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Auditor General for Wales

Housing Adaptations



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The Wales Audit Office study team was managed by Nick Selwyn and comprised Steve Frank, Gareth Jones, Euros Lake, Duncan Mackenzie, Sara Leahy and Sara Woollatt under the direction of Jane Holownia

Huw Vaughan Thomas
Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

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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 homes¹, 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 environment². 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 data³ highlights that a higher proportion of the Welsh population consider themselves to be in poor health than is the case in England. Welsh Government projections⁴ 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’⁵ 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 poor⁶. 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 **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.**

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). **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:**

- **setting appropriate strategic objectives for adaptations that focus on wellbeing and independence;**
- **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**
- **linking the system for managing and delivering adaptations with adapted housing policies and registers to make best use of already adapted homes.**

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 ⁷ 	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.

⁷ 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 adaptations⁸ 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.⁹ Outside of this funding, no other health body provides resources to support adaptation work in their community.

⁹ 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
Disabled Facilities Grants taken from the local-authority Capital budget	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%
Local-authority Housing Revenue Account funding for adaptations to local-authority housing	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%
Traditional housing associations Physical Adaptation Grants provided by the Welsh Government	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
Traditional housing associations' own resources used to fund adaptation works	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%
Large Scale Voluntary Transfer housing associations – own resources used to fund adaptations	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%
Rapid Response Adaptation Programme provided by the Welsh Government	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%
Total	Amount spent in cash terms	£58,701,732	£58,354,681	£60,348,828	2.8%
	Amount spent in real terms	£60,169,077	£58,942,899	£60,348,828	0.3%
	Numbers assisted	28,594	32,158	31,941	11.7%

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.

