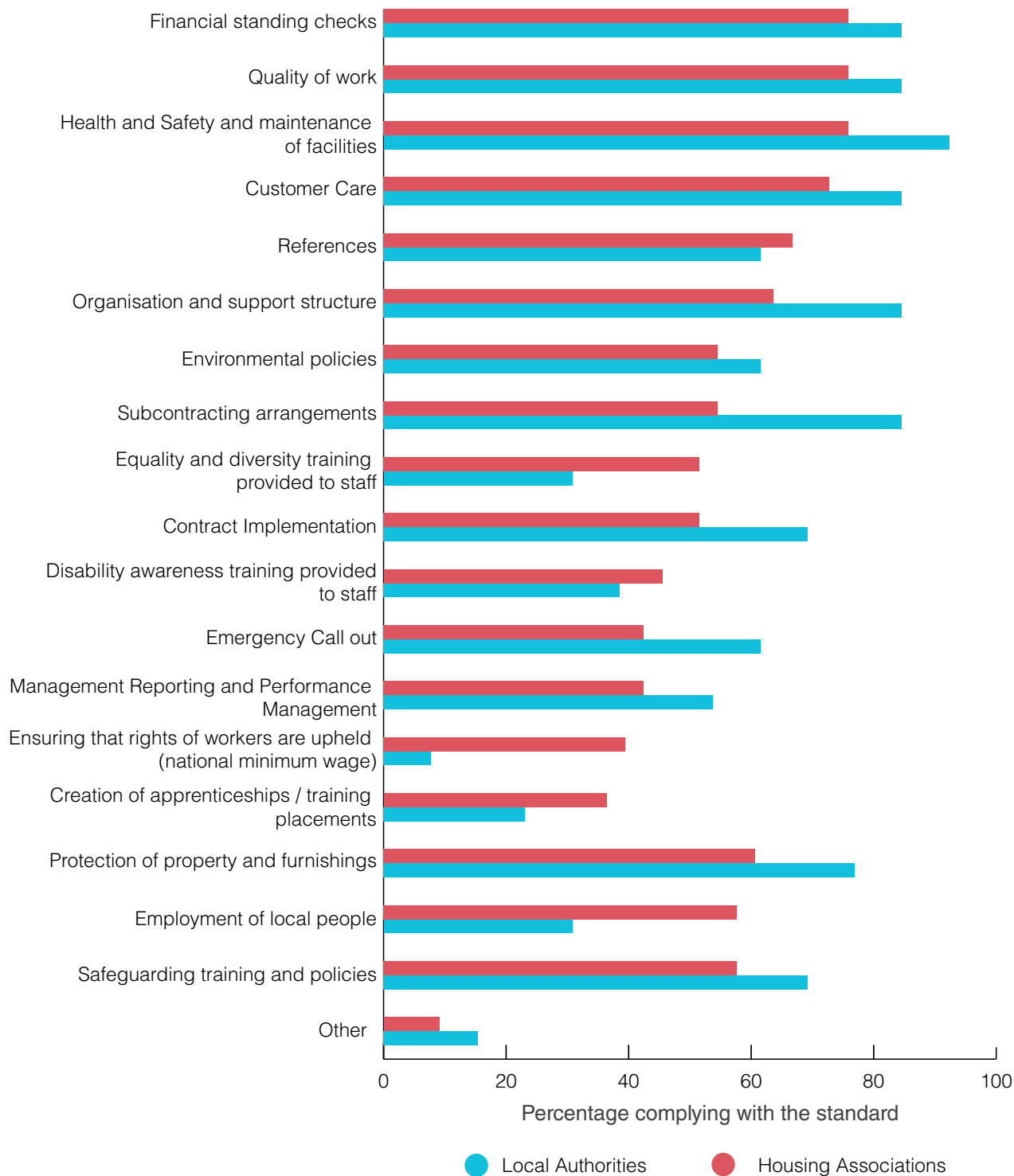
<sup>12</sup> A framework agreement will generally allow a purchaser more flexibility around the goods or services contracted for under the framework, both in terms of volume and also the detail of the relevant goods and services. A multi-supplier framework allows the contracting organisation to select from a number of suppliers for its requirements, helping to ensure that each purchase represents best value.

<sup>13</sup> Construction Line: the national pre-qualification database for assessing contractors undertaking work in the building and construction industry



2.40 Even without use of online services such as Construction Line, delivery organisations can lack published standards for approved contractors, such as regular production and vetting of appropriate insurance and evidence of financial standing. Compliance with these standards enables delivery organisations to assure themselves of the appropriateness of the contractors who undertake adaptations work. These limitations are reflected in our survey of local authorities and housing associations set out in [Exhibit 7](#) which shows that the range of criteria used by delivery organisations to select contractors is not comprehensive. For example, less than half of local authorities and housing associations require contractors to have provided their staff with disability awareness training.

**Exhibit 7: the criteria used by local authorities and housing associations to assess whether a company should be included on the approved contractor list or to approve a builder who tenders for work**



Source: Wales Audit Office Survey of local authorities and housing associations. The chart assesses the 22 local authorities' and 33 housing associations' criteria for working with contractors and builders.

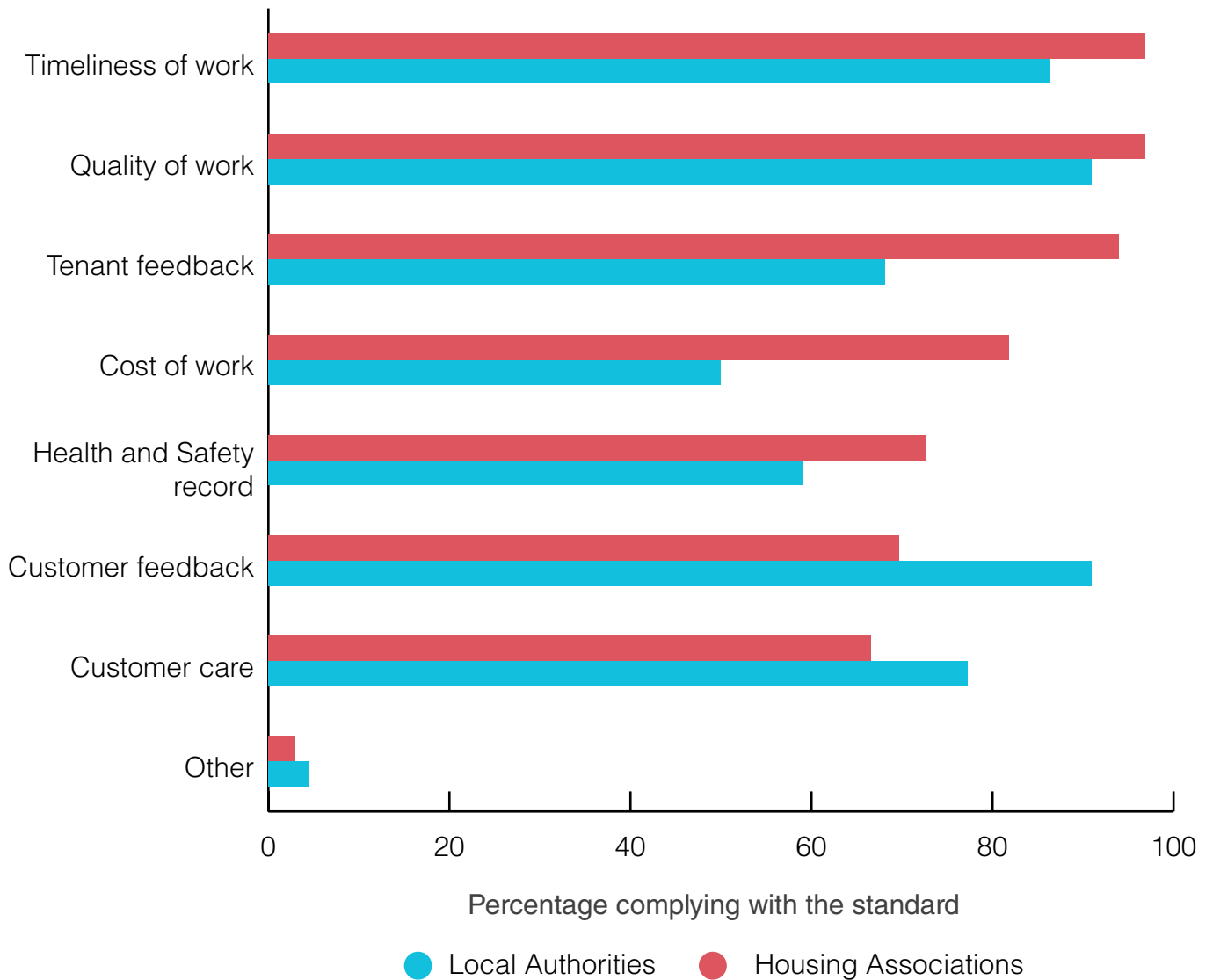
- 2.41 From our survey we found that a small number of local authorities and housing associations are using framework agreements as an alternative to tendering. These approaches allow contractors to achieve savings through economies of scale and some guarantee of the quantity of work they might receive. The longer-term relationship also allows the contractor to invest appropriate resources and develop higher standards of workmanship, and can deliver benefits such as reduced transaction costs; continuous improvement with long-term relationships that are clearly set out and underwritten by contract; better value and greater community wealth; and customer-focused solutions. For example, two local authorities have established four-year framework agreements whilst other local authorities and housing associations use Sell2Wales.<sup>14</sup>
- 2.42 Some local authorities have trouble with the availability of contractors, which causes delays in the timeliness of delivery of adaptations. In particular, mainly rural authorities with limited or no access to major building contractors noted an over reliance on smaller local building firms which often have limited capacity to deal with new agency procurement arrangements. We found that despite these difficulties in securing builders, authorities were not proactively seeking to widen out their pool of contractors to improve choice, speed up delivery and drive greater efficiency. Market testing of contractor rates is often carried out annually via authority quantity surveyors and benchmarked against standard construction pricing schedules such as Spons.<sup>15</sup> However, we found that Grant officers are unclear if this delivers the best value for money, and the lack of supply of contractors can push up rates.
- 2.43 In a small number of areas, the local authority does not directly manage contractors but guides applicants to an approved list of contractors and requires grant applicants to select and manage builders themselves. Where a grant applicant elects or is required to manage a builder directly, it is important that the local authority consider whether they wish to provide applicants with information on local contractors and builders to help them decide on who to appoint. We found that in some authorities the list of contractors provided to grant applicants is not always based on a robust analysis of performance, standing, quality and skills. These are important weaknesses that need to be strengthened to safeguard applicants, and authorities should provide guidance on how to vet builders to help applicants select the right contractor.

<sup>14</sup> Sell2Wales is a website procurement portal set up by the Welsh Government to help businesses win contracts with the public sector across Wales and help the public sector advertise and manage tender opportunities.

<sup>15</sup> Spons provides accurate, detailed and professionally relevant construction price information for the UK. Its unique Tender Index, updated through the year, provides an ongoing reality check and adjustment for changing market conditions.

- 2.44 Home-improvement agencies (HIAs) offer practical help with building works to vulnerable homeowners. The service offered varies but normally covers help in diagnosing building problems, identifying solutions, selecting a builder, and ensuring work is effectively delivered. Some HIAs are independent non-profit organisations whilst others operate in-house within a local authority with the cost often covered by fees drawn from the DFG. We found that 17 of the 22 local authorities offer HIA support and 15 authorities charge the grant applicant for these services. Given home improvement agency provision is not available across all of Wales, we have concerns that disabled and older people do not apply for DFGs because they are unable or unwilling to directly engage and manage contractors and builders without the support of their local authority.
- 2.45 Monitoring and evaluating performance on delivery of individual adaptations is a key part of ensuring builders provide good-quality and cost-effective services. Delivery organisations need to have appropriate systems in place to collect sufficient intelligence to judge a contractor's performance, actions and behaviours. This should be undertaken independently of the contractor and used to judge whether the builder is retained to deliver adaptations work in the future.
- 2.46 We found that 19 local authorities and 21 housing associations review the performance of contractors on every adaptation on an ongoing basis; one authority and five associations review performance quarterly; and six associations annually. However, two authorities and five housing associations do not evaluate contractor performance at all. Overall, we consider that delivery organisations responsible for delivering adaptations do not always have effective arrangements to monitor, review and evaluate the performance of builders and contractors.
- 2.47 **Exhibit 8**, below, summarises the findings of our survey of local authorities and housing associations analysing the criteria they use to review contractor performance. Most delivery organisations focus on customer feedback, the quality of the building works and speed of delivery. However, only 11 local authorities consider the cost of the works and 13 the contractor's health and safety record and overall performance. In addition, two local authorities and five housing associations stated that they do not review a contractor's performance at all. This highlights that not all agencies are managing and reviewing contractor performance against a suitable range of information.

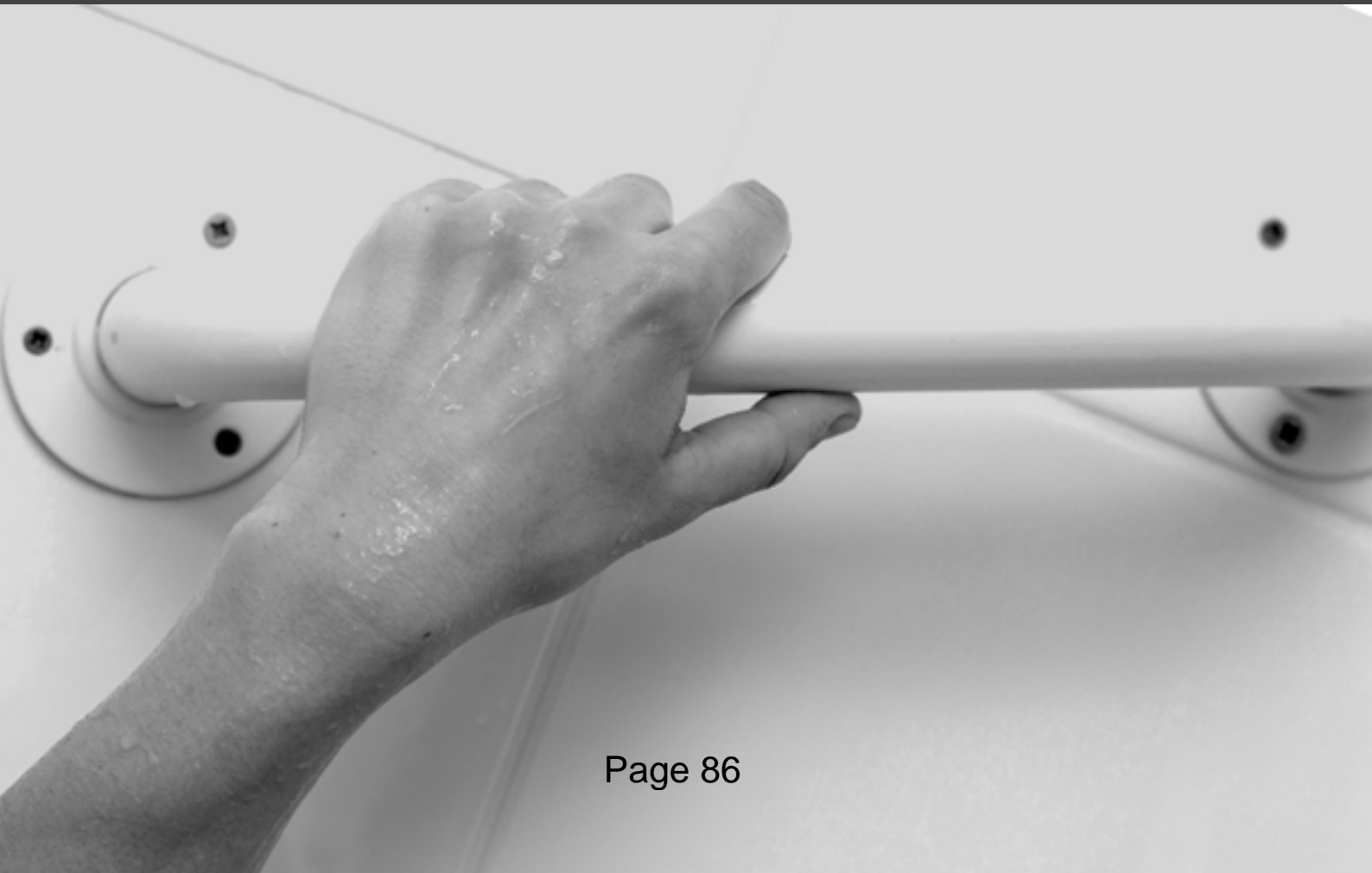
Exhibit 8: the criteria used by local authorities and housing associations to assess the performance of contractors and builders who deliver adaptations



Source: Wales Audit Office Survey of local authorities and housing associations.

## Part 3

Public bodies are generally clear on the benefits of adaptations, but partnership working is ineffective to address need



- 3.1 For at least 30 years, successive UK and Welsh government policies have recognised the importance of supporting frail older people and disabled people to live independently in their own homes rather than in hospitals or residential establishments. For most older and disabled people, addressing their housing needs does not mean specialised new provision but adaptations to their existing homes.
- 3.2 In this part of our report, we examine census data and population projections to gauge the overall level of demand for adaptations in Wales. We also review public bodies' policies for adaptations and the effectiveness of partnership arrangements between local authorities, housing associations, Care and Repair and health bodies to judge how well services are meeting current needs and working together to address predicted increases in demand. Finally, we review current joint working arrangements to judge whether adaptations are benefitting all those who need assistance.