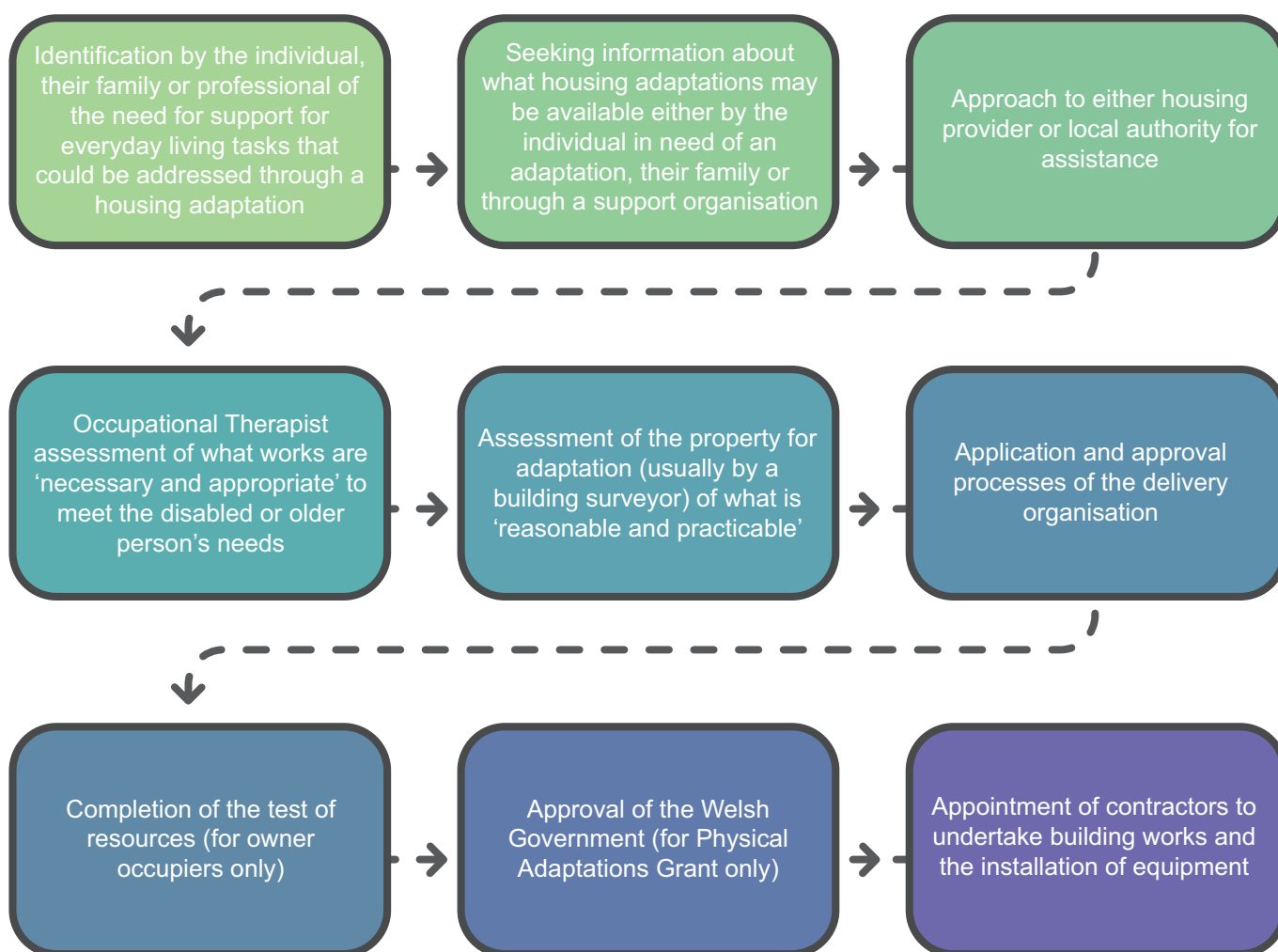
Part 2

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

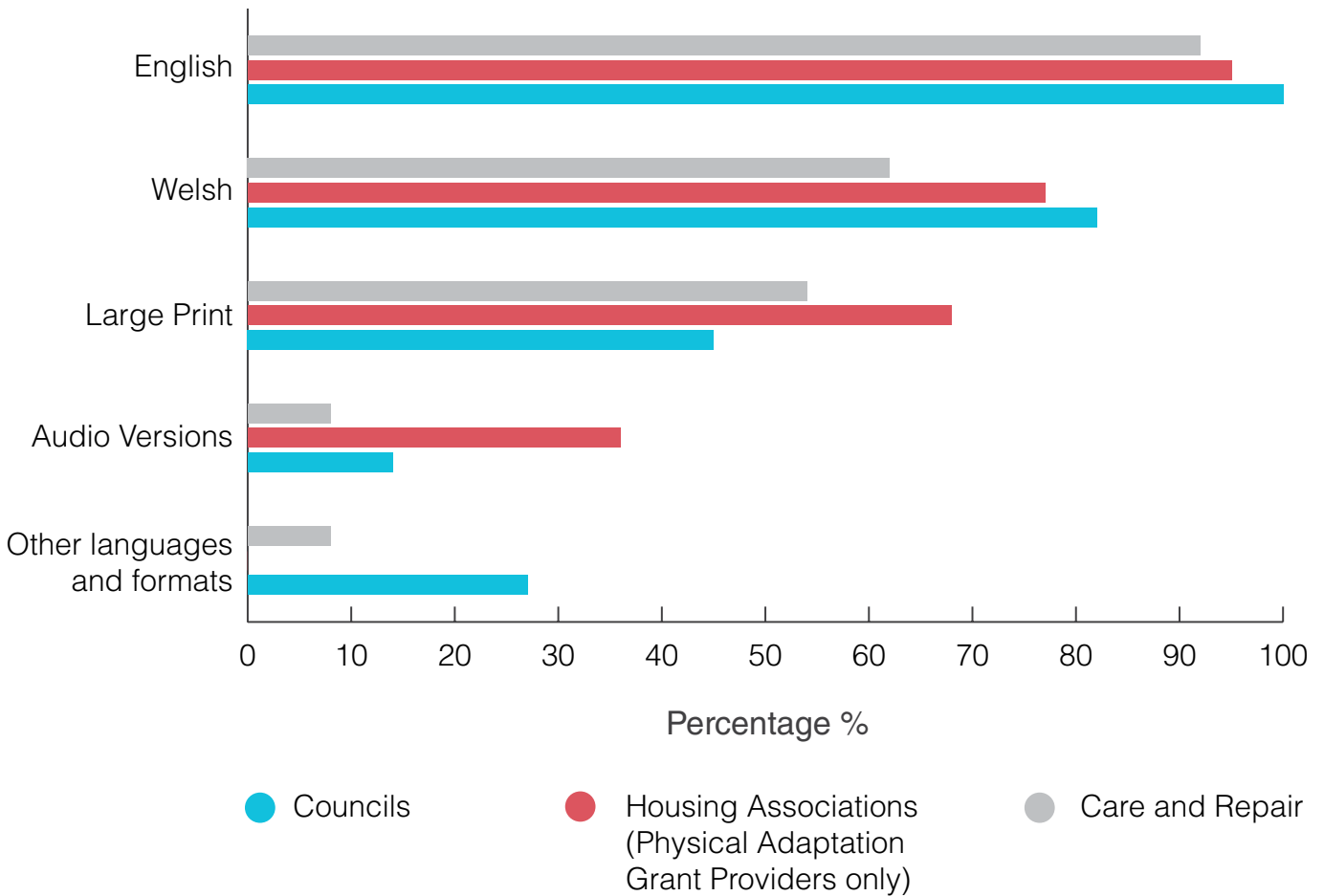
- 2.4 For a service that provides support to some of the most vulnerable people in society, effective promotion is crucial in order to ensure that all those who could benefit from the service are aware of its existence, the opportunities it provides, how they can use it and ultimately, maintain their 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.

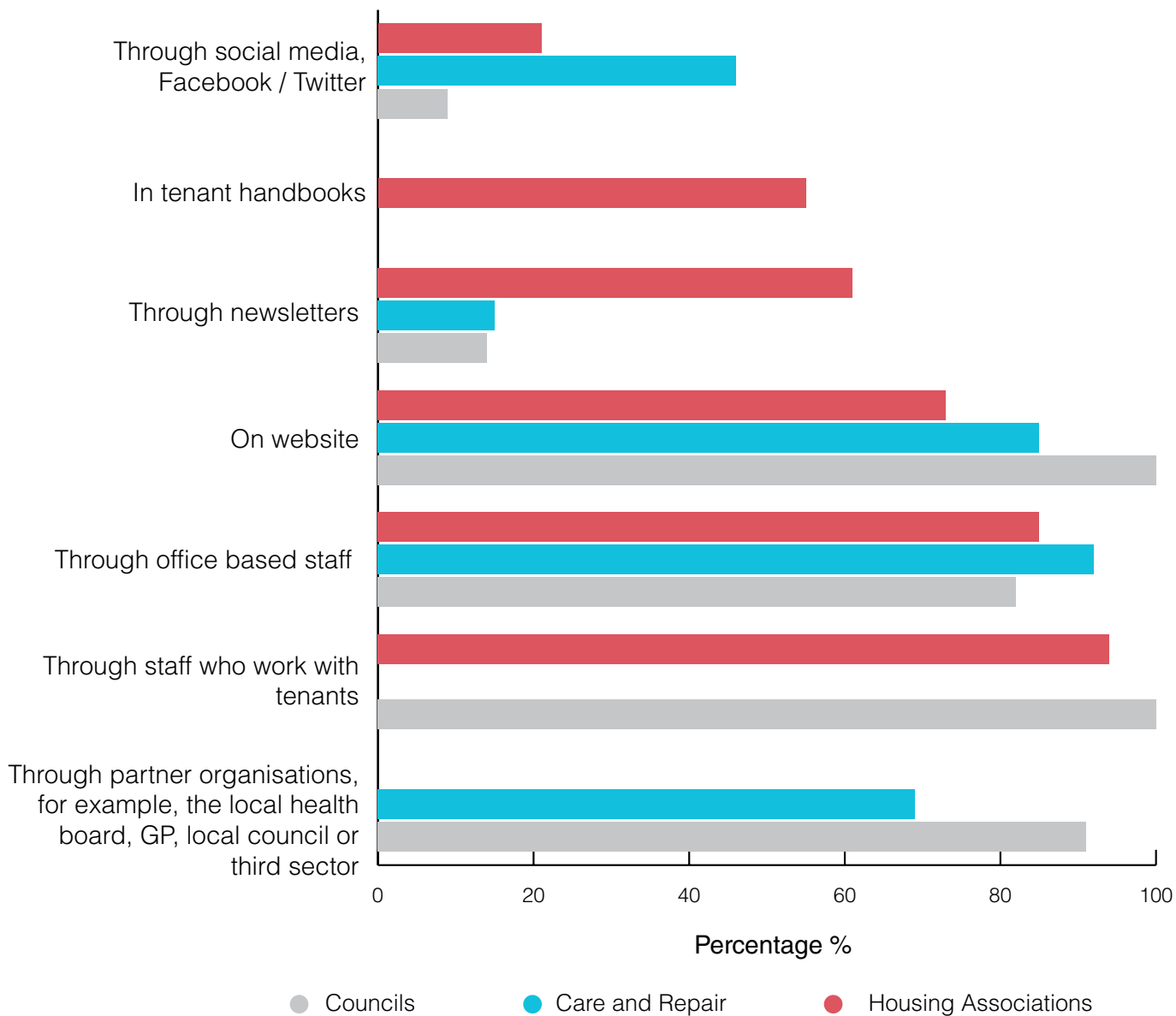
2.11 Whilst health bodies are well aware of benefits of adaptations on avoidable admissions and in supporting discharge, respondents to our surveys noted poor communication, limited knowledge and understanding with GPs, hospital staff and commissioners as major blocks to making better use of adaptations. 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

Criteria			
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 Assessors¹⁰ 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.

¹⁰ 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 resources¹¹ 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.

11 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.

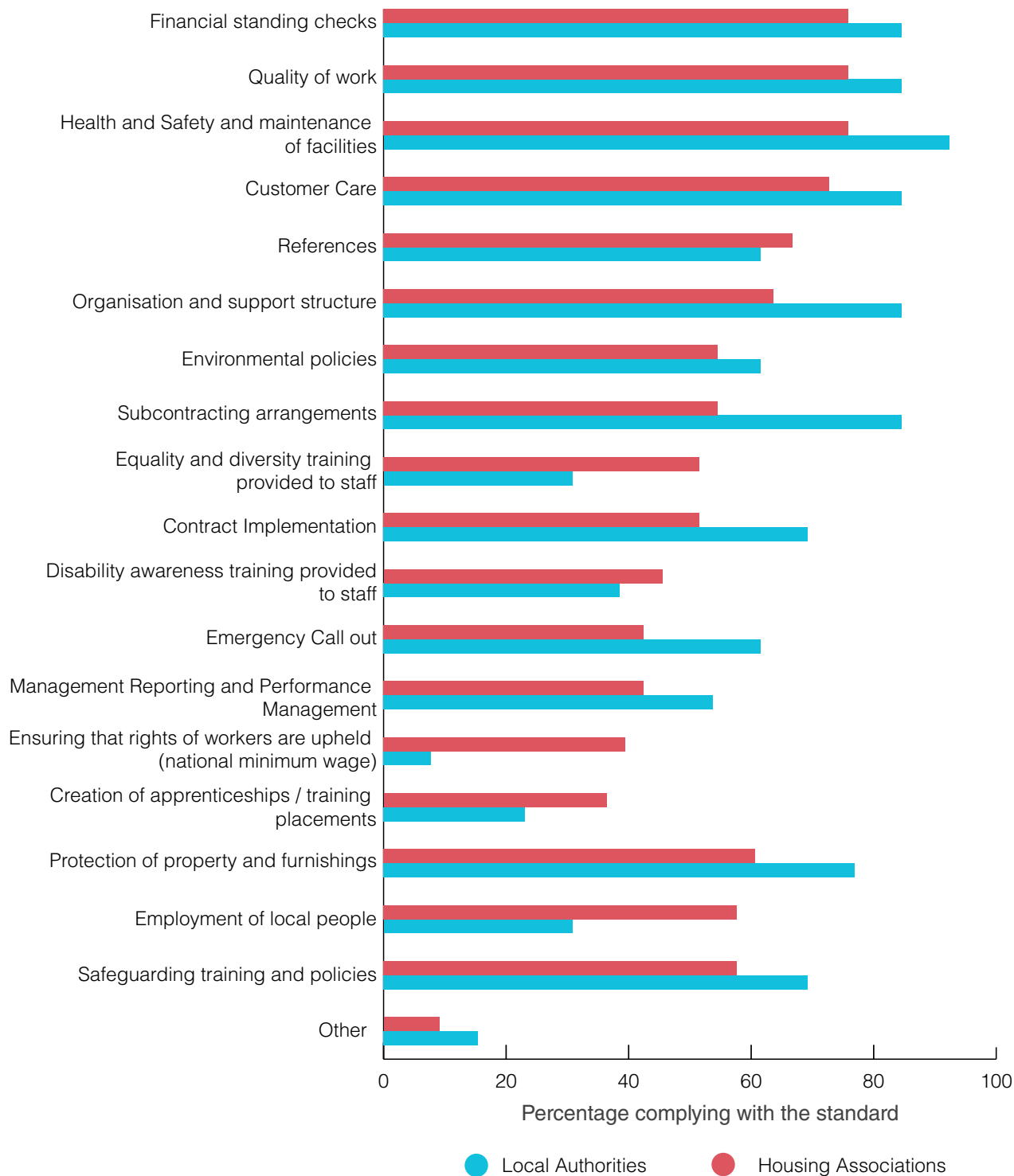
- 2.37 Half of local authorities use approved contractor lists to procure building works and only work with builders they have approved to undertake adaptation work. This is proportionally much lower than housing associations where 27 of the 33 operate approved contractor lists for adaptations. Other 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.¹²
- 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 Line¹³ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