## Census data and population projections suggest demand for adaptations will continue to increase

- 3.3 The rights of disabled and older people to receive help for adaptations determines that this is a needs-led service. Local authorities have a statutory duty to review the condition of the housing stock and the need for housing in their area, and have extensive powers to intervene where housing conditions are unacceptable and there is unmet housing need. Local housing authorities also have an obligation under legislation<sup>16</sup> to make an estimate of the likely need for these services and to develop plans for delivering them at a level that will meet the needs identified.
- 3.4 Census data<sup>17</sup> highlights that a higher proportion of the Welsh population (7.8%) consider themselves to be in poor health compared to those in England (4.2%). Comparatively, people in Wales have poorer health than all regions in England with the exception of the North East of England. In Wales, activity limitations are also notably higher: almost 12% reported they are 'limited a lot' and almost 11% are 'limited a little'. In Wales, the prevalence of activity limitations is higher than any English region. Wales also has proportionately more people aged 55 and above than England, and activity limitations are more common among those above retirement age.

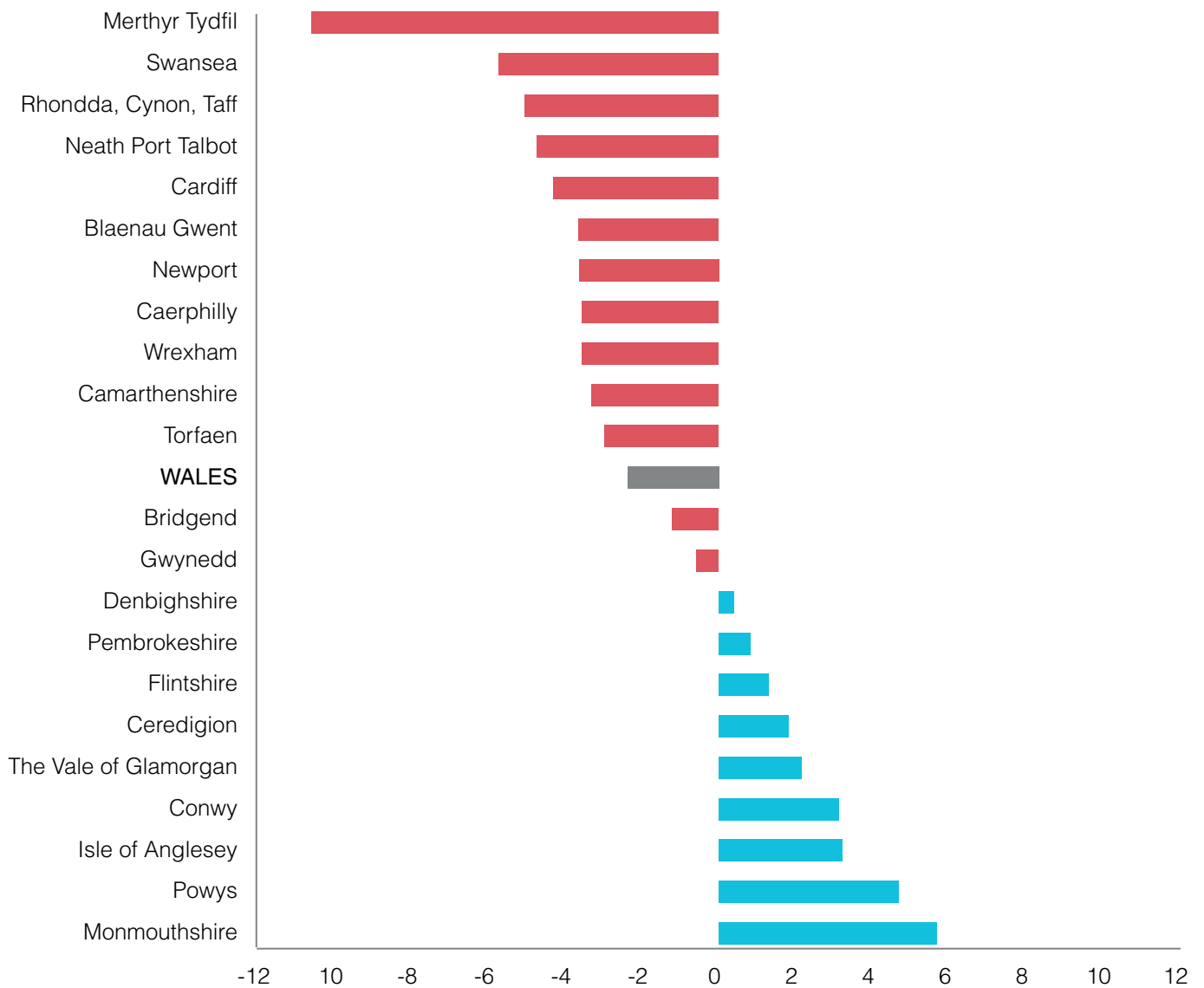
<sup>16</sup> Relevant legislation includes: the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales Order) 2002 and accompanying guidance NAFW Circular 20/02; and the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amount and Additional Purposes) (Wales) Order 2008 (Welsh Government 2008a).

<sup>17</sup> General Health in England and Wales: 2011 and comparison with 2001.

- 3.5 The proportion of the population in Wales who consider themselves to be in good health is also falling. **Exhibit 9** highlights that between the Censuses in 2001 and 2011, in 13 local authorities the number of people who considered that they suffered from poor health increased, most significantly in Merthyr Tydfil where the rate of deterioration in health was over 10%.



Exhibit 9: the percentage change in the number of people who consider themselves to be suffering from poor health in Wales by local authority between 2001 and 2011



Source: Census, 2001 and 2011.

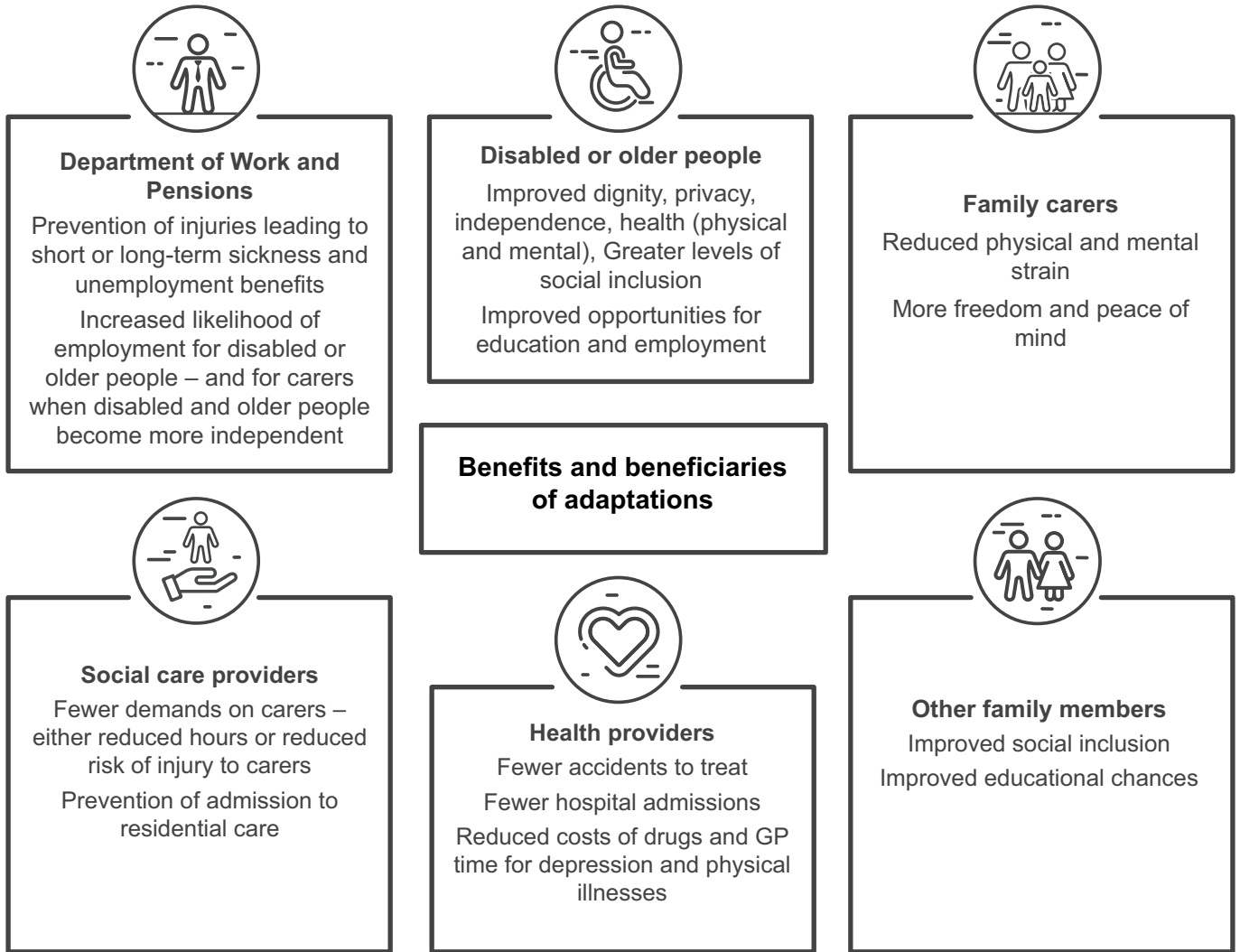
- 3.6 Over the next 20 years we expect to see an increase in the number of people in Wales who experience mobility problems and difficulties undertaking daily domestic tasks. In summary, Welsh Government projections at an all-Wales level show that the number of people who will struggle with domestic tasks aged over 65 will increase by roughly 34% rising to 381,500 and those with mobility difficulties will rise by 58% to 178,000 in 2035. [Appendix 4 and 5](#) provide the detailed projection data from the Welsh Government's Daffodil<sup>18</sup> system at an all-Wales level and by local-authority area.
- 3.7 The predicted increase in demand for adaptations identified in Daffodil projections are echoed by the majority of delivery organisations responding to our surveys who note that demand for housing adaptations is growing and they expect this to continue to increase in the future. Eleven of the 22 local authorities have seen demand rise in the last three years, and 16 of them anticipate demand will grow in the next three years. Similarly, 25 of the 33 housing associations have seen a rise in demand and 27 anticipate further increases in the next three years. All Care and Repair bodies have seen demand surge and expect it to continue to grow.

### **Public bodies are mostly clear on the importance of adaptations in supporting independence, but organisations continue to plan in silos with limited focus on collaboration or integration**

- 3.8 Public bodies in Wales recognise the importance of housing adaptations in changing the home environment to enable or restore independent living, privacy, self-confidence and self-respect for individuals and their families. Adaptations also deliver many benefits for local and national organisations. [Exhibit 10](#) below summarises some of these beneficiaries and benefits.

<sup>18</sup> Daffodil is a web-based system developed by the Institute of Public Care for the Welsh Government and pulls together in one place the information needed to plan what future care, support and housing services over the next 20 years for children, adults and older people.

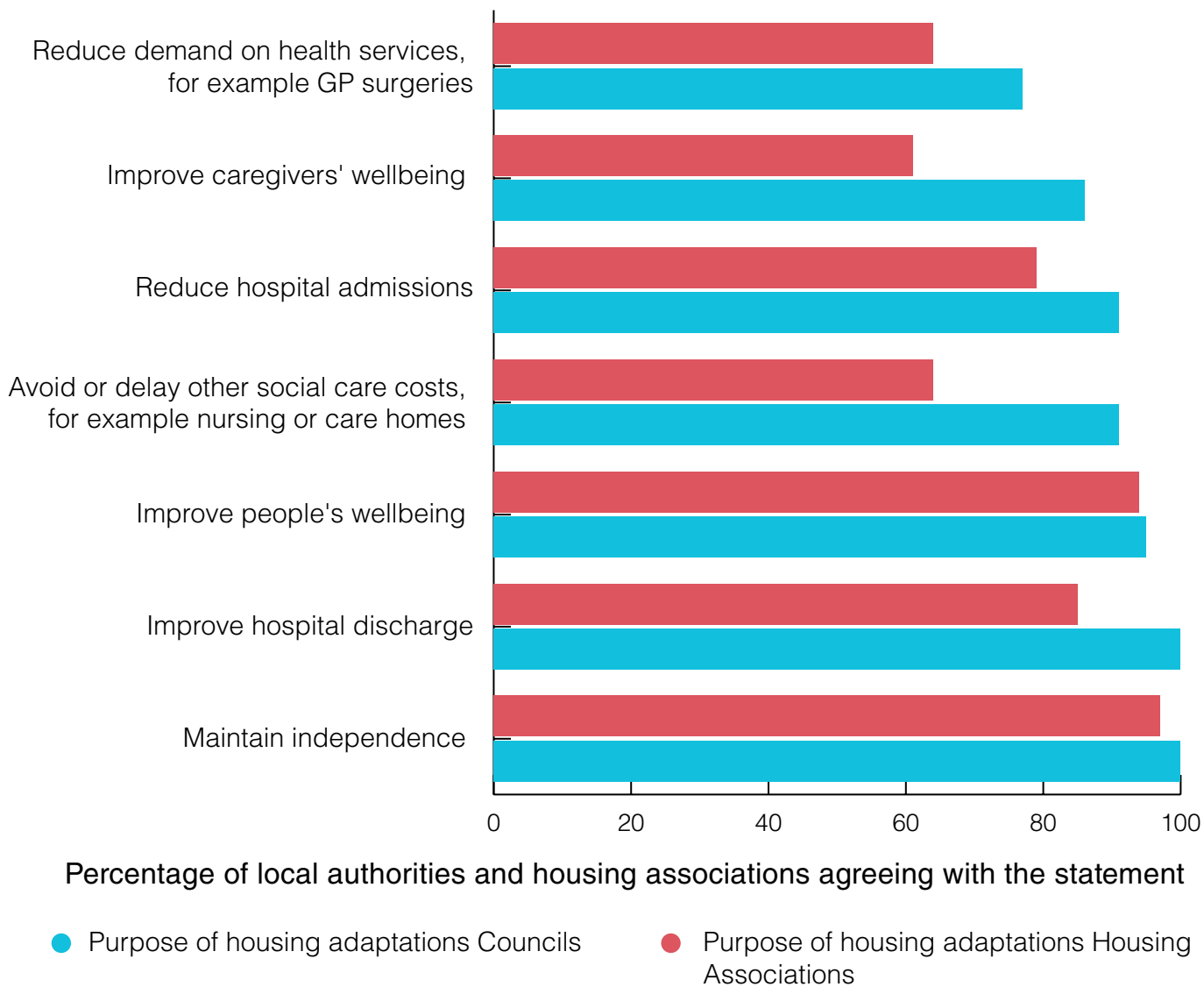
Exhibit 10: examples of the beneficiaries and benefits of adaptations



Source: Wales Audit Office.

3.9 For adaptations, having the right strategic goals establishes a clear basis for decision-making about service prioritisation and how and where to direct resources. Most delivery organisations are clear on how their work on adaptations positively helps disabled and older people. For example, through our surveys we found that all local authorities and the vast majority of housing associations have policies for adaptations, which highlights the importance adaptations make in maintaining independence. Similarly, the majority of bodies are also clear on how adaptations support hospital discharge and contribute to improving wellbeing. However, our survey findings highlight that there are some opportunities to improve coverage and focus in some organisations. In particular, improving policies to better address the needs of carers and avoid or reduce demand and costs in health and social care services – [Exhibit 11](#).

**Exhibit 11: local-authority and housing-association views on the purpose and coverage of their policies for deciding on and delivering adaptations**



Source: Wales Audit Office, survey of local authorities and housing associations.

- 3.10 For local authorities, the key policy for provision of adaptations is their Housing Renewal Policy, which should set out the basis and rationale for housing and renewal activity. From our review of Housing Renewal Policies, we found that local authorities are generally clear on the importance and benefits of adaptations and have set appropriate aims and objectives to support their housing investment activity. For example, Bridgend County Borough Council has a stated aim to ‘enable older and disabled people, and people suffering from domestic abuse, where appropriate, to remain in their own homes and live independently’ and Caerphilly County Borough Council is focused on ‘enabling vulnerable persons to remain at home in safety and comfort’.
- 3.11 Our review, however, also identified some shortcomings in current policies for adaptations. Housing Renewal policies should go beyond simply basing priorities on past performance and experience of previous years in responding to the demand that presents itself through applications for services. We often found a poorly presented strategic case, and need for adaptations and information on future needs is often underplayed. Whilst local authorities and partners hold activity data on past performance in providing adaptations, they are not sighted as to whether this activity is meeting all of the need for housing adaptations and public bodies in many areas do not pool information to better understand future demand.
- 3.12 There are some good examples of joint working between agencies to consider the overall demand for adaptations – for example, in Cardiff through the Accessible Homes Register and in Swansea and Wrexham. However, these approaches are often the exception. Even where public bodies work together to better understand demand, data is often not used to set out how authorities intend to address the needs of disabled and older people in the medium-to-long term. In terms of needs assessment, the data most frequently identified and used in strategic planning and needs mapping for future services, is historic trend and spend information, but only where it relates to an organisation’s own performance. Agencies rarely collate sufficiently detailed information and data to provide a strategic overview of current performance and activity to inform future need.

## Good Practice – Cardiff Accessible Homes Project

The project has developed a Housing Register specifically for people with physical impairment who are seeking to move to alternative accommodation. Initial grant funding from the Welsh Government enabled a partnership of housing, social care, health and voluntary agencies in Cardiff to be established. The partnership identified the housing needs and preferences of clients, and developed a database of existing adapted properties across all housing associations in Cardiff, and a 'matching' process to allocate adapted properties. The outcome for clients is an improvement in the options available to those in unsuitable accommodation. For landlords, there has been an improvement in letting times and existing adapted properties are being used more effectively. By identifying existing, suitably adapted dwellings and matching them with a client in need, the project maximised the use of existing resources. The project provided a database of the needs of people with physical disabilities, which informed provision at a strategic level. The Cardiff Accessible Homes project demonstrates growing focus on value for money through development of integrated systems in the capital covering the work of all the housing associations and the local authority.

- 3.13 A small number of respondents to our surveys referenced other data they relied on to plan services, mainly: census data; social-services referrals; private-sector stock condition survey; local housing-market assessment information; and the Welsh Governments Daffodil system. However, no Council or housing association referenced data held by health bodies – a reflection of both housing and health organisations not feeling engaged in strategic discussions on adaptations. Overall, we concluded that public bodies do not have robust approaches to forecasting future demand.

### Partnership arrangements are not sufficiently integrated to maximise the potential benefits of adaptations

- 3.14 The assessment for, and provision of, housing adaptations requires effective joint working between housing organisations, health and social-care services to ensure the needs of often very vulnerable people can be met, and their quality of life improved. Effective partnerships allow delivery organisations to make the best use of their resources to maximise impact and value for money. To be truly effective, organisations should therefore seek to align activity and work in partnership. However, given the wide variation in the approaches of the 68 different agencies delivering adaptations works, and the decisions of the Welsh Government and UK legislation on the funding and guidance that underpins activity, the current system can result in the reinforcement of inequalities for disabled and older people.

- 3.15 We surveyed the delivery organisations responsible for delivering adaptations in Wales – local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair bodies – on the scale and range of current partnership and joint working arrangements. The detailed findings are set out in [Appendices 6, 7 and 8](#). In summary, we found that few local authorities have formal partnership forums or cross-sector working groups, and partnership arrangements are generally underpinned by informal contact. Joint working between local authorities and Care and Repair is more likely to take place than with housing associations, the third sector, other local-authority services or health bodies.
- 3.16 Delivery organisations do not always take a whole resources view of their adaptations work that considers the availability and use of all monies within an area. Aligning and pooling budgets enables partners to work together to consider their budgets and align their activities to deliver agreed aims and outcomes, while retaining complete accountability and responsibility for their own resources. Collaboration can lead to better outcomes for local people and drive better value for money. Given the constraints on public finances, it is essential that public bodies align budgets where possible to deliver more efficient and effective services that better meet citizens' needs.
- 3.17 For example, we found poor joint working practices between housing allocation staff and Grants officers to improve use of already adapted homes. Policies are often property, rather than client focussed, and rarely make the strategic link to other organisations and the wider needs of disabled and older people. This is despite the Welsh Government's Framework for Action on Independent Living that commits to improving access to adapted and accessible housing for disabled people. The Framework identifies the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the use of Accessible Housing Registers as key opportunities to bring about improvements<sup>19</sup>. Too often, matching applicants to adapted homes via accessible homes registers does not happen. Instead adaptation policies continue to be focussed on the work of individual organisations, usually centred on processes for deciding on and managing grant applications, approvals and delivery or work to a social-housing landlord's property.

19 Welsh Government, [Framework for Action on Independent Living, 2014-15 Outcome Measures](#), 2014



- 3.18 Few local authorities have comprehensive and integrated Housing Renewal Policies that link decisions on grant investment with better use of existing adapted housing. A recent Shelter Cymru report found that housing associations who have comprehensive approaches to adapted housing are more likely to integrate funding and make better use of adapted properties.<sup>20</sup> We identified few examples of delivery organisations taking an holistic view of funding linking DFGs with existing adapted homes and local spending on PAGs, the Rapid Response Adaptation Programme and a landlord's own resources.
- 3.19 Effective relationships can only be achieved through appropriate training, time spent in working collaboratively and integrating resources, processes and systems to provide a seamless service to disabled and older people. We found that because funding is not always joined up or aligned, resources are spread too widely, which affects delivery organisations' ability to target funding better to maximise impact. Only seven local authorities pool funds with Care and Repair, and no pooling of funding takes place between local authorities and housing associations. Likewise, co-locating staff to provide a single one-stop-shop service is limited. Only seven local authorities have combined Occupational Therapy and housing-adaptation teams to create single point-of-contact arrangements to improve the accessibility to services. Our survey of Occupational Therapists bears this out with 67% of respondents noting that they do not work in an integrated team across health and social care.

<sup>20</sup> Welsh Government Social Research 2013, **Accessible social housing in Wales: a review of systems for assessment, recording and matching**, (Shelter Cymru website)

<sup>21</sup> Social prescribing is a means of enabling primary care services to refer patients with social, emotional or practical needs to a range of local, non-clinical services, often provided by the voluntary and community sector. Recognising that people's health is determined primarily by a range of social, economic and environmental factors, social prescribing seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way. It also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health.

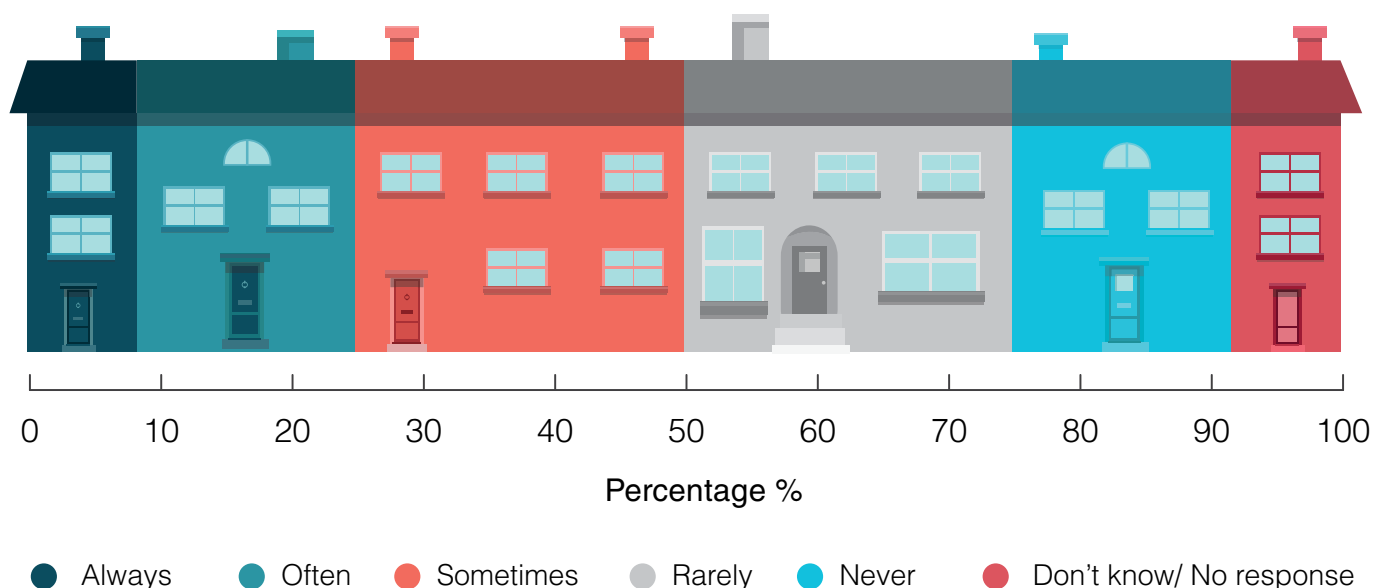
- 3.20 There are some areas where greater collaborative working across professional boundaries is taking place. For instance, GP surgeries working with Occupational Therapists, leading to improved outcomes for people in need of housing adaptations. Similarly, we identified some good examples of closer working with health professionals such as social prescribing<sup>21</sup> with Care and Repair, and some local authorities are beginning to improve collaborative working through the creation of integrated housing-adaptation teams.
- 3.21 Co-locating services can improve both first point of contact arrangements and accessibility to services, and allows organisations to maximise the availability of and customer access to adaptations. A small number of local authorities, including Swansea and Cardiff, have developed integrated approaches to housing adaptations, drawing together grants, building surveyors and Occupational Therapists into single teams. However co-locating services to improve delivery of housing adaptations rarely happens. Most organisations involved in providing housing adaptations continue to work in isolation focussing on their individual responsibilities, rather than working holistically to address people's housing and health needs.

**Adaptations can help people avoid going to hospital and speed up patient discharge, but too often these benefits are not being realised**

- 3.22 Whilst the role of adaptations in reducing the risk of falls and other accidents in the home, and in preventing hospital admissions and speeding up discharge is growing, the importance of adaptations is not always reflected in local partnership arrangements between housing, health and social-care bodies. With the exception of Occupational Therapists, health professionals noted that the different local-authority and housing-association systems for administering, approving and delivering adaptations are difficult to navigate. Because most adaptations are reactive (following a crisis) rather than preventative (before the crisis) the engagement and relationship between delivery organisations carrying out adaptations and health bodies are often less well developed.

3.23 Whilst the majority of health bodies felt they understood how adaptations could contribute to hospital discharge and prevent avoidable admissions, many noted concerns with the timeliness of adaptations. In particular, health respondents noted issues of concern in respect of timescales and processes for delivery of adaptations; complexity and inconsistency in the range of services available within an area; availability and accessibility of funding; and need to train and inform health professionals to improve usage and take-up. The findings of our discharge planning survey of health bodies set out in [Exhibit 12](#) show that almost half of health-body respondents felt that they were 'rarely' or 'never' engaged in discussions on how to make better use of, or improve access to, adaptations.

**Exhibit 12: health bodies' understanding and awareness of housing-adaptation systems and delivery**



Source: Wales Audit Office, Discharge Planning Survey

3.24 Only half of the 22 local authorities felt that their health board was making the best use of housing adaptations. Similarly, over half of the housing associations we surveyed (17 of 33 associations) did not know how integrated or effective joint-working arrangements are between public bodies in delivering adaptations. There are some good examples of effective joint working between health bodies and local authorities to make the best use of adaptations. Caerphilly County Borough Council, through its Joint Hospital Discharge Team, is helping to speed up and improve discharge of patients from hospital. The local authority has published 'Leaving Hospital' online guidance, and its work with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is improving discharge planning and performance. We found similar approaches in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan with the integrated discharge service, which we highlight as good practice.

#### **Integrated Discharge Service – Cardiff and Vale Health Board**

A collaborative and integrated approach on housing adaptations by Cardiff and Vale Health Board, local-authority partners and Care and Repair is leading to a reduction in the number of delayed transfers of care attributed to housing reasons.

The integrated discharge service uses a stock of adapted homes as step-down accommodation as an interim solution to help improve the patient flow from hospitals. The local authority manages this accommodation, but the health board work with the local authority to identify appropriate referrals into these adapted homes. It is offered as an alternative to people who are waiting to be discharged from hospital but whose homes are not yet adapted to meet their needs.

Two local-authority employed housing-support officers are based in the health board and act as a conduit between the health board and councils on a daily basis, providing practical in-house expert knowledge of the housing-adaptation system. They are effectively in-house experts who know the system and weekly meetings are held between these housing-support officers and health-board staff whereby a list of roughly 200 patients are analysed in order to determine their care and housing needs once discharged from hospital.

In addition, the health board, Cardiff City and County Council, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, and Care and Repair operate a shared equipment store, which helps to manage the demand for adaptations by enabling them to quickly deal with minor works required. This is seen as vital to the health board as its focus very much moves to preventing the need for people to be admitted to hospital in the first place.

3.25 Overall, however, our findings reinforce our conclusion that public bodies continue to have a limited strategic focus on adaptations, concentrating on organisational specific responses rather than how best collectively to meet the needs of disabled and older people.

## Part 4

Public bodies have a limited understanding of the longer-term wellbeing benefits of housing adaptations and there remains significant scope to reform the system to measure and improve equality and wellbeing

- 4.1 Public bodies need good-quality and wide-ranging performance information to set their strategic plans for the future. A good range of performance data will also enable public bodies to judge how well services are performing and identify where improvement is required. Performance information should cover both financial and non-financial measures and allow public bodies to evaluate how successful they are, typically in terms of making progress towards their long-term goals.
- 4.2 In this final part of the report, we review the current arrangements in place to oversee the 68 delivery organisations' performance in undertaking circa £60 million of annual expenditure on adaptations. We consider the robustness of these arrangements and the planned changes to the performance management framework of the Welsh Government's Enable review. We also consider service-user satisfaction levels and whether the current approaches to evaluate performance are sufficiently focussed on understanding the impact of investment choices on individuals' wellbeing.

### Recipients of adaptations that we surveyed are very satisfied with their adaptations

- 4.3 Overall, the people we surveyed who have received housing adaptations provided positive feedback on their experience with roughly three-quarters of respondents rating application processes as excellent or good. In addition, 91% of survey respondents are satisfied with the time taken to deliver their adaptations. Importantly, 89% of recipients of adaptations we surveyed felt the work undertaken allowed them to undertake everyday tasks more easily and 85% that the works had improved both their confidence and independence. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents also noted that the adaptations they received had reduced the incidence of accidents or falls in their home and 61% felt they needed less help and support to live independently. These are all good outcomes highlighting the positive impact adaptations can make to improve the wellbeing of vulnerable people, despite some of the delays and system problems noted above.

- 4.4 Our survey also identified some important variations. Generally, satisfaction with application processes is higher for DFG recipients than people who received a PAG. Whilst delivery organisations are generally good at providing disabled and older people applying for adaptations with the right contact details, the quality of ongoing support and help provided to applicants throughout the life of the adaptation is less effective. People under 55 have a more positive experience of adaptations than other groups of applicants, especially those aged 75 and over. In addition, 65% of disabled and older people we surveyed noted that help or support is not provided by delivery organisations where they were required to contribute financially to the cost of an adaptation, and 76% noted that they were offered little or no choice on the adaptations that were finally delivered.

### **Weaknesses in oversight of performance reinforce the inequalities of the system caused by the different sources of funding**

#### **Performance indicator data is only currently published for Disabled Facilities Grants provided by local authorities, so it is not possible to compare performance across all delivery organisations**

- 4.5 Despite the wide range and different sources of funding for housing adaptations, there is only a small range of national publicly reported performance indicators. These cover the work of local authorities in delivering DFGs and cover average time taken, the number of DFGs completed by tenure, and the amount spent in the financial year. The information reported on local authorities' performance specifically covers DFG activity for all 22 authorities, but does not include the adaptation expenditure or activity on council housing for the 11 authorities who retain social housing. Consequently, the performance indicators only present a partial picture of expenditure and performance by local government.
- 4.6 There are no nationally-reported performance indicators for housing associations for their delivery of PAGs, although Welsh Government collects some data on expenditure and the number of PAGs delivered in each financial year. Similarly, whilst Welsh Government receives information on the performance of Care and Repair in respect of the Rapid Response Adaptation programme, this information is not published.

- 4.7 The lack of nationally-reported performance indicators means that it is not possible to fully evaluate and understand the performance or effectiveness of individual agencies, or the efficiency and impact of the 'whole' adaptation system. Neither the individual delivery organisations nor the Welsh Government is sighted of the relative performance of the whole adaptation system. Current performance is only reported for 55% of annual expenditure on adaptations and 14% of disabled and older people who receive adaptations from delivery organisations. This makes it difficult to judge how well organisations are performing and the positive impact of adaptations on people's lives.

### The National Performance Indicator for Disabled Facilities Grants shows a reduction in the average length of time taken to complete adaptations, but the methodology is not robust and the Performance Indicator needs updating

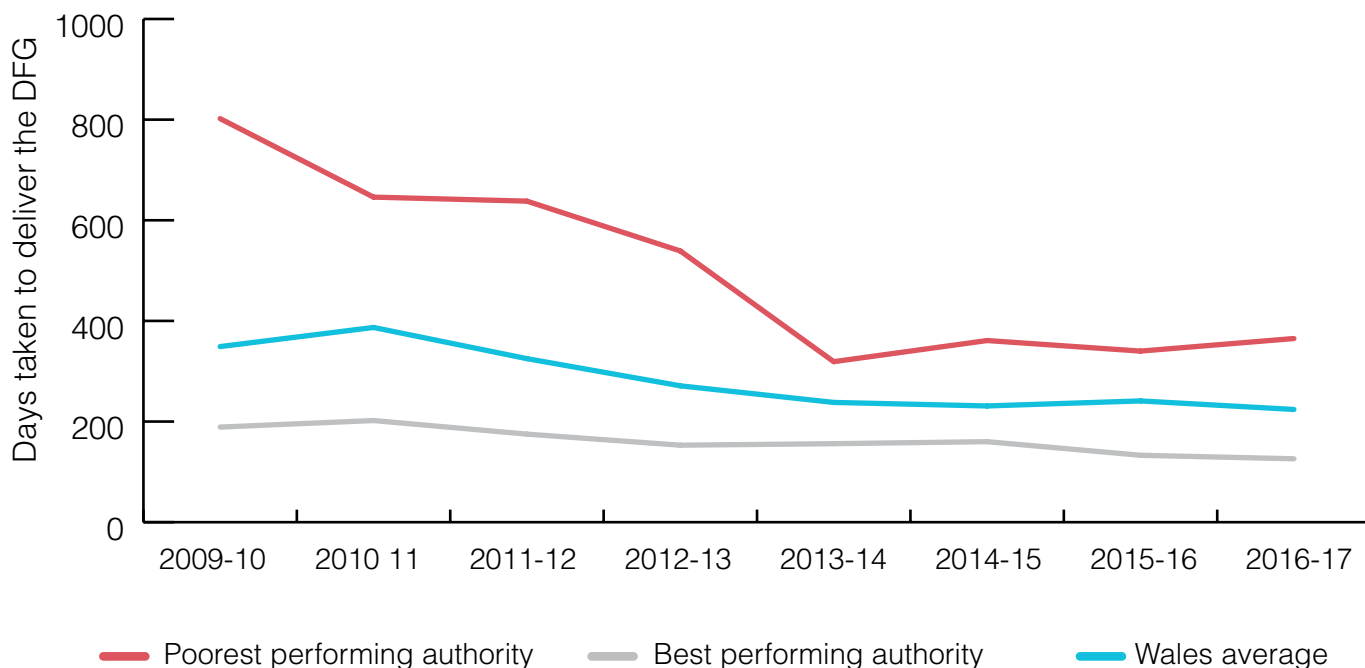
- 4.8 The key national performance indicator for DFGs measures the average number of days that local authorities take to deliver individual grants. However, performance measures assessing averages can mask the scale of local-authority performance and does not measure the impact or benefits of investment. In 2016-17, the average number of days that local authorities across Wales took to deliver DFGs was 224 days, an improvement in performance on the previous year where the average was 241 days.<sup>22</sup> Since 2009-10, the average time taken to deliver DFGs has reduced from around 350 days.
- 4.9 In 2016-17, the average number of days taken to deliver a DFG ranged from 126 days in Powys to 356 days in Monmouthshire. This means that a disabled or older person in Monmouthshire waits on average eight months longer than in Powys. Overall, ten authorities reduced the average time taken to deliver DFGs compared to the previous year and 12 took longer on average. However, between 2009-10 and 2016-17 the rate of improvement for the better performing local authorities has plateaued. This suggests that there is an optimum level of performance that delivery organisations can achieve and, consequently, there is limited scope for improving timeliness beyond the current best-performing local authorities – **Exhibit 13** overleaf.