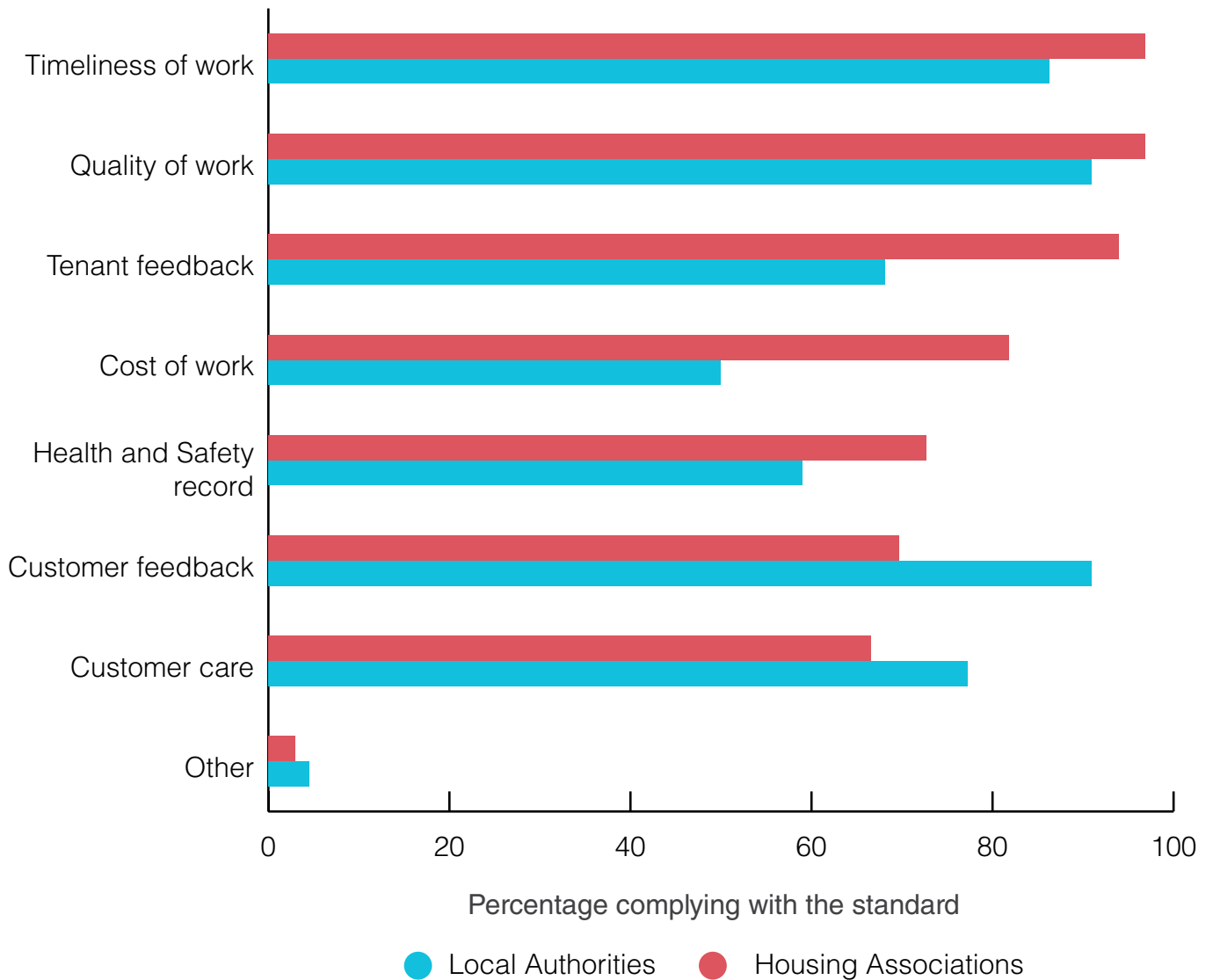
- 2.41 From our survey we found that a small number of local authorities and housing associations are using framework agreements as an alternative to tendering. These approaches allow contractors to achieve savings through economies of scale and some guarantee of the quantity of work they might receive. 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.¹⁴
- 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.¹⁵ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