<sup>22</sup> Welsh Government (StatsWales website), **HOUS1301: Disabled Facilities Grants**, February 2017



- 4.10 The Welsh Government's review of Independent Living Adaptations<sup>23</sup> in 2015 identified that the performance indicators focus solely on inputs, outputs and timeliness but do not cover important issues such as customer satisfaction and the positive impact of the adaptation on disabled and older people. A number of local authorities are concerned that some delivery organisations manipulate how they record data and are consequently not accurately reporting their performance.
- 4.11 For example, not recording the true time taken to deliver a DFG from initial first contact (the 'start' date) to completion of the adaptations (the actual 'end' date), and there is potential for 'gaming', whereby authorities could 'stop the clock' at different times and different stages to improve performance. Indeed, the Welsh Government in its 2015 review concluded that: 'The way in which Performance Indicator (PI) information is currently collected is not consistent across the 22 local authorities in Wales, despite clear guidance issued by the Welsh Government. It was suggested by some stakeholders that some local authorities are deliberately ignoring guidance in order to make delivery times look better.' The issues surrounding the definition and consistent measurement of performance are being addressed through the Welsh Government's 'Enable' review.

Exhibit 13: the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant by local authorities 2009-10 to 2015-16



Source: NSIW0001: National Strategic Indicators (NSI) data collection, Welsh Government.

### The Welsh Government through ‘Enable’ is addressing performance-reporting weaknesses, but the new system has some gaps

4.12 The Welsh Government, through its ‘Enable’ review, has sought to address some of these weaknesses through the introduction of a new system for monitoring and reporting performance in delivering housing adaptations. The new system, introduced in January 2017, requires local authorities and housing associations to record the same core set of information in respect of every DFG and PAG they deliver. Exhibit 14 below sets out the new performance information established by the Enable review, which local authorities and housing associations are required to submit to the Welsh Government.

Exhibit 14: the performance-reporting standards developed for Disabled Facilities Grants and Physical Adaptation Grants under the Welsh Government Enable scheme

**The performance-reporting standards developed for Disabled Facilities Grants and Physical Adaptation Grants under the Welsh Government Enable scheme**

All organisations	<p>Age of applicant.</p> <p>Housing tenure.</p> <p>Date of first contact with the delivery organisation.</p> <p>Source of referral.</p> <p>Whether an Occupational Therapist or trained assessor is required.</p> <p>Date that the need for adaptation was identified (by Occupational Therapist or trained assessor).</p> <p>Category of adaptation, (small, medium or large).</p> <p>Completion date of the adaptation.</p> <p>Whether the adaptation enabled hospital discharge.</p> <p>Overall cost of works (including VAT).</p> <p>Source of funding.</p> <p>Predicted outcome for person.</p> <p>Customer overall satisfaction.</p>
Local-authority DFG specific	<p>Whether a person is required to make a financial contribution.</p> <p>If a contribution is required, the amount of contribution.</p>
Housing-association PAG specific	<p>Date that the Physical Adaptation Grant is referred to the Welsh Government for approval.</p> <p>Date of Welsh Government approval of the Physical Adaptation Grant.</p>

Source: Wales Audit Office review of Welsh Government information

4.13 We identified some weaknesses with the new Enable framework. Firstly, whilst Enable is seeking to enhance oversight of local-authority and housing-association performance and expenditure, coverage has not been extended to include investment in adaptations to local-authority housing or LSVT homes. The new approach therefore omits roughly 25% of all investment and approximately 30% of the disabled and older people who receive adaptations annually. Whilst the new performance standards introduced through Enable are a step forward in allowing delivery organisations to be able to judge the effectiveness of their management systems, some of the main causes of delays that we have identified in our review are not included. In particular, data relating to planning permissions or utility-company approvals; delays created by applicant/household choices or decisions; equalities data capturing the ethnicity of the applicant; delays arising from difficulties appointing contractors; and the time taken and outcome of the suitability of a home for adaptation. These gaps will limit the usefulness of the data being collated and will not allow the Welsh Government and delivery organisations to fully evaluate all aspects of the complex adaptation system.

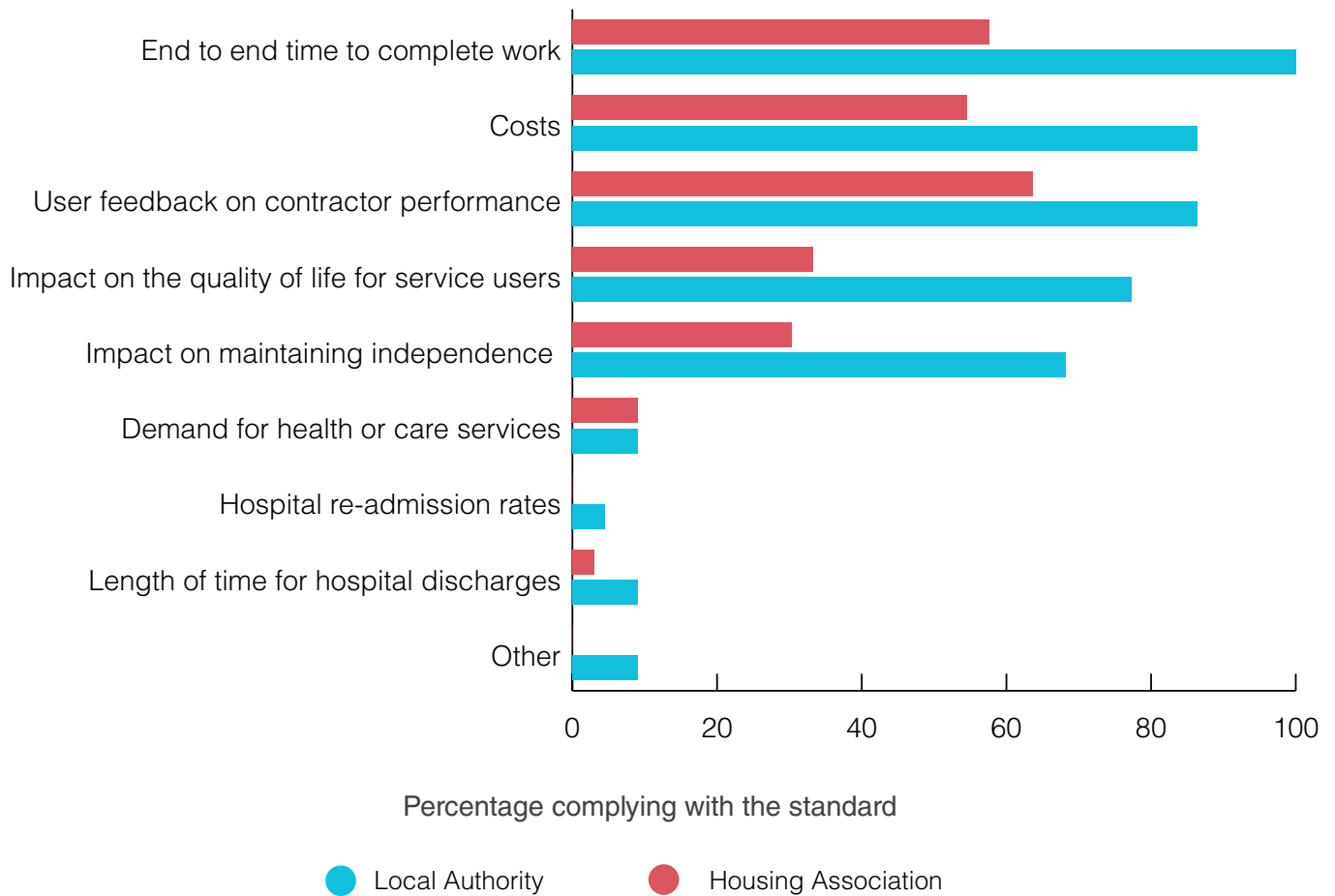
### **Performance management focuses too much on individual organisation inputs and outputs rather than improving outcomes and the preventative benefits of adaptations**

4.14 Historically, the adaptation of buildings is seen as the domain of housing bodies and, to a lesser extent, social-services authorities. Increasingly, adaptations are recognised as the responsibility of health, planning, architectural, education and leisure services amongst others. It is important therefore that a modern adaptation service embraces and uses the skills and experience of a wide range of disciplines in delivering work, but also focuses on understanding not just the efficiency of delivery systems but the wider benefits of adaptations.

- 4.15 In our review, we found that delivery organisations are mostly focussing their performance management and evaluation on inputs and outputs associated with delivery of adaptations. **Exhibit 15** (overleaf) summarises the current approaches of local authorities and housing associations for monitoring and evaluating performance. There continues to be a limited focus on the wider benefits of adaptations for disabled and older people, or on health and social-care services, because performance focuses too much on end-to-end delivery and cost of grants. Current monitoring focuses too much on the mechanics of delivering adaptations and not enough on impact, wellbeing and the wider benefits of investment. Public bodies find it difficult to evaluate performance because of these weaknesses.
- 4.16 The Equality Act 2010 (the 2010 Act) states that a landlord or manager of a property has a duty to make reasonable adjustments and must do this if a disabled or older person is disadvantaged by something because of their disability.<sup>24</sup> The 2010 Act recognises that adaptations are important services that positively advance equality of opportunity and support the wellbeing of disabled and older people. Many local authorities and housing associations have set policy objectives to support people with disabilities to live independently. Despite highlighting equality as a key policy objective, we found that few delivery organisations collect and evaluate a sufficient range of data to demonstrate and ensure fair access to services. Only seven of the 22 local authorities and 11 of the 33 housing associations responding to our surveys stated that they collect equalities information on recipients of housing adaptations. This is a major weakness in current arrangements.

<sup>24</sup> The Equality Act 2010 does not require a landlord to make changes which affect the structure or which would substantially and permanently alter the home – for instance, revising the internal layout by removing walls or widening doors. There are some things they must do, however, to adapt the home for a disabled or older person and if it is reasonable to do so.

Exhibit 15: the data collected by local authorities and housing associations to measure and evaluate their performance in delivering adaptations



Source: Wales Audit Office Survey of local authorities and housing associations.

- 4.17 In Part 3 of this report ([Exhibit 10](#) on page 57) we set out some of the benefits and beneficiaries of adaptations. For individual families these include improved dignity, independence, health (physical and mental), greater levels of social inclusion and improved opportunities for education and employment for disabled and older people; reduced physical and mental strain and more freedom and peace of mind for family carers. Health bodies also highlight that delivery of adaptations contribute to improving discharge delays and help prevent hospital admissions or residential care placements through fewer accidents or falls in the home. Despite many local authorities and housing associations acknowledging the importance of adaptations in enabling disabled and older people to live independently and in preventing demand on health and social-care services, we found little evidence of delivery organisations undertaking robust evaluation of these wider and longer-term benefits of adaptations.
- 4.18 Various local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies undertake post-adaptation satisfaction surveys with disabled and older people. There is also a wide variation in how feedback from service users is used and we identified opportunities to use this feedback to both strengthen understanding and improve delivery. Surveys are usually undertaken at the point the physical building works have been completed, which does not allow for a full consideration of the benefits of the work on disabled and older people. Key outcomes such as independence, wellbeing, reductions in accidents or falls and greater independence are most often not captured.
- 4.19 For example, whilst almost all delivery organisations used survey findings to help judge the quality of building works and contractor performance, less than half of local authorities and housing associations use the data to examine performance through scrutiny committees or governance boards, and just over half to improve joint working. Roughly a half of housing associations and local authorities use service-user feedback in discussion with the Welsh Government to identify opportunities to improve delivery and performance. Finally, six housing associations do not report and evaluate performance at all. Our analysis shows that at present, using data to judge performance and support future decision making in respect of adaptations continues to have many limitations.

# Appendices





# Appendix 1: Study Methodology

## Review of literature

We have reviewed a wide range of documents and media, including:

- Welsh Government policy and guidance documents;
- local-authority plans and strategies for Housing Renewal; and
- other relevant research and guidance from Shelter Cymru, WLGA and research bodies.

## National Interviews

We interviewed representative of the Royal College of Occupational Therapy, Tai Pawb, Public Health Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, the Welsh Government and Community Housing Cymru.

## Data and statistical analysis

We have collated and analysed a wide range of performance indicator returns and budget data available online at the Office for National Statistics and StatsWales.

We analysed spending data for all local authorities, housing associations and Care and Repair agencies in Wales.

## Local-authority and housing-association fieldwork

We visited six local authorities and four housing associations in Wales in 2016-17. The local authorities selected represented a mix of city, urban, rural and valley authorities, which are geographically spread across Wales. The four housing associations selected included three traditional community-based associations and one LSVT housing association. The fieldwork sites were:

- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- Cardiff Community Housing Association
- Conwy County Borough Council
- Melin Homes
- North Wales Housing Association
- Newport City Council
- Pembrokeshire County Council
- Powys County Council
- V2C Housing Association

During the visits, we interviewed a range of staff. In addition, we reviewed detailed documentation for Gwynedd County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.

### Surveys and data collection

We undertook a range of online surveys and we surveyed and collected data from:

- Occupational Therapists working with the Royal College of Occupational Therapy and received 71 responses;
- 12 NHS organisations, a mix of health boards and a sample of hospitals, covering all Health Board areas in Wales;
- all 22 local authorities covering management and delivery of adaptations, including specific information on the 11 authorities which retain their social-housing stock;
- the 33 major housing associations covering management and delivery of adaptations, including the 22 which are in receipt of Physical Adaptations Grant monies and the 11 LSVT associations; and
- the 13 Care and Repair agencies on delivery of the Rapid Response Adaptation programme and strategic working to deliver adaptations.

We also commissioned a telephone survey and completed 521 surveys of disabled and older people who received either a Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) or Physical Adaptation Grant (PAG) in 2015-16. The sample for the survey covered all areas of Wales and both DFG and PAG funding.

## Appendix 2: Definition of housing associations and Care and Repair agencies

Organisation	Remit	Coverage
Housing Associations	To be accepted as a housing association, organisations must satisfy a number of conditions including any surpluses are retained by the organisation to be applied to social-housing purposes. The organisation should operate with high standards of housing, business and financial management. Board membership must be voluntary, and non-executive Directors must not be remunerated. There should also be Independence from other organisations, including a limit of 20% on local-authority ownership or representation on Boards of Management.	Twenty-two housing associations deliver Physical Adaptations Grants to their homes and provide housing for rent in all local-authority areas in Wales.
Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)	LSVT housing associations are created as the result of the transfer of ownership of local-authority stock following agreement of a majority of tenants in a ballot. The key features of a LSVT are transferring tenants are offered benefits such as rent guarantees, stock investment programmes and rights as 'assured tenants'. The new landlord must be registered with the Welsh Government, complying with the requirements for community or traditional housing associations. Transfers are funded via a mix of public and private monies.	Eleven LSVT housing associations covering the local-authority areas of: Blaenau Gwent; Bridgend; Ceredigion; Conwy; Gwynedd; Merthyr Tydfil; Monmouthshire; Neath Port Talbot; Newport; Rhondda Cynon Taf; and Torfaen.
Care and Repair	Care and Repair is a national charitable body that seeks to ensure that all older people have homes that are safe, secure and appropriate to their needs. Since 2002-03, the Welsh Government has funded Care and Repair to deliver the national Rapid Response Adaptations Programme.	Thirteen Care and Repair agencies cover the 22 local authorities in Wales.

## Appendix 3: The five different public funding routes for adaptations in Wales

### The five different public funding routes for adaptations in Wales

#### Disabled Facilities Grants

Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, local authorities provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). These are mandatory grants available to help disabled and older people to remain living independently in their own homes. Owner-occupiers, landlords as well as local-authority, private-rented and housing-association tenants can apply for a DFG.

The 1996 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act set the basis for the provision of DFGs. The Housing Renewal Grants Regulations 1996 (Wales) set out the criteria used to test financial resources and the maximum level of grant that local authorities can pay for an adaptation, which is currently £36,000. Local authorities have discretionary powers to provide funding for adaptations, repairs and improvements under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Local authorities can provide assistance under that Order in the form of a grant, but it is often a loan. Local Authorities have their own policies on the level of and form of the discretionary assistance they offer and the conditions a person must meet to qualify. The Welsh Government published supplementary housing renewal guidance (NAfW 20/02) to accompany the Regulatory Reform Order. The Welsh Government updated that guidance in 2010.

DFGs are means tested and applicants' contribution towards the cost of works depends on their assessed levels of income, savings and outgoings. Local authorities have a duty to conduct those assessments. The Welsh Government, however, excludes families with dependent disabled children or young people under 19 from means testing. Before issuing a DFG a local housing authority must satisfy itself that the works are 'necessary and appropriate' to meet the needs of the disabled or older person, and are 'reasonable and practicable' depending on the age and condition of the property. In reaching a decision, authorities need to consider whether DFG is:

- needed to provide for a care plan to be implemented which will enable the disabled or older occupant to remain living in their existing home as independently as possible; and
- meet, as far as possible, the assessed needs of the disabled or older person taking into account both their medical and physical needs.

#### Physical Adaptation Grants

The Welsh Government provides Physical Adaptation Grants (PAGs) to housing associations to adapt homes for their tenants where there is an identified need for assistance. Tenants of housing associations cannot apply as an individual for funding. Welsh Government officials approve all PAG funding. Currently, 22 major housing associations receive PAG funding.

## The five different public funding routes for adaptations in Wales

### **Housing Revenue Account funding of adaptations to local-authority housing**

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account within a local authority's General Fund, which means that local authorities have no general discretion to transfer sums into or out of it. The items to be credited and debited to the HRA are prescribed by statute. These include expenditure and income relating to property listed in section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Schedule 4 to the 1989 Act (as amended) which specifies the debit and credit items to be recorded in the HRA. Permissible debit items include expenditure on repairs, maintenance and management, capital expenditure and rents, rates, taxes and other charges. The cost of adaptations is included as an area of activity for investment. Whilst tenants can apply for financial assistance to modify their homes typically, the local-authority landlord provides and funds adaptations for their own stock.

### **Large-scale voluntary transfer (LSVT) housing associations**

PAGs are not available to the 11 housing associations that were created through transfer of housing stock from a local authority. LSVT housing associations can either apply to local authorities for a DFG or use their own funding to provide adaptations in their properties. Tenants of stock-transfer associations cannot apply as individuals for funding of an adaptation and are therefore dependent on their landlord agreeing to adapt their home. The Welsh Government requires LSVT housing associations to set out their anticipated investment for housing adaptations in the offer document when tenants are balloted on whether to support stock transfer. If the stock transfer is supported and the housing stock and tenants transfer from the local authority to a new housing-association landlord, then the cost of adaptations work has to be funded from the stock-transfer association's maintenance budgets rather than via PAGs. However, some of organisations now find that their anticipated investment is insufficient to meet the rising demand for housing adaptations from their tenants. LSVT housing associations neither require approval from the Welsh Government nor do they need to comply with the Welsh Government's PAG criteria.

### **Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP)**

The Welsh Government has funded Care and Repair agencies to deliver the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP) since 2002-03. The programme is unique to Wales. The RRAP allows Care and Repair agencies to carry out minor adaptations such as handrails, to enable people to return safely to their own homes from hospital and thus improve hospital discharge. The Welsh Government expects these adaptations to be completed within 15 working days; however, adaptations can be carried out immediately in response to a crisis. The RRAP is only available for owner-occupiers and private-rented tenants. Care and Repair has sought to widen coverage to other tenures but the Welsh Government has yet to approve this extension.

Source: Wales Audit Office analysis of grants and funding for adaptations.

## Appendix 4: Total projected population aged 65 and over unable to manage at least one domestic task on their own

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>% change</b>
Blaenau Gwent	5,232	5,632	6,162	6,760	7,390	29.20%
Bridgend	11,108	12,548	14,212	16,063	17,861	37.81%
Caerphilly	12,976	14,565	16,441	18,462	20,452	36.55%
Cardiff	20,619	22,551	25,365	28,933	32,677	36.90%
Carmarthenshire	16,966	18,857	21,163	23,681	25,891	34.47%
Ceredigion	7,006	7,780	8,666	9,516	10,181	31.19%
Conwy	12,853	13,951	15,324	16,884	18,324	29.86%
Denbighshire	8,764	9,738	10,862	12,128	13,293	34.07%
Flintshire	12,134	13,912	15,820	17,880	19,796	38.70%
Gwynedd	11,133	11,928	12,918	13,997	14,942	25.49%
Isle of Anglesey	6,977	7,725	8,591	9,412	10,088	30.84%
Merthyr Tydfil	4,285	4,751	5,336	6,026	6,704	36.08%
Monmouthshire	8,778	10,033	11,370	12,909	14,300	38.62%
Neath Port Talbot	11,332	12,321	13,658	15,182	16,532	31.45%
Newport	10,412	11,187	12,316	13,672	15,154	31.29%
Pembrokeshire	11,990	13,381	14,874	16,461	17,798	32.63%
Powys	13,831	15,775	17,931	20,216	22,222	37.76%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	17,468	19,131	21,163	23,388	25,537	31.60%
Swansea	19,132	20,851	22,954	25,240	27,388	30.14%
Torfaen	7,313	8,094	9,001	10,054	10,994	33.48%

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>% change</b>
Vale of Glamorgan	10,559	11,977	13,684	15,530	17,193	38.59%
Wrexham	10,317	11,734	13,351	15,124	16,862	38.82%
<b>Wales</b>	<b>251,188</b>	<b>278,422</b>	<b>311,163</b>	<b>347,518</b>	<b>381,580</b>	<b>34.17%</b>

Source: Welsh Government, Daffodil projections

## Appendix 5: Projected population aged 65 and over with mobility problems

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>% change</b>
Blaenau Gwent	2,325	2,510	2,759	3,078	3,400	46.24%
Bridgend	4,946	5,622	6,418	7,345	8,281	67.43%
Caerphilly	5,745	6,489	7,363	8,397	9,456	64.60%
Cardiff	9,374	10,283	11,533	13,188	15,076	60.83%
Carmarthenshire	7,642	8,504	9,562	10,865	12,089	58.19%
Ceredigion	3,152	3,515	3,936	4,402	4,806	52.47%
Conwy	5,863	6,378	7,026	7,828	8,624	47.09%
Denbighshire	3,924	4,374	4,906	5,562	6,202	58.05%
Flintshire	5,395	6,227	7,153	8,221	9,291	72.22%
Gwynedd	5,052	5,438	5,894	6,498	7,039	39.33%
Isle of Anglesey	3,136	3,492	3,914	4,363	4,763	51.88%
Merthyr Tydfil	1,910	2,131	2,405	2,736	3,087	61.62%
Monmouthshire	3,959	4,545	5,179	5,972	6,743	70.32%
Neath Port Talbot	5,095	5,531	6,143	6,905	7,647	50.09%
Newport	4,673	5,058	5,588	6,271	7,021	50.25%
Pembrokeshire	5,378	6,053	6,770	7,610	8,398	56.15%
Powys	6,228	7,127	8,144	9,342	10,466	68.05%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	7,803	8,591	9,534	10,692	11,875	52.19%
Swansea	8,607	9,445	10,427	11,617	12,821	48.96%
Torfaen	3,286	3,653	4,076	4,615	5,131	56.15%
Vale of Glamorgan	4,765	5,409	6,209	7,147	8,048	68.90%



<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2030</b>	<b>2035</b>	<b>% change</b>
Wrexham	4,626	5,272	6,024	6,942	7,871	70.15%
<b>Wales</b>	<b>112,887</b>	<b>125,645</b>	<b>140,963</b>	<b>159,599</b>	<b>178,134</b>	<b>57.80%</b>

Source: Welsh Government, Daffodil projections

## Appendix 6: The views of local-authority managers on the effectiveness of partnership arrangements between their local authority and other organisations delivering housing adaptations

Local Authorities	Member of cross-sector group	Regular meeting	Informal contact	Sharing information	Collocated staff	Pooled resources	No partnership arrangements
Care and Repair	5	18	15	15	1	7	1
Housing Associations and/or LSVT Associations that do not manage housing in your area	5	6	13	8	2	1	4
Housing Associations and/or LSVT Associations that manage housing in your area	0	0	3	2	0	0	18
Local authorities	10	14	9	11	1	0	5
Other third sector organisations	1	2	7	4	0	0	12
Users of housing adaptations	0	2	14	8	0	0	5

Local Authorities	Member of cross-sector group	Regular meeting	Informal contact	Sharing information	Collocated staff	Pooled resources	No partnership arrangements
Your Local Health Board – other than Occupational Therapy Services	1	4	6	5	0	3	12
Your Local Health Board – through Occupational Therapy Services	5	8	11	10	7	7	3

Source: Wales Audit Office survey of local-authority housing managers. We received responses from all 22 local authorities. Survey respondents could choose more than one response so totals in rows can add up to more than 22. The final column in red is actual numbers.

## Appendix 7: The views of housing-association managers on the effectiveness of partnership arrangements between their housing association and other organisations delivering housing adaptations

Local Authorities	Member of cross-sector group	Regular meeting	Informal contact	Sharing information	Collocated staff	Pooled resources	No partnership arrangements
Care and Repair	3	6	17	9	0	0	7
Housing Associations and/or LSVT Associations that do not manage housing in your area	7	12	20	19	1	2	1
Housing Associations and/or LSVT Associations that manage housing in your area	0	0	9	4	0	0	12
Local authorities	1	1	8	3	0	0	8
Other third sector organisations	2	4	10	12	0	0	10
Users of housing adaptations	3	4	9	7	0	2	12

Local Authorities	Member of cross-sector group	Regular meeting	Informal contact	Sharing information	Collocated staff	Pooled resources	No partnership arrangements
Your Local Health Board – other than Occupational Therapy Services	0	0	6	2	0	0	14
Your Local Health Board – through Occupational Therapy Services	3	6	17	9	0	0	7

Source: Wales Audit Office survey of housing associations. We received responses from all 33 housing associations which provide adaptations. Survey respondents could choose more than one response so totals can add up to more than 33. The final column in red is actual numbers.

## Appendix 8: The views of Care and Repair managers on the effectiveness of partnership arrangements between their organisation and other organisations delivering housing adaptations

<b>Local Authorities</b>	<b>Member of cross-sector group</b>	<b>Regular meeting</b>	<b>Informal contact</b>	<b>Sharing information</b>	<b>Collocated staff</b>	<b>Pooled resources</b>	<b>No partnership arrangements</b>
Care and Repair	5	11	5	10	3	2	0
Housing Associations and/or LSVT Associations that do not manage housing in your area	1	3	8	6	0	0	1
Housing Associations and/or LSVT Associations that manage housing in your area	4	3	5	4	0	0	3
Local authorities	0	1	4	2	0	0	5
Other third sector organisations	4	7	4	5	0	0	2
Users of housing adaptations	1	3	7	6	0	0	0

Local Authorities	Member of cross-sector group	Regular meeting	Informal contact	Sharing information	Collocated staff	Pooled resources	No partnership arrangements
Your Local Health Board – other than Occupational Therapy Services	2	8	8	7	3	0	0
Your Local Health Board – through Occupational Therapy Services	5	11	5	10	3	2	0

Source: Wales Audit Office survey of Care and Repair managers. We received responses from all 13 Care and Repair agencies. Survey respondents could choose more than one response so row totals can add up to more than 13. The final column in red is actual numbers.

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Welsh Government  
Consultation Document

# Housing Adaptations Service Standards

Date of issue: 26 September 2018  
Action required: Responses by 19 December 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.  
This document is also available in Welsh.

<b>Overview</b>	<p>The Welsh Government is consulting on Service Standards for Housing Adaptations that support disabled and older people to live more independently in their own home.</p> <p>The aim of the Standards is to ensure greater consistency on the way adaptations are provided regardless of a persons tenure or geographic location.</p>
<b>How to respond</b>	<p>This is a written, electronic consultation. Questions are summarised in a questionnaire at the end of this document. Please use this questionnaire to provide your feedback. Responses can be e-mailed/posted to the contact details below.</p>
<b>Further information and related documents</b>	<p><b>Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.</b></p> <p>The consultation documents can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at:  <a href="http://www.gov.wales/consultations">www.gov.wales/consultations</a></p>
<b>Contact details</b>	<p>For further information:</p> <p>Independent Living Team  Housing Policy  Welsh Government  Merthyr Tydfil Office  Rhydycar  Merthyr Tydfil  CF48 1UZ</p> <p>email: <a href="mailto:IndependentLiving@gov.wales">IndependentLiving@gov.wales</a></p>

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## General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation. Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data. In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation. If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

### Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:  
to be informed of the personal data holds about you and to access it  
to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data  
to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing  
for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'  
to (in certain circumstances) data portability  
to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection.

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:  
Data Protection Officer:  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
CARDIFF  
CF10 3NQ

e-mail:  
Data.ProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 01625 545 745 or  
0303 123 1113  
Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

## 1. Aim

The Welsh Government recognises the essential role housing adaptations play in supporting disabled and older people to live safely and independently, improving the health and wellbeing of the individual supported including their families and reducing pressures on frontline services such as health and social care. The preventative work which housing adaptations offer is very much in line with the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, and the approach set out in Prosperity for All and Healthier Wales.

The provision of support for housing adaptations in Wales is complex and is a reflection of the multiple partners involved in the care and support arrangements of disabled and older people.

To provide greater consistency of delivery across Wales the Welsh Government plan to publish National Service Standards for the delivery of housing adaptations to support disabled and older people to live independently in their own home. The aim of the standards is to set out the level of service expected for the delivery and installation of a housing adaptation that service users, regardless of their geographic location and tenure, can expect. The Service Standards should ensure service providers deliver housing adaptations in a more consistent manner and inform service users on the level of service to expect when they seek support for a housing adaptation.

## 2. Key Issues

Recent independent reviews have highlighted the complexity of the different ways in which housing adaptations are provided. Examples of reports include:

- A review of Independent Living Adaptations: Welsh Government (2015) <sup>1</sup>
- Housing Adaptations: Wales Audit Office (2018) <sup>2</sup>
- Housing and Disabled People: Equalities and Human Rights Commission (2018) <sup>3</sup>
- Housing Adaptations: Report of the Public Accounts Committee (2018)<sup>4</sup>

Each report has identified issues of funding complexity and the challenging arrangements for accessing services across Wales. The multiple funding programmes in place for providing adaptations in Wales has resulted in service users receiving different levels of service as a result of their tenure and where they live.

## 3. Scope

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<sup>1</sup> <https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/review-independent-living-adaptations/?lang=en>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/housing-adaptations-2018-english.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/housing-and-disabled-people-wales-hidden-crisis.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld11703/cr-ld11703-e.pdf>

These standards will be applied to all housing adaptations, and will be relevant to:

- Local Authorities
- Care and Repair Agencies
- Registered Social Landlords
- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) organisations
- Occupational Therapists

In addition to the above, the Service Standards will be relevant for Healthcare and Social Service Professionals.

The Welsh Government will keep the standards under review, and may publish amended standards as appropriate.

Legislation requirements for the delivery of specific types of adaptation overrides any services standards outlined in this document, and service provider should seek their own legal advice where needed.

#### **4. Service Standards for the delivery of Housing Adaptations**

The Service Standards set the expected levels of service for the installation of a Housing Adaptation and can be seen at **Figure 1**.

Setting service levels will help to ensure housing adaptations are delivered in a consistent manner, regardless of a service users location and tenure, whilst giving flexibility to service providers to determine the best way to utilise their own resources to meet the standards.

Due to the complexity of delivering some housing adaptations, especially larger sized adaptations, the process can result in a number of steps that may involve input from wider stakeholders such as the planning department, building control teams and utility companies. These steps have to be taken to ensure that the adaptation will provide the help and assistance needed for the service user and meets broader legislative requirements. As a result, the timeframes for delivering a housing adaptation can vary due to this. The 'Expected Timeframes' service standard in **Figure 1** has been split to reflect the following key phases that can be involved in deciding if a Housing Adaptation should be provided:

- The time it takes from a service user making first contact with a relevant Service Provider (this could be a Local Authority, Care and Repair Agency, Housing Association or from their health or social services contacts) to being assessed by a competent person (such as Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor) and;
- The timescale for an Occupational Therapist (or another suitably competent person) report/referral/recommendation being provided to the service provider outlining the adaptation works required.

- The date of referral (or decision, recommendation, report) made by the competent person when the adaptation is confirmed as needed to installation. This is to ensure that alternative forms of assistance (e.g. re-ablement) are considered before deciding a housing adaptation is needed.

The Welsh Government expect the service provider to work in collaboration with Occupational Therapists (or other competent persons who can advise and identify the required adaptation) as well as the service users to determine the best possible outcome is achieved, while still reflecting the principles of all work being necessary and appropriate, reasonable and practicable.

Definitions of the different types of housing adaptations (Small, Medium or Large) are listed in **Figure 2**. These are included to provide a guide for service providers to determine how to record the most appropriate type of adaptation (Small, Medium or Large). The Welsh Government recognises there may be situations or individual cases which do not fit within the categories of Figure 2. In these cases, service providers should use their professional judgement to decide the most appropriate category to use, based on sound judgement and evidence.

The definitions in **Figure 2** also aims to help service users understand the different types of adaptations and what they can expect in how they are delivered by the service provider.

## **5. Monitoring of Service Standards**

Performance monitoring data will be submitted to the Welsh Government using existing data collection methodology for the ENABLE data; national performance data for each organisation will be published on an annual basis.

## **6. Complaints and concerns**

If a service user is not satisfied with the level of service received, they have the right to make a complaint. Any complaints should be directed to the Service Provider and handled in accordance with their organisational complaints procedure.