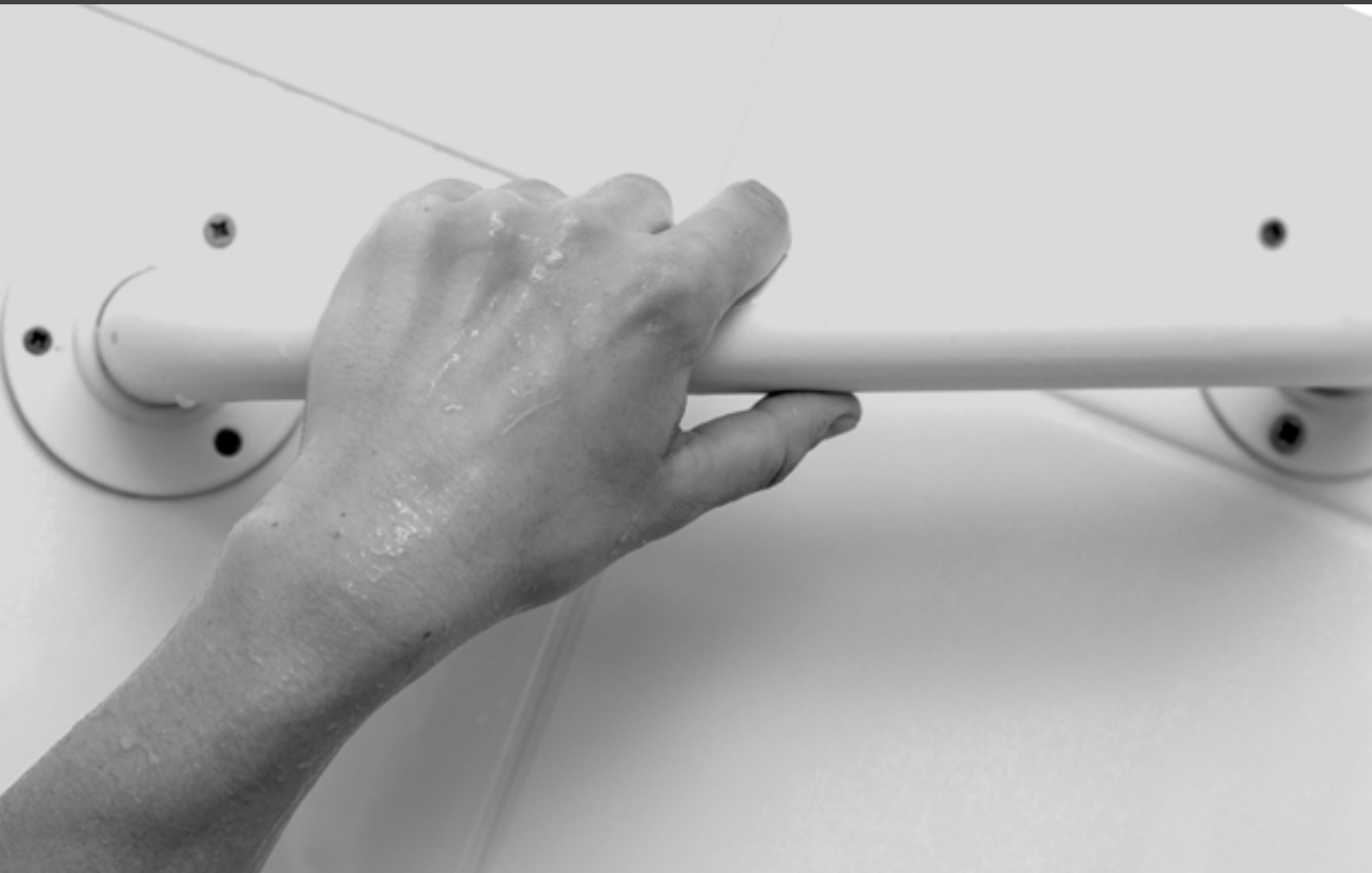
Exhibit 8: the criteria used by local authorities and housing associations to assess the performance of contractors and builders who deliver adaptations



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

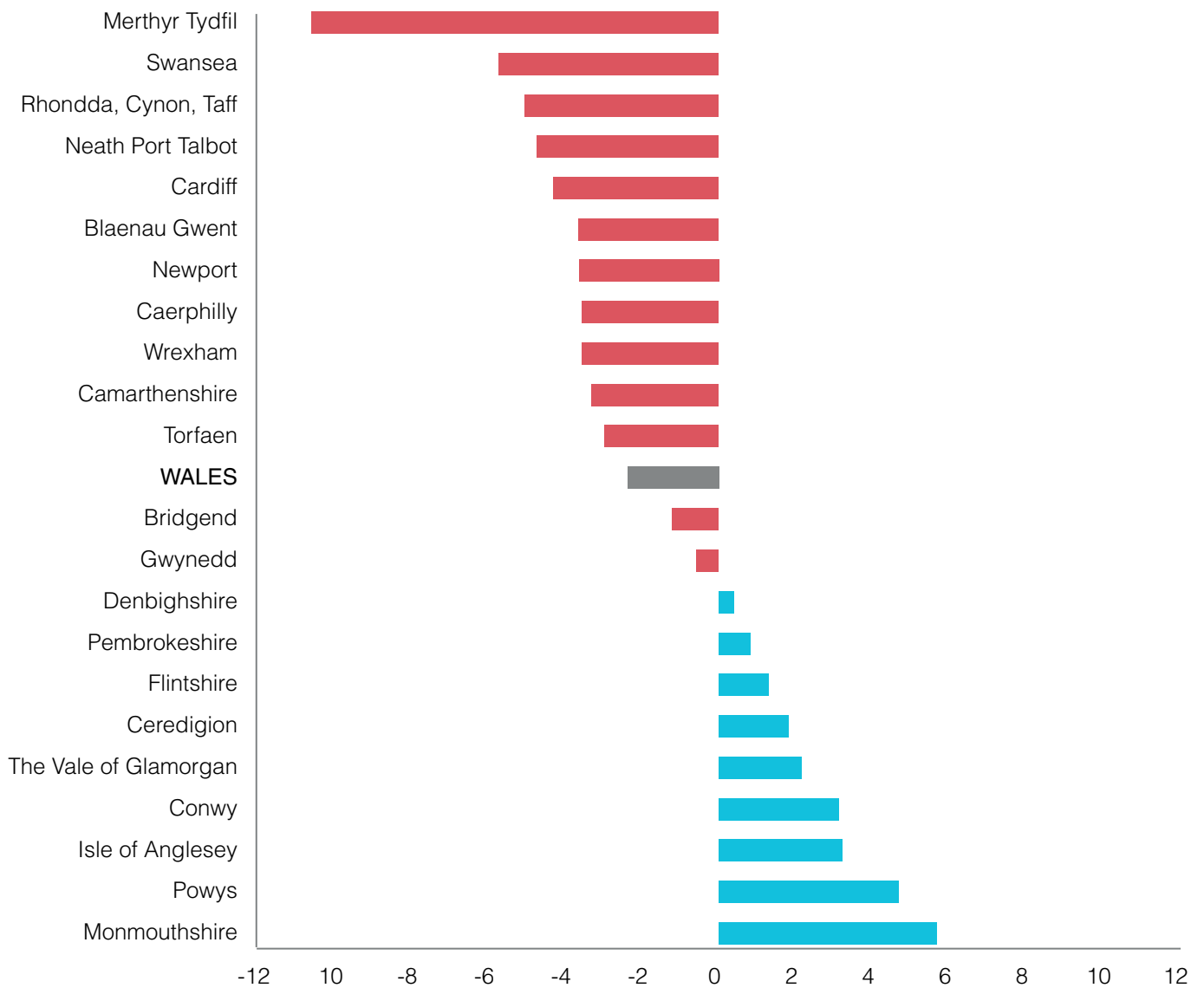
- 3.3 The rights of disabled and older people to receive help for adaptations determines that this is a needs-led service. Local authorities have a statutory duty to review the condition of the housing stock and the need for housing in their area, and have extensive powers to intervene where housing conditions are unacceptable and there is unmet housing need. Local housing authorities also have an obligation under legislation¹⁶ 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 data¹⁷ 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.

¹⁶ 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).

¹⁷ 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.

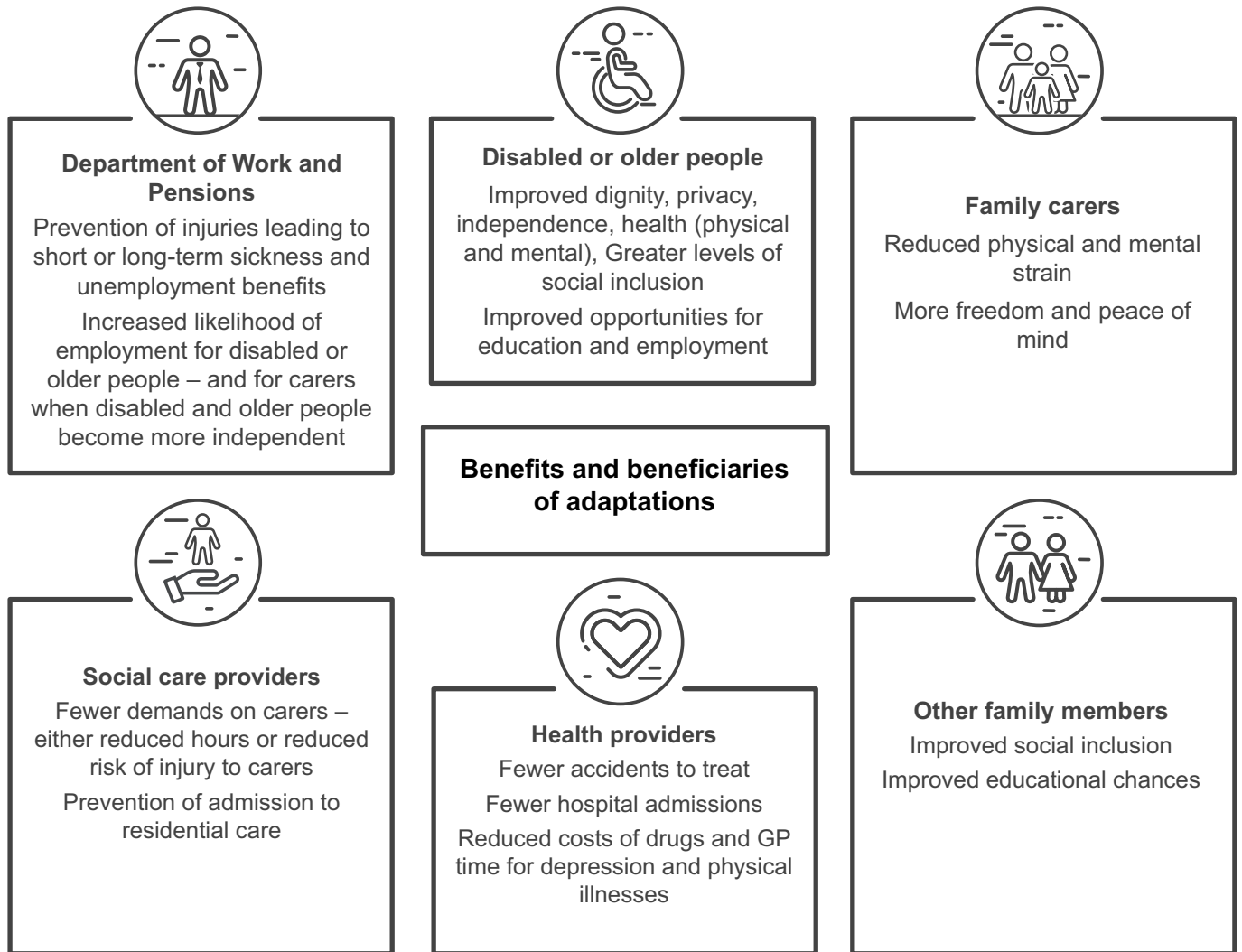
- 3.6 Over the next 20 years we expect to see an increase in the number of people in Wales who experience mobility problems and difficulties undertaking daily domestic tasks. In summary, Welsh Government projections at an all-Wales level show that the number of people who will struggle with domestic 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 Daffodil¹⁸ 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.