**Figure 1 Housing Adaptations Service Standards**

Service Standard	Level of Service Expected
<b>Standard 1: Purpose</b>	The purpose of a housing adaptation is to help disabled and/or older people to remain or become more independent within their own home. The adaptation provided should be necessary and appropriate, as well as reasonable and practicable.
<b>Standard 2: Equality and Diversity</b>	Disabled and/or older people can expect that they will be treated fairly and respectfully. Service providers will ensure they have equality and diversity policies in place to ensure this.
<b>Standard 3: Communication</b>	Information and communication will be in a format which most effectively meets a service users needs, such as Welsh and English, and accessible formats including braille, large fonts, audio versions and other languages. At the start of the process the service user (or their representative) will be informed of the key steps to install an adaption, be included in the decision making process, informed of the expected timeframes, be regularly updated on progress and invited to provide feedback at the end of installation.
<b>Standard 4: Quality of Service</b>	The work will be completed by a suitably competent person, either an employee of the Service Provider or someone from their approved contractors list which is regularly monitored by the Service Provider. If a service user decides to use their own contractor to carry out the work it will be the service users responsibility to deal with and resolve any issues.
<b>Standard 5: Quality of Equipment</b>	Any equipment installed will be compliant with relevant health and safety requirements, technical specifications and be appropriate for the purpose which they were intended. service user should also be informed of any warranty information, service charges and maintenance requirements where it is appropriate to do so.



<b>Standard 6:</b> <i>Expected Timeframes</i>	<b>For Small Adaptations:</b> The solution will usually be installed within 2 weeks from date of first contact with the Service Provider who have deemed it necessary for the adaptation to be installed.
	<b>For Medium Adaptations:</b> - From first point of contact with the Service Provider, the service user can expect to be assessed within 2 months by a competent person e.g. an Occupational Therapist, or Trusted Assessor. - Once the adaptation is confirmed as necessary the Occupational Therapist or Trusted Assessor will provide a report/referral/recommendation to the service provider within 2 weeks of the decision. - Solution usually installed within 4 months (or in line with legislative requirements) from date of referral/recommendation from a competent person.
	<b>For Large Adaptations:</b> -From first point of contact with the Service Provider, the service user can expect to be assessed within 2 months by a competent person e.g. an Occupational Therapist. - Once the adaptation is confirmed as necessary the Occupational Therapist will provide a report/referral/recommendation to the service provider within 2 weeks of the decision. - Solution usually installed within 15 months (or in line with legislative requirements) from date of referral from a competent person, to reflect steps taken in some cases, e.g. planning permission.
<b>Standard 7:</b> <i>Eligibility Checks</i>	<b>For Small Adaptations:</b> - Means Test is not required. - Occupational Therapist assessment not required. - Trusted Assessor assessment may be required.
	<b>For Medium Adaptations:</b> - Means Test may be required. - Occupational Therapist Assessment may be required. - Trusted Assessor assessment will be required.
	<b>For Large Adaptations:</b> - Means Test may be required. - Occupational Therapist Assessment will be required. - Trusted Assessor assessment would not be appropriate in these cases.

**Figure 2 – Definitions of different types of Housing Adaptations**

Category	Nature of Work Required	Example of Work	Funding Source
<p><b>Small Adaptions</b>                      adaptations are inexpensive items, which can be provided very quickly. It would generally fit into the description of ‘immediate falls prevention’ or ‘urgent for hospital discharge’ and can be assessed and installed within days or the same day if urgent. It can be identified by a number of health/ social services/ other appropriately trained staff e.g. RSL staff, Care and Repair Staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor home modification required</li> <li>• Not a specialised solution</li> <li>• No building/planning approval required</li> <li>• Adjustable / Flexible</li> <li>• Simple &amp; Intuitive</li> <li>• Minimal maintenance and/or servicing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grab rails</li> <li>• Stair rails</li> <li>• Small ramps</li> <li>• Accessible taps</li> <li>• Key safes</li> <li>• Mop stick hand rails</li> <li>• Outdoor rails</li> <li>• External / staircase lights</li> <li>• Additional electrical sockets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENABLE</li> <li>• RRAP</li> <li>• RSL Funds</li> <li>• LA own funds</li> <li>• Self funded</li> </ul>
<p><b>Medium Adaptations</b>                      anything which is not classed as small or large.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major home modification may be required, but building/planning approval not required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk in shower</li> <li>• Stair lifts</li> <li>• Large ramps</li> <li>• A combination of adaptations installed as one job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ENABLE</li> <li>• RSL Funds</li> <li>• LA own funds</li> <li>• Physical Adaptation Grants (PAG)</li> <li>• Disabled Facility Grant (DFG)s</li> <li>• Self funded</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large Adaptations</b>                      these are works which will require specialist assessments and major adaptations to a property such as extensions and through floor lifts. An Occupational Therapists assessment will be required and planning permission may be needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major home modification / structural change required</li> <li>• Specialised / Innovative solutions required</li> <li>• Building / planning approval required</li> <li>• Fixed / permanent / long term</li> <li>• Complex / unfamiliar / requires training &amp; supervision</li> <li>• Solution requires expertise for installation and maintenance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building an extension to provide a downstairs bedroom and/or bathroom</li> <li>• Through floor lift</li> <li>• Significant internal structural modifications e.g. relocate bathroom or kitchen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled Facilities Grant</li> <li>• Physical Adaptations Grants</li> <li>• RSL Funds</li> <li>• LA own funds</li> <li>• Self funded</li> </ul>

**Consultation  
Response Form**

Your name:

Organisation (if applicable):

email / telephone number:

Your address:

**Housing Adaptation Service Standards**

**Question 1:** Will the proposed service standards improve the way housing adaptations are delivered in Wales? If not, are there further service standards which should be included?

**Question 2:** Are the proposed service standards on the 'Expected Timeframes' (Service Standard 6) challenging enough?

**Question 3:** Are the definitions for a small, medium and/or large adaptation sufficiently clear? If not, how could they be clarified?

**Question 4:** Are there any issues relating to impact on the Welsh language, equalities or children's rights in relation to this draft guidance that you wish to highlight?

**Question 5:** Do you have any further comments to add?

Please enter here:

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here:

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Disabled Facilities Grants risk register (v7 January 2019)

Identifying the risk or issue					Managing the risk or issue							Closing the risk or issue					
ID	Issue (i.e.: Threat to the Project)	Risk / Consequence	Current assessment			Already in place	Who is managing	Not in place / in progress	Who will manage	Implement date	Revised date	Residual risk level			Review date	Closure date	Signed off by
			I	L	O							I	L	O			
1	Management oversight of DFG cases and programme needs strengthening	Potential for non-compliance with systems Poor case management leading to delays Lower value for money Lower customer satisfaction	H	M	H	New manual spreadsheet created to summarise Civica record – compliance with each process stage and timescales for each	Joe Muxlow	Management sampling of case files	Niall	July 2018		M	L	L			
								Monthly monitoring of system compliance, case progress and timescales using spreadsheet	Joe Muxlow	July 2018							
								Clear desk instructions for each stage in the process	Joe Muxlow	July 2018	October 2018						
								Restructure of wider service to reinstate operational manager function over the	Neal Cockerton	July 2018	April 2019						
								Review findings from customer satisfaction surveys every 6 months	Joe Muxlow	September 2018							
								New IT system with case management dashboard functionality to facilitate monthly manager review of process compliance	Niall Waller	July 2019							
2	New adaptation framework may not deliver anticipated benefits – timeliness, VFM and customer service	Lower value for money Lower customer satisfaction	H	M	H	Gather data on costs and timeliness for each contractor Introduce new customer satisfaction survey to include contractor service	Joe Muxlow	Monitor the costs and timeliness for each contractor	Joe Muxlow	August 2018		M	L	M			
								Review the implementation of the framework at quarterly intervals to establish effectiveness	Niall Waller	July 2018							
2a	Implementation of adaptations framework not transparent in allocation of work to  Land charges process inadequate to ensure charges are placed in a timely manner to protect public investment	Lower value for money Reputational risk	L	L	L	Record officers allocating work.	Joe Muxlow	Operate framework in accordance with rotation of contractors. Review work allocation quarterly to ensure rotation being used effectively and	Joe Muxlow	August 2018		L	L	L			
								New manual spreadsheet created to summarise Civica record – compliance with each process stage and timescales for each	Joe Muxlow	July 2018							
4	Mismatch between current published policy and practice for top up loans and grants and relocation grants	Lack of transparency of decision-making leading to criticism and challenge	M	L	M			New programme schedule to be created to set out criteria for each	Niall Waller	July 2018		L	L	L			
								Management sampling of case files on monthly basis	Niall Waller	July 2018							
								New manual spreadsheet to summarise Civica record – compliance with each process stage and timescales for each	Joe Muxlow	July 2018							
5	Systems and paperwork not GDPR compliant	Legal action against the Council and potential fines	H	L	M	Forms reviewed for GDPR compliance	Joe Muxlow	All systems to be checked and signed off by Information Governance	Joe Muxlow	August 2018	November 2018	L	L	L			
								The Civica system needs review as its ability to meet GDPR requirements is	Niall Waller	March 2018							
6	Overall DFG timescale too long to meet published targets	Reputational damage Customer frustration	M	H	M	New manual spreadsheet to summarise Civica record – compliance with each process stage and timescales for each Review all cases that fail to meet 247 day targets	Joe Muxlow	Review evidence base generated to identify pinch points in the process and identify actions to reduce them	Niall Waller	August 2018		L	M	M			
								Lean review of the overall DFG process including the OT elements	Niall Waller	September 2018							
								Learn from high-performing Council areas	Joe Muxlow	September 2018							
7	Lifting equipment contract out of date	Failure to meet CPRs	L	M	L			New procurement arrangement being put in place through national framework	Joe Muxlow	July 2018	October 2018	L	L	L			
8	Whole systems approach to adaptations not in place in County	Lower value for money – opportunities for economies of scale and reduced administration Services not customer	M	M	M	Monthly panel meetings bring together OTs, DFG (private) team, C&R and Housing Options	Niall Waller	Need wider dialogue to start with Health Board and with RSLs	Niall Waller	November 2018		M	M	M			
								Develop common systems across providers	Niall Waller	June 2019							

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## COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
<b>Report Subject</b>	Quarter 3 Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing; Cabinet Member for Economic Development; and Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets); and Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council Plan 2018/19 was adopted by the Council in June 2018. This report presents a summary of the monitoring of progress for the Quarter 3 (October – December 2018) position of 2018/19 for the Council Plan priorities ‘Supportive Council’ and ‘Ambitious Council’ relevant to the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Flintshire is a high performing Council as evidenced in previous Council Plan monitoring reports as well as in the Council’s Annual Performance Reports. This second monitoring report for the 2018/19 Council Plan is a positive report, with 92% of activities being assessed as making good progress, and 85% likely to achieve the desired outcome. In addition, 67% of the performance indicators met or exceeded target. Risks are also being successfully managed with the majority being assessed as moderate (61%) or minor/insignificant (22%).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee consider the Quarter 3 Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report to monitor under performance and request further information as appropriate.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>EXPLAINING THE COUNCIL PLAN 2018/19 MONITORING REPORT</b>
1.01	The Council Plan monitoring reports give an explanation of the progress being made toward the delivery of the impacts set out in the 2018/19 Council Plan. The narrative is supported by performance indicators and / or milestones which evidence achievement. In addition, there is an assessment of the strategic risks and the level to which they are being controlled.
1.02	This is an exception based report and detail therefore focuses on the areas of under-performance.
1.03	<p><b>Monitoring our Activities</b></p> <p>Each of the sub-priorities have high level activities which are monitored over time. 'Progress' monitors progress against scheduled activity and has been categorised as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RED: Limited Progress – delay in scheduled activity; not on track</li> <li>• AMBER: Satisfactory Progress – some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track</li> <li>• GREEN: Good Progress – activities completed on schedule, on track</li> </ul> <p>A RAG status is also given as an assessment of our level of confidence at this point in time in achieving the 'outcome(s)' for each sub-priority. Outcome has been categorised as: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RED: Low – lower level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)</li> <li>• AMBER: Medium – uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)</li> <li>• GREEN: High – full confidence in the achievement of the outcome(s)</li> </ul>
1.04	<p>In summary our overall progress against the high level activities is: -</p> <p><b>ACTIVITIES PROGRESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are making good (green) progress in 48 (92%).</li> <li>• We are making satisfactory (amber) progress in 4 (8%).</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTIVITIES OUTCOME</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have a high (green) level of confidence in the outcome achievement of 44 (85%).</li> <li>• We have a medium (amber) level of confidence in the outcome achievement of 8 (15%).</li> <li>• No activities have a low (red) level of confidence in their outcome achievement.</li> </ul>
1.05	<p><b>Monitoring our Performance</b></p> <p>Analysis of performance against the Improvement Plan performance indicators is undertaken using the RAG (Red, Amber Green) status. This is defined as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RED equates to a position of under-performance against target.</li> <li>• AMBER equates to a mid-position where improvement may have been</li> </ul>



	<p>made but performance has missed the target.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GREEN equates to a position of positive performance against target.</li> </ul>
1.06	<p>Analysis of current levels of performance against period target shows the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 29 (67%) had achieved a green RAG status</li> <li>• 12 (28%) had achieved an amber RAG status</li> <li>• 2 (5%) had achieved a red RAG status</li> </ul>
1.07	<p>The performance indicator (PI) which show a red RAG status for current performance against target, relevant to the Community &amp; Enterprise Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee is: -</p> <p><b>Priority: Supportive Council</b>  <b>Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a DFG</b></p> <p>A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a mandatory grant to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence. This area of performance has required improvement for a number of years.</p> <p>As a result a DFG review board has been established which meets monthly to review progress towards implementing improvements to processes and controls. One improvement area has been the launch of a new contractor framework for the delivery of the DFG's which has started to show a reduction in the number of days taken to deliver DFGs.</p> <p>In 2017/18 DFG works were suspended due to budgetary constraints with outstanding works being completed this year. This has impacted on the overall performance for the service as these cases were on hold for as long as 4 months.</p> <p>Overall performance is affected by these older cases from 2017/18, which is bringing down the figures when compared with the current year cases that are being delivered using the improved processes. This is evidenced as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 adaptations delivered in Q3 were 17/18 legacy cases and averaged 397 days</li> <li>- 3 adaptations delivered from 18/19 claims and using the new approach averaged 198 days</li> </ul> <p>Once the backlog of legacy cases has been completed during the remainder of this year, 2019/20 performance should show a marked improvement.</p>
1.08	<p><b>Monitoring our Risks</b></p> <p>Analysis of the current risk levels for the strategic risks identified in the Council Plan is as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 (11%) are insignificant (green)</li> <li>• 5 (11%) are minor (yellow)</li> <li>• 27 (61%) are moderate (amber)</li> <li>• 7 (16%) are major (red)</li> <li>• 0 (0%) are severe (black)</li> </ul>

1.09	<p>The major (red) risk identified for the Community &amp; Enterprise Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee is: -</p> <p><b>Priority: Supportive Council</b>  <b>Risk: Debt levels will rise if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent or council tax.</b></p> <p>Work has commenced on the identification of the impacts of Universal Credit on Council Tenants and their rent accounts. There is a team that works with tenants at the earliest opportunity on the basis that intervention at early stages allows support (if appropriate) to be identified earlier giving a more realistic chance of the rent account coming back under control and out of arrears.</p> <p>The Council now has "Trusted Partner" status with the Department for Work and Pensions and this means that processes and flow of information and payments is much more streamlined and automated. Notwithstanding this, there will inevitably always be an element of cash flow arrears on accounts due to the Universal Credit payments (whether direct to the council or directly to the tenant) are made in arrears. During 2018/19 focus is on early identification and intervention to prevent the problem from escalating. Council Tax Collection remains under pressure.</p>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no specific resource implications for this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	The Council Plan Priorities are monitored by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees according to the priority area of interest.
3.02	Chief Officers have contributed towards reporting of relevant information.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	Progress against the risks identified in the Council Plan is included in the report at Appendix 1 and 2. Summary information for the risks assessed as major (red) is covered in paragraphs 1.07 and 1.09 above.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Council Plan 2018/19 – Year-end Progress Report – Supportive Council.
5.02	Appendix 2 – Council Plan 2018/19 – Year-end Progress Report – Ambitious Council.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p><b>Council Plan 2017/18:</b> <a href="http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Council-and-Democracy/Improvement-Plan.aspx">http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Council-and-Democracy/Improvement-Plan.aspx</a></p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Ceri Shotton  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702305  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk">ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
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7.01	<b>Council Plan:</b> the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish a Council Plan.																																													
7.02	<b>Risks:</b> These are assessed using the improved approach to risk management endorsed by Audit Committee in June 2015. The new approach, includes the use of a new and more sophisticated risk assessment matrix which provides greater opportunities to show changes over time.																																													
7.03	<p><b>Risk Likelihood and Impact Matrix</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Impact Severity</td> <td>Catastrophic</td> <td>Y</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> <td>R</td> <td>B</td> <td>B</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Critical</td> <td>Y</td> <td>A</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> <td>R</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marginal</td> <td>G</td> <td>Y</td> <td>A</td> <td>A</td> <td>A</td> <td>R</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Negligible</td> <td>G</td> <td>G</td> <td>Y</td> <td>Y</td> <td>A</td> <td>A</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Unlikely (5%)</td> <td>Very Low (15%)</td> <td>Low (30%)</td> <td>Significant (50%)</td> <td>Very High (65%)</td> <td>Extremely High (80%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td colspan="6">Likelihood &amp; Percentage of risk happening</td> </tr> </table> <p>The new approach to risk assessment was created in response to recommendations in the Corporate Assessment report from the Wales Audit Office and Internal Audit.</p>	Impact Severity	Catastrophic	Y	A	R	R	B	B	Critical	Y	A	A	R	R	R	Marginal	G	Y	A	A	A	R	Negligible	G	G	Y	Y	A	A			Unlikely (5%)	Very Low (15%)	Low (30%)	Significant (50%)	Very High (65%)	Extremely High (80%)			Likelihood & Percentage of risk happening					
Impact Severity	Catastrophic		Y	A	R	R	B	B																																						
	Critical		Y	A	A	R	R	R																																						
	Marginal		G	Y	A	A	A	R																																						
	Negligible	G	G	Y	Y	A	A																																							
		Unlikely (5%)	Very Low (15%)	Low (30%)	Significant (50%)	Very High (65%)	Extremely High (80%)																																							
		Likelihood & Percentage of risk happening																																												

7.04	<b>CAMMS – An explanation of the report headings</b>
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	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p><u>Action</u> – Each sub-priority have high level activities attached to them to help achieve the outcomes of the sub-priority.</p> <p><u>Lead Officer</u> – The person responsible for updating the data on the action.</p> <p><u>Status</u> – This will either be ‘In progress’ if the action has a start and finish date or ‘Ongoing’ if it is an action that is longer term than the reporting year.</p> <p><u>Start date</u> – When the action started (usually the start of the financial year).</p> <p><u>End date</u> – When the action is expected to be completed.</p>
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% complete - The % that the action is complete at the time of the report. This only applies to actions that are 'in progress'. An action that is 'ongoing' will not produce a % complete due to the longer-term nature of the action.  
Progress RAG – Shows if the action at this point in time is making limited progress (Red), satisfactory progress (Amber) or good progress (Green).  
Outcome RAG – Shows the level of confidence in achieving the outcomes for each action.