¹⁸ 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.

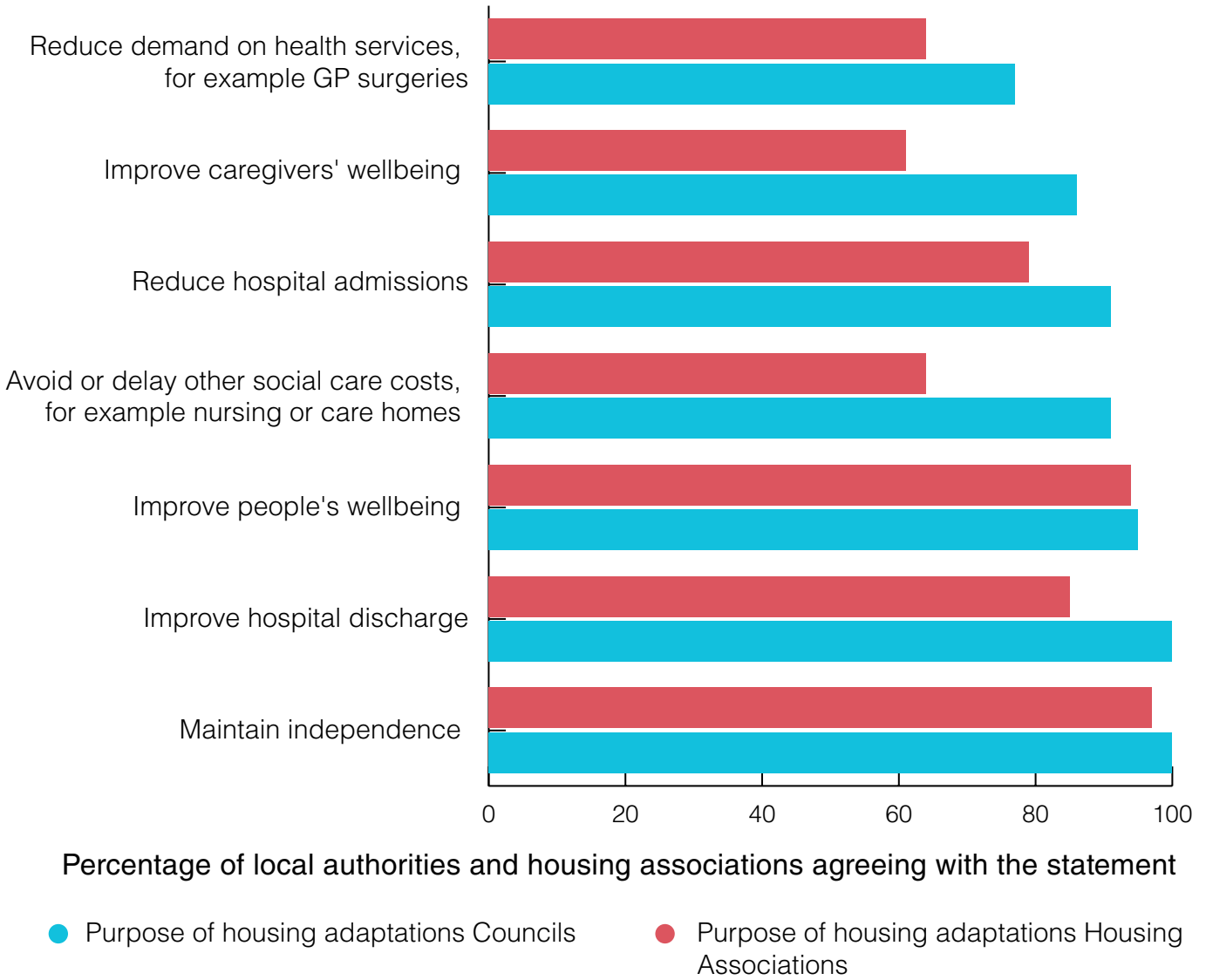
Exhibit 10: examples of the beneficiaries and benefits of adaptations



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 improvements¹⁹. 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.²⁰ 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.

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

21 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.