### **Measures (Key Performance Indicators - KPIs)**

Pre. Year Period Actual – The period actual at the same point in the previous year. If the KPI is a new KPI for the year then this will show as 'no data'.

Period Actual – The data for this quarter.

Period Target – The target for this quarter as set at the beginning of the year.

Perf. RAG – This measures performance for the period against the target. It is automatically generated according to the data. Red = a position of under performance against target, Amber = a mid-position where improvement may have been made but performance has missed the target and Green = a position of positive performance against the target.

Perf. Indicator Trend – Trend arrows give an impression of the direction the performance is heading compared to the period of the previous year:

- A 'downward arrow' always indicates poorer performance regardless of whether a KPI figure means that less is better (e.g. the amount of days to deliver a grant or undertake a review) or if a KPI figure means that more is better (e.g. number of new jobs in Flintshire).
- Similarly an 'upward arrow' always indicates improved performance.

YTD Actual – The data for the year so far including previous quarters.

YTD Target – The target for the year so far including the targets of previous quarters.

Outcome RAG – The level of confidence of meeting the target by the end of the year. Low – lower level of confidence in the achievement of the target (Red), Medium – uncertain level of confidence in the achievement of the target (Amber) and High - full confidence in the achievement of the target (Green).

### **Risks**

Risk Title – Gives a description of the risk.

Lead Officer – The person responsible for managing the risk.

Supporting Officer – The person responsible for updating the risk.

Initial Risk Rating – The level of the risk at the start of the financial year (quarter 1). The risks are identified as follows; insignificant (green), minor (yellow), moderate (amber), major (red) and severe (black).

Current Risk Rating – The level of the risk at this quarter.

Trend Arrow – This shows if the risk has increased (upward arrow), decreased (downward arrow) or remained the same between the initial risk rating and the current risk rating (stable arrow).

Risk Status – This will either show as 'open' or 'closed'. If a risk is open then it is still a relevant risk, if the risk is closed then it is no longer a relevant risk; a new risk may be generated where a plan or strategy moves into a new phase.



# Performance Progress Report – Appendix 1 – Supportive Council

Flintshire County Council



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# 1 Supportive Council

## Action

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.1.1.1 Provide new social and affordable homes	Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	70.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN
<p><b>ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:</b> Work continues to deliver the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme. The programme has delivered 153 new Council and affordable homes at the end of Quarter 3. The next phase of the programme has been approved and will deliver a further 149 new council and affordable homes across the county. Work continues to identify suitable land within the county for further developments.</p> <p>Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019</p>							

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ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.1.1.2 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Investment plan targets achieved	Sean O'Donnell - Contract Surveyor	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN
<p><b>ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:</b> All WHQS Contracts have progressed into Year 4 (2018/19) of the 6 year Capital Programme with a smooth transition into their new Capital Districts (areas of work). The Capital Programme has now introduced new work streams which will gradually replace the Internal work streams (kitchens and bathrooms). This will comprise of roofing works, window &amp; door replacements along with wider community works including car parking and communal footpaths. These new work streams will have an increased impact on communities as they begin to transform the aesthetics and environment by regenerating and revitalising areas. Currently all WHQS Contracts are on schedule to be completed before 31st March 2019 and our current expenditure and delivery key performance indicators are also on target.</p> <p>Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019</p>							

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.1.1.3 Address the increasing frequency of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments and improve the Council's own permanent site	Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes	In Progress	12-Jul-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

The Flintshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2018 update was commissioned by Flintshire County Council in the summer of 2018. The GTAA report will be completed by March 2019. The purpose is to update the Gypsy and Traveller pitch requirements evidence base to inform the preparation of the Local Development Plan. As part of this, works are underway to identify a suitable location for a transit site within the county to address the unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments. Improvements to the existing Council owned site have been identified and work undertaken to the utility blocks. Funding options are being investigated with Welsh Government to cover further improvement costs.



Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.1.2.1 Improve standards within the private rented sector	Jenny Prendergast - Health and Safety Team Leader	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

We have proactively undertaken work to ensure that landlords register with Rent Smart Wales and have been working with Rent Smart Wales to tackle those who are resistant to registering .



Last Updated: 11-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.1.2.2 Deliver the Council's housing growth needs	Lesley Bassett - Housing Strategy Manager	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

The Welsh Government funding programme, Social Housing Grant (SHG), continues to provide funding for our Housing Association Partners to deliver 262 units. The outcome of the programme will be the delivery of a mix of social rented properties to meet general housing needs, supported housing and intermediate purchase products. Work is being undertaken to engage with owners of empty properties to bring 70 units back into use. Planning policy requirements are being negotiated on a site by site basis and continue to deliver affordable homes and affordable ownership properties on market led residential developments.



Last Updated: 16-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.1.2.3 Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable groups	Lesley Bassett - Housing Strategy Manager	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

To date we have rehoused 35 people from vulnerable groups into appropriate housing. We have also implemented a strategic acquisition policy which enables us to acquire units where they meet a specific need including larger families.



Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.2.1.1 Support Flintshire residents to better manage their financial commitments	Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

Personal budgeting support is provided to Flintshire residents via the Welfare Reform response team. The team deal with referrals from the Council and from external agencies or organisations such as Citizens Advice and Job Centres. The team also provide advice and support relating to discretionary housing payments for people who are struggling to meet their rental payments. Ongoing referrals to other agencies or organisations is sometimes necessary depending on the specialist advice or support the customer may require.

Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019



ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.2.1.2 Working collaboratively to minimise Universal Credit (UC) Risks	Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

Cross organisation and cross sector meeting are held regularly to review progress with actions, raise issues and identify solutions. Where issues are based around the national model, there is a process in place to escalate, track progress and disseminate solutions or work arounds as and when received.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019





ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.2.1.3 .Develop skills programmes and delivery mechanisms for North Wales Growth Deal	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

The Growth Vision for North Wales emphasises the importance of skills to meet the needs of the economy and facilitate growth. The Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) is tasked with identifying skills needs and steering learning provision. The RSP has now also been tasked with overseeing the employability work streams of the Growth Vision - the Information and Advice Gateway and the Employability Pathway. These are currently under development. The Economic Ambition Board has received confirmation of funding from UK and Welsh Governments in the region of £240m which will include skills capital projects.

Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019



ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
1.2.1.4 Develop and deliver programmes to improve domestic energy efficiency to reduce Co2 emissions and fuel poverty	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

The Council is delivering the Warm Homes Fund programme in partnership with Warm Wales and Care and Repair. The programme will deliver energy efficient heating system to a minimum of 300 households and energy advice to 3,000 properties. In addition, the Council is delivering a gradual programme of replacing older boilers in its own stock with more energy efficient models. The Council is currently developing the next phase of gas infill project with Wales and West Utilities to extend the gas main network to properties in Ffynnongroyw. If approved this will enable householders to access more cost-efficient heating systems. The Council is also working closely with providers for the ECO (Energy Company Obligation), Nest and Arbed funding programmes. This will maximise benefit to Flintshire from these programmes and to ensure that the programmes, although managed independently, are delivered coherently in Flintshire and that support is co-ordinated for the benefit of each individual householder.

Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019

## Performance Indicators



KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.1.1.4M04 Increasing the total number of properties managed by NEW Homes	No Data	127	148	 AMBER	N/A	127	148	 GREEN

**Lead Officer:** Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes

**Reporting Officer:** Denise Naylor - Housing Programmes Support Manager

**Progress Comment:** Work has began at the development sites at Llys Dewi, Penyffordd and Maes Gwern, Mold . The developments at Nant y Gro, Gronant and Dobshill will begin in 2019. Completion of the developments will add a further 39 new homes to the NEW Homes portfolio. NEW Homes has also acquired 3 new properties at St Mary's Park, Northop Hall.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019



KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.2.1.1M01 The percentage of landlords and letting agents compliant with the Rent Smart Code of Practice	76.6	88.48	75	 GREEN	↑	88.48	75	 GREEN

**Lead Officer:** Lynne Fensome - Management and Support Manager

**Reporting Officer:** Jenny Prendergast - Health and Safety Team Leader

**Progress Comment:** Ongoing proactive and reactive work with landlords is being taken to ensure registration and compliance with Rent Smart Wales .

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019



KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.2.1.2M02 The percentage of tenants protected from unsuitable living conditions	100	100	100	 GREEN	↔	100	100	 GREEN

**Lead Officer:** Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy

**Reporting Officer:** Jenny Prendergast - Health and Safety Team Leader

**Progress Comment:** All complaints about substandard housing conditions were investigated. 155 service requests dealt with.

Last Updated: 11-Jan-2019

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.2.1.2M02 The percentage of tenants protected from unsuitable living conditions	100	100	100	 GREEN	↔	100	100	 GREEN

**Lead Officer:** Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy

**Reporting Officer:** Jenny Prendergast - Health and Safety Team Leader

**Progress Comment:** All complaints about substandard housing conditions were investigated. 155 service requests dealt with.

Last Updated: 11-Jan-2019

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.2.2.3M03 Number of affordable housing on all applicable applications for residential development	N/A	44	N/A	N/A	N/A	161	0	N/A

**Lead Officer:** Lynne Fensome - Management and Support Manager

**Reporting Officer:** Daniel McVey - Planning Officer

**Progress Comment:** Planning officers continue to assess the need for an affordable housing element on all new housing development applications and apply the relevant criteria from the Councils affordable housing policy. By applying the criteria we can calculate the affordable housing contribution required from the developer.

Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.2.3.1M01 (PAM/015) Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a DFG	309.11	322.63	247	 RED	↓	308.77	247	 AMBER

**Lead Officer:** Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager

**Reporting Officer:** Joseph Muxlow - Regeneration Programme Lead

**Progress Comment:** A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is a mandatory grant to help individuals living with a disability with the cost of adapting their homes to enable them to continue living at their residence with the maximum amount of independence. This area of performance has required improvement for a number of years.

As a result a DFG review board has been established which meets monthly to review progress towards implementing improvements to processes and controls. One improvement area has been the launch of a new contractor framework for the delivery of the DFG's which has started to show a reduction in the number of days taken to deliver DFGs.



In 2017/18 DFG works were suspended due to budgetary constraints with outstanding works being completed this year. This has impacted on the overall performance for the service as these cases were on hold for as long as 4 months.

Overall performance is affected by these older cases from 2017/18, which is bringing down the figures when compared with the current year cases that are being delivered using the improved processes. This is evidenced as follows:

- 5 adaptations delivered in Q3 were 17/18 legacy cases and averaged 397 days
- 3 adaptations delivered from 18/19 claims and using the new approach averaged 198 days

Once the backlog of legacy cases has been completed during the remainder of this year, 2019/20 performance should show a marked improvement.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019



KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.1.1M01 Number of days to process new housing benefit claims	15.3	20.48	20	 AMBER	↓	22.15	20	 AMBER

**Lead Officer:** Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager

**Reporting Officer:** Suzanne Jones - Team Manager - Benefits and Council Tax Reduction Assessment

**Progress Comment:** There has been an issue with attendance and vacancies within the service and although there has been some improvement since quarter two, the target of 20 days has not been reached. During the end of the quarter the attendance has improved and training for new employees in on going so an improvement in quarter four into target area is expected

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019



KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.1.2M02 Number of days to process change of circumstances for housing benefit	7.4	9.38	8	 AMBER	↓	9.38	8	 GREEN

**Lead Officer:** Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager

**Reporting Officer:** Suzanne Jones - Team Manager - Benefits and Council Tax Reduction Assessment

**Progress Comment:** Processing times have improved since quarter two, however the target of 8 days has not been achieved. Towards the end of this quarter the attendance within the team has improved and training for new employees is on going.

Last Updated: 28-Jan-2019



KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.1.3M03 The amount of additional income paid to Flintshire residents as a result of the work undertaken by the Council (£)	352257.53	685486.82	375000	 GREEN	↑	1716798.88	1125000	 GREEN

**Lead Officer:** Neal Cockerton - Chief Officer - Housing and Assets

**Reporting Officer:** Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager

**Progress Comment:** Income gains for Flintshire residents are via a combined effort of Supporting People teams; Citizens Advice Flintshire and Macmillan funded posts in Wrexham County Borough Council.

Last Updated: 15-Jan-2019

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.2.1M01 (PAM/012) Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	74.73	70.97	89	 AMBER	↓	78.47	89	 AMBER

**Lead Officer:** Neal Cockerton - Chief Officer - Housing and Assets



**Reporting Officer:** Jenni Griffith - Flintshire Connects Manager

**Progress Comment:** The Housing Solutions Service achieved 70.97% successful outcomes this quarter. The year to date percentage is 78.47%.

Whilst this is below the target set at 89% it is within the variance set. There continue to be significant challenges for homeless prevention. Welfare reform changes and the availability of suitable properties within the private rented sector has limited the options available for customers. The service is continuing to develop new and innovative working practices to assist with early intervention and prevention of homelessness.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019

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KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.2.2M02 The number of people on Universal Credit (UC) that have received personal budgeting support	111	105	157	 AMBER	↓	536	468	 GREEN



**Lead Officer:** Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager



**Reporting Officer:** Dawn Barnes - Training Officer



**Progress Comment:** There has been a reduction in people making a new claim for Universal Credit which has led to a reduction in referrals for budgeting support.



Last Updated: 03-Jan-2019

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.2.3M03 The number of people on Universal Credit (UC) that have received digital support	701	122	95	 GREEN	↓	539	283	 GREEN
<p><b>Lead Officer:</b> Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager  <b>Reporting Officer:</b> Dawn Barnes - Training Officer  <b>Progress Comment:</b> There is a continued high demand for access to Assisted Digital Support for Universal Credit customers.</p> <p>Last Updated: 19-Dec-2018</p>								

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.3.1M01 Number of people completing programmes commissioned by the Council which deliver job and training outcomes	179	96	125	 AMBER	↓	350	375	 GREEN
<p><b>Lead Officer:</b> Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy  <b>Reporting Officer:</b> Sharon Jones - Communities For work  <b>Progress Comment:</b> 96 Clients between Communities For Work (CFW) &amp; Communities For Work Plus (CFW+) have registered for the programme,. All have support from a mentor. End November / December is notoriously a quiet month. We have fewer clients through Job clubs / Drop ins especially December. Also between 20th December and 7th January there are no job clubs or drop in sessions, so the number of clients enrolling onto the programme and completing a course would be limited.</p> <p>Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019</p>								

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.4.1M01 The number of people receiving advice and support to enable reductions in tariffs	N/A	186	137.5	 GREEN	N/A	583	412.5	 GREEN
<p><b>Lead Officer:</b> Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy  <b>Reporting Officer:</b> Shelley Webber - Energy Project Coordinator  <b>Progress Comment:</b> Provided advice for Warm Homes Fund and Healthy Homes Healthy People (HHHP) clients, started Arbed engagement in Penyffordd</p> <p>Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019</p>								




KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.4.2M02 The number of private sector homes receiving efficiency measures	25	107	25	 GREEN	↑	229	75	 GREEN
<p><b>Lead Officer:</b> Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy  <b>Reporting Officer:</b> Shelley Webber - Energy Project Coordinator  <b>Progress Comment:</b> A combination of Warm Homes Fund and Affordable Warmth installs including boilers plus a focus on the supply of lighting upgrades and monitors</p> <p>Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019</p>								

KPI Title	Pre. Year Period Actual	Period Actual	Period Target	Perf. RAG	Perf. Indicator Trend	YTD Actual	YTD Target	Outcome RAG
IP1.3.4.3M03 The number of Council homes receiving energy efficiency measures	15	22	25	 AMBER	↑	119	75	 GREEN
<p><b>Lead Officer:</b> Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy  <b>Reporting Officer:</b> Shelley Webber - Energy Project Coordinator  <b>Progress Comment:</b> During quarter 3 19 Boilers/Air Source Heat Pump installs for council stock and 3 Loft insulation were carried out.</p> <p>Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019</p>								









# RISKS

## Strategic Risk

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Homelessness will remain a growing area of demand due to the current economic climate	Jenni Griffith - Flintshire Connects Manager	Lesley Bassett - Housing Strategy Manager				Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Homelessness remains an area of risk. The lack of suitable, settled accommodation for those on welfare benefits has caused delays in being able to achieve positive outcomes for customers.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> The Council has been awarded in year funding to assist with additional measures to develop Landlord incentives within the private rented sector. We have also been awarded funding to develop a night shelter during the winter months.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> Homelessness remains a risk as a result of a number of factors. The introduction of welfare reforms and Universal Credit has created additional barriers to being able to successfully discharge duties to customers. The number of people presenting to the authority for help has increased during each quarter. Additional funding has been granted to develop landlord incentives within the private rented sector and also to consider alternatives to rough sleeping.</p> <p>Last Updated: 18-Jan-2019</p>						

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RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
The supply of affordable housing will continue to be insufficient to meet community needs	Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes	Denise Naylor - Housing Programmes Support Manager				Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> i) Increase in homelessness ii) Increased pressure on the Housing Options Team iii) Increase in people sleeping rough</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> A Housing Strategy Manager is in post to monitor and manage Section 106 and Social Housing Grant programmes.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> This will always be a risk due to changes in housing demand and a lack of supply both in terms of the quantity and type of affordable homes provided. Over the past year the Welfare Reform policies have also impacted on the type of affordable housing required due to benefit restrictions. The Council aims to mitigate the risk through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informing the type and size of all of the new builds (Council and RSLs)</li> <li>2. Informing the type, tenure and size of affordable housing provision through market led schemes.</li> </ol> <p>Last Updated: 18-Jan-2019</p>						

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Department for Works and Pension's Welfare Reform Programme, including Universal Credit full service implementation which would place increasing demand on the Council for affordable and social housing	Jenni Griffith - Flintshire Connects Manager	Denise Naylor - Housing Programmes Support Manager, Suzanne Mazzone - Commissioning Officer				Open



**Potential Effect:** Increased homelessness

**Management Controls:** Developing innovative housing schemes that will aim to provide housing at a cost that under 35's can meet. The Common Housing Register recognises affordability as a housing need and gives priority to those who are suffering financial hardship in terms of housing costs due to the impacts of welfare reforms

**Progress Comment:** Applicants who are affected by bedroom tax are given urgent priority for rehousing to more affordable accommodation.

The proposed property for the shared housing pilot received full planning permission and work has been undertaken to establish demand. Due to Government changes and the withdrawal of plans to introduce a shared room rate for under 35s the demand in social housing for shared accommodation has lessened. Applicants contacted expressed a preference for self contained properties and we were unable to establish demand for the shared housing pilot. This will of course have an effect on the demand for affordable one bedroom properties.

Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Reduction of land supply for council housing construction	Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes	Denise Naylor - Housing Programmes Support Manager				Closed

**Potential Effect:** i) Reduction in number of units delivered

**Management Controls:** On-going work to maximise the use of Council land and other publically owned land. Privately owned sites are reviewed for their potential use and purchase.

**Progress Comment:** Potential land for development of housing through the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) continues to be identified and considered to support the target of 500 new social and affordable houses by 2021.

Last Updated: 23-Oct-2018

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Capital borrowing limits for council housing	Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes	Denise Naylor - Housing Programmes Support Manager	Amber	Amber	↔	Open

**Potential Effect:** A reduction in the construction and delivery of Council houses

**Management Controls:** i) submit application to Welsh Government for increase in borrowing cap relating to specific schemes.

ii) Lobby WG to remove borrowing limits following removal in England

iii) seek increase in borrowing cap with the UK Government through the Growth Deal

**Progress Comment:** WG announced in November 2018 they would be discontinuing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Borrowing Cap. The Council is currently reviewing how this will impact upon its ability to build new Council properties.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019

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RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Customer expectations for the timeliness of adaptations undertaken through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) may not be met due to competing demands on resources	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration		Amber	Amber	↔	Open

**Potential Effect:** There will be a reputational risk to the Council if adaptations fail to meet the expectations of customers. This is increased because of the national ranking of performance by Welsh Government.

**Management Controls:** i) Monitoring and management of adaptation cases.

ii) Ongoing process review.

iii) Continually seek ways to further increase cost-efficiency

iv) Increase in budget allocation to meet demand

**Progress Comment:** The performance on DFG timescales has been an area of challenge over time and a management board has been established to improve and monitor progress. The budget for the programme is currently on track. Improvements in timeliness have been noted with the implementation of a new process.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Availability of sufficient funding to resource key priorities	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	Melville Evans - Senior Manager - Housing Programmes	Amber	Amber	↔	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Customers will wait longer to receive adaptation work in their homes</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> Monthly monitoring of adaptations budgets and consideration of the business case for an increased budget allocation.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> All budgets are monitored monthly to ensure there is sufficient availability for funding key priorities. However, as demography and expectations change with reduced resources the Council is continually reviewing opportunities to meet requirements.</p> <p>Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019</p>						

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Universal Credit Full Service roll out - negative impact upon Council services	Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager	Dawn Barnes - Training Officer	Amber	Amber	↔	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Potential increased in rent arrears and decrease of Council Tax collection. Potential increased risk of homelessness and need for accommodation. Increased demand in existing support services</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> Welfare Reform is undoubtedly impacting services. Rent Arrears have increased and there is work on-going to identify the reason for this. Focus is now more on early identification and intervention and we have increased communication across the teams and portfolios to support this work. Council Tax Collection is under pressure and we are currently reviewing the claims process for Council Tax Reduction to make the process easier and quicker. Although there is no evidence of links to increased presentations for homelessness, this remains a risk and we will continue to provide early intervention to prevent this and monitor the situation closely.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> Work is now well underway to identify and mitigate the impacts of Universal Credit on Council Tenants and their rent accounts. Work is concentrated around early intervention which enables support to be provided to those who need it, but a harder line to be taken with those who can pay but choose not to. This provides a more realistic chance of the rent account coming back under control and out of arrears. There will inevitably always be an element of cash flow arrears on accounts due to the Universal Credit payments (whether direct to the council or directly to the tenant) are made in arrears. During 2018/19 focus is on early identification and intervention to prevent the problem from escalating. Council Tax Collection remains under pressure.</p> <p>Last Updated: 23-Jan-2019</p>						

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RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Demand for advice and support services will not be met	Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager		Amber	Amber	↔	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> The impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire households increasing the demand for advice and support to levels beyond what resource can handle in a timely manner.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> The Flintshire Advice and Support Gateways are ensuring residents in need of help are referred to an appropriate service provider and maximising effective use of resources as far as possible.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> The development of the Welfare Response Team has assisted with the implementation of Universal Credit. Referrals to wider support services still remain high with a significant number of residents presenting with underlying debt issues. Managers across Customer Services, Neighbourhood Housing and Revenues and Benefits are continuing to work together to develop early intervention strategies.</p> <p>Last Updated: 18-Jan-2019</p>						

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Debt levels will rise if tenants are unable to afford to pay their rent or council tax	Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager	Sheila Martin - Income Team Leader	Amber	Red	↑	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> With the introduction of universal credit and reduction in benefits being paid it is anticipated that tenants will struggle to maintain their payments increasing the level of debts owed to the Council for Rent and Council Tax.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> Review of procedures is being carried out to try and mitigate the impact, however, a full estimate of impact cannot yet be confirmed.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> Work has commenced on the identification of the impacts of Universal Credit on Council Tenants and their rent accounts. There is a team that works with tenants at the earliest opportunity on the basis that intervention at early stages allows support (if appropriate) to be identified earlier giving a more realistic chance of the rent account coming back under control and out of arrears.</p> <p>The Council now has "Trusted Partner" status with the Department for Work and Pensions which means that processes and flow of information and payments is more streamlined and automated. Notwithstanding this, there will inevitably always be an element of cash flow arrears on accounts due to Universal Credit payments (whether direct to the council or directly to the tenant) being made in arrears.</p> <p>During 2018/19 focus has been on early identification and intervention to prevent the problem from escalating. Council Tax Collection remains under pressure.</p> <p>Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019</p>						

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RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
The local economy will suffer if residents have less income to spend	Jen Griffiths - Benefits Manager	Jenni Griffith - Flintshire Connects Manager	Amber	Amber	↔	Open

**Potential Effect:** Local economy will suffer as people can only just afford to spend on essential items  
**Management Controls:** The council is continuing to support residents to access advice and support to enable them to better manage their financial situation.  
**Progress Comment:** Welfare Rights and Supporting People teams worked with residents during the year to explore areas of income maximisation for residents of the County.

Last Updated: 28-Jan-2019



# Performance Progress Report – Appendix 2 – Ambitious Council

Flintshire County Council



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## 2 Ambitious Council



### Actions

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
2.1.1.1 The Regional Economic Growth Deal will be developed to final approval stages with UK and Welsh Government this year, including agreement of funding allocations and formal governance arrangements	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN
<p><b>ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:</b> The detailed proposition document has been developed. The UK and Welsh Governments have announced funding support for the Growth Deal and further work is underway to identify which areas of work will be included.</p> <p>Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019</p>							

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ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
2.1.1.2 Guide the development of the Deeside Enterprise Zone (DEZ) and Northern Gateway mixed use development site. Propose that developments maximise economic and social value for the County and that they deliver the commitments made in the Regional Economic Growth Deal	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN
<p><b>ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:</b> The Council continues to work closely with the DEZ Board, Welsh Government, the owners of the Northern Gateway development site and potential investors to support and secure investment proposals.</p> <p>Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019</p>							





ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
2.1.1.3 Develop a long term strategic approach to Council's economic estate/land	Lisa McLellan - Asset Manager	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	30.00%	 AMBER	 AMBER

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

The initial report on the Councils Industrial Estate has now been received. Detailed consideration needs to be given to the development of strategies which either release sites for the generation of capital receipts, invest to generate increased income, and review terms on renewal or the exercising of break clauses. It is of course important to note that these assets generate a significant revenue income stream for the Council so due care needs to be exercised in any approach. A more detailed approach to each estate is required and will begin to be undertaken in 2019. From this there will be series of recommendations which will seek to maximise income and minimise liability.



Last Updated: 15-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
2.1.1.5 Develop a more strategic approach to regenerating and supporting town centres in partnership with Town Councils	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

A new strategic approach to town centres has been developed and will be presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny in March 2019.



Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
2.1.1.6 Targeted regeneration investment programme (TRIP) - developing Flintshire's role and it's local programme	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2017	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

The Welsh Government Targeted Regeneration Investment programme is a capital programme to invest in regeneration projects. A North Wales Regeneration Plan has been developed to steer investment and has identified 4 priority settlements for the first tranche of activity based on their levels of deprivation - Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Wrexham and Bangor. Another 8 towns will also be able to benefit in the early stages of the programme and these include Holywell and Shotton. Although resources for the programme are limited development work is underway on potential projects for inclusion.

Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019

ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	STATUS	START DATE	END DATE	COMPLETE %	PROGRESS RAG	OUTCOME RAG
2.1.1.7 Propose that the development of regional and local transport strategy and initiatives maximise the potential for economic benefits and improves access to employment and tourism destinations	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	In Progress	01-Apr-2018	31-Mar-2019	75.00%	 GREEN	 GREEN

**ACTION PROGRESS COMMENTS:**

All current transport proposals under development form part of the wider North Wales Growth Vision which seeks to promote economic growth across the region. In the Flintshire context transport proposals focus on enabling residents to access employment opportunities to spread the benefits of economic growth.

Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019

**Performance Indicators**

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No KPIs available for this quarter

## RISKS

### Strategic Risk

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Infrastructure investment does not keep pace with needs and business is lost to the economy	Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	Amber	Amber	↔	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Infrastructure is essential to facilitating economic growth in Flintshire. If infrastructure is not improved then investment opportunities will be jeopardised and new jobs will not be created. Overloaded infrastructure will also increase the likelihood of business investment being lost to better serviced areas.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> i) The Council will play a leading role in regional structures promoting economic growth. ii) The Council will set out a clear plan for local infrastructure to meet regional and local needs.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> The North Wales Growth Deal will include a package of strategic infrastructure investment projects. At the local level the Deeside Plan sets out a strategy for transport investment to maximise the benefit of economic growth. Welsh Government has already announced major investment in strategic road infrastructure and in public transport to help deliver this strategy.</p> <p>Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019</p>						

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
Support for businesses in Flintshire doesn't meet their needs and fails to encourage investment	Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	Amber	Amber	↔	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Businesses feed back that they highly value the service provided by the Council to help them to navigate wider support and overcome barriers to growth. Business networking activity delivered by the Council also assist businesses to work and trade together. Reduction of this support may make the County less successful as a location for business.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> i) The Council will continue to engage businesses and help them to access support. ii) The Council will provide opportunities for businesses to network and support one another.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> The business development service in Flintshire remains responsive to business needs. The Council works closely alongside Welsh Government and other agencies to provide a co-ordinated service.</p> <p>Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019</p>						

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
The stability of local and sub-regional economies	Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	Amber	Amber	↔	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Instability in the local and regional economies would lead to reduced business investment and significant job losses.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> Maintain an intelligence base on potential risks and mitigation measures.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> The Council continues to monitor changes and trends in the UK and regional economies that may have an impact on Flintshire's economy. The main area of uncertainty, Brexit, remains difficult to predict and quantify whilst the negotiated settlement with the European Union remains unknown.</p> <p>Last Updated: 10-Jan-2019</p>						

RISK TITLE	LEAD OFFICER	SUPPORTING OFFICERS	INITIAL RISK RATING	CURRENT RISK RATING	TREND ARROW	RISK STATUS
The region having a sufficient voice at Welsh Government and UK Government levels to protect its interests	Andrew Farrow - Chief Officer - Planning, Environment and Economy	Niall Waller - Service Manager - Enterprise and Regeneration	Amber	Yellow	↓	Open
<p><b>Potential Effect:</b> Decisions are taken on national and regional economic issues, infrastructure investment or other programmes which do not meet the needs of the Flintshire economy.</p> <p><b>Management Controls:</b> Play a major role in the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Mersey Dee Alliance and the Rail Task Force.</p> <p><b>Progress Comment:</b> The Council has a lead role in developing the role and functions of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and is closely involved in the work of the Mersey Dee Alliance. The Council also represents the region on the Rail Task Force and supports the All Party Parliamentary Group on transport. The Council is closely involved in the development of the outline projects for the regional Growth Deal and both the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive play a leading role in the development of the new Joint Committee for North Wales. Negotiations with UK and Welsh Governments are progressing to plan.</p> <p>Last Updated: 29-Jan-2019</p>						



## COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday, 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2019
<b>Report Subject</b>	Forward Work Programme
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	N/A
<b>Report Author</b>	Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

### RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME</b>
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?</li><li>2. Is it an area of major change or risk?</li><li>3. Are there issues of concern in performance?</li><li>4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?</li><li>5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?</li></ol>
<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None as a result of this report.
<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	Publication of this report constitutes consultation.
<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	None as a result of this report.
<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Current Forward Work Programme
<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Ceri Shotton Overview &amp; Scrutiny Facilitator</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702305</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk">ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

7.00	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<b>Improvement Plan:</b> the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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**CURRENT FWP**

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Report Author	Submission Deadline
<p><b>Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019</b> 10.00 am</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 177</p>	<p><b>Welfare Reform Update – Universal Credit Roll Out</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on the impact of Welfare Reform on Flintshire residents</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Benefits Manager</p>	
	<p><b>Digital Connectivity Development</b></p>	<p>To update Committee Members on the development of digital infrastructure in North Wales and in Flintshire</p>	<p>Information sharing</p>	<p>Service Manager – Enterprise and Regeneration</p>	
	<p><b>Specialist Housing</b></p>	<p>To consider how the Council will meet the needs of applicants with specialist needs through specialist housing</p>	<p>Consultation</p>	<p>Customer Support Manager</p>	
	<p><b>New Homes Board</b></p>	<p>To receive an update on the work of the New Homes Board</p>	<p>Assurance/Monitoring</p>	<p>Housing Strategy Manager</p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019</b> 10.00 am</p>	<p><b>Quarter 4/Year-end Council Plan 2018/19 Monitoring Report</b></p>	<p>To enable Members to fulfil their role in relation to performance monitoring</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Facilitator</p>	
	<p><b>Homeless Local Action Plan Update</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on progress being made in relation to the Homeless Local Action Plan</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)</p>	

	<p><b>Update on Housing Rent Income</b></p> <p><b>Modular Homes</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on current Rent Arrears</p> <p>To receive a report on the concept and options available in using modular homes to increase the supply of Council properties.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Information sharing</p>	<p>Revenues Manager</p> <p>Housing Strategy Manager</p>	
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**Items to be scheduled to a date**

- Update on private sector housing renewal strategy
- Update report on stairwell at Castle Heights Flint – as suggested during the 20<sup>th</sup> September meeting
- Smart Metres – as suggested during the 16<sup>th</sup> October meeting.
- Current borrowing conditions and interest rates – as suggested during the 11<sup>th</sup> September County Council meeting

**REGULAR ITEMS**

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
<b>Quarterly / Annual</b>	<b>Performance Reporting</b>	To consider performance outturns for improvement targets against directorate indicators.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)  Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
<b>Six monthly</b>	<b>Welfare Reform Update – including Universal Credit</b>	To update Members on the impact of Welfare Reform and the cost to the Council.	Benefits Manager
<b>Six monthly</b>	<b>Update on North East Wales Homes &amp; Property Management</b>	To update Members on the work of the North East Wales Homes & Property Management	Service Manager – Housing Programmes
<b>Annually – September</b>	<b>WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update</b>	To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme. Report to include information around the use of local labour and number of apprentices and school leavers.	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
<b>Quarterly</b>	<b>Update on Housing Rent Income</b>	To provide an update on rent collection and current arrear levels	Revenues Manager

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