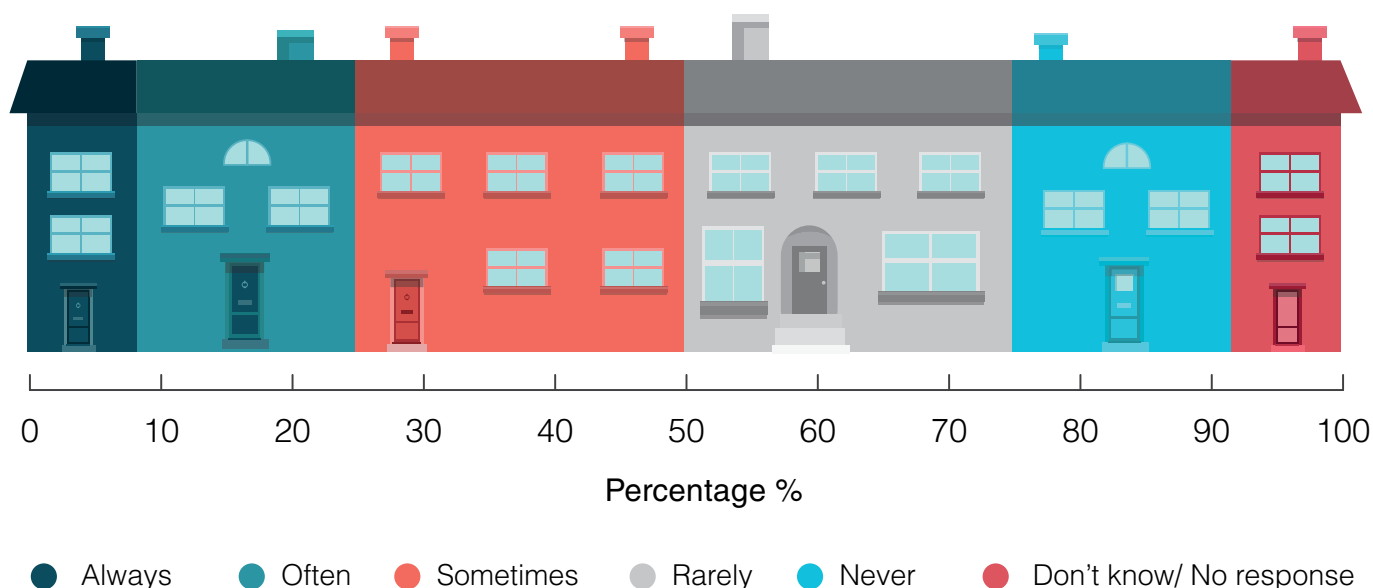
- 3.20 There are some areas where greater collaborative working across professional boundaries is taking place. For instance, GP surgeries working with Occupational Therapists, leading to improved outcomes for people in need of housing adaptations. Similarly, we identified some good examples of closer working with health professionals such as social prescribing²¹ 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

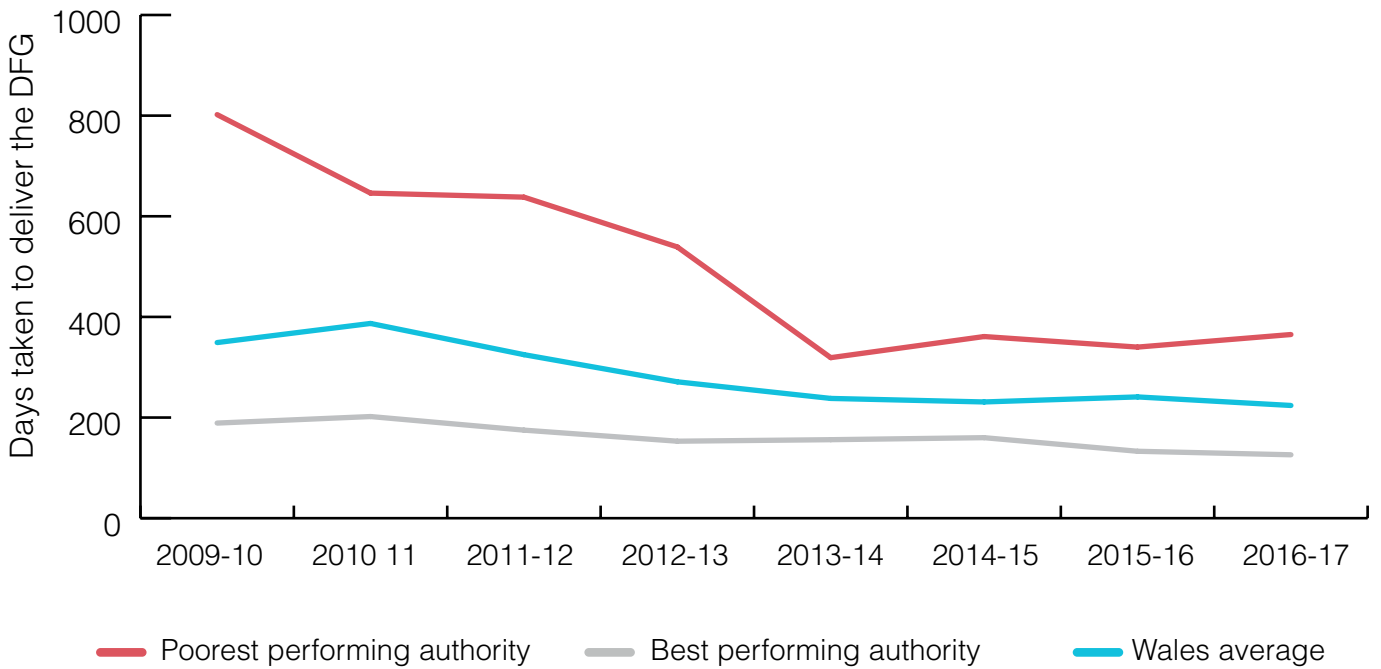
- 4.8 The key national performance indicator for DFGs measures the average number of days that local authorities take to deliver individual grants. However, performance measures assessing averages can mask the scale of local-authority performance and does not measure the impact or benefits of investment. 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.²² 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.

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

- 4.10 The Welsh Government's review of Independent Living Adaptations²³ 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.

²³ Welsh Government Social Research, [A Review of Independent Living Adaptations](#), January 2015

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.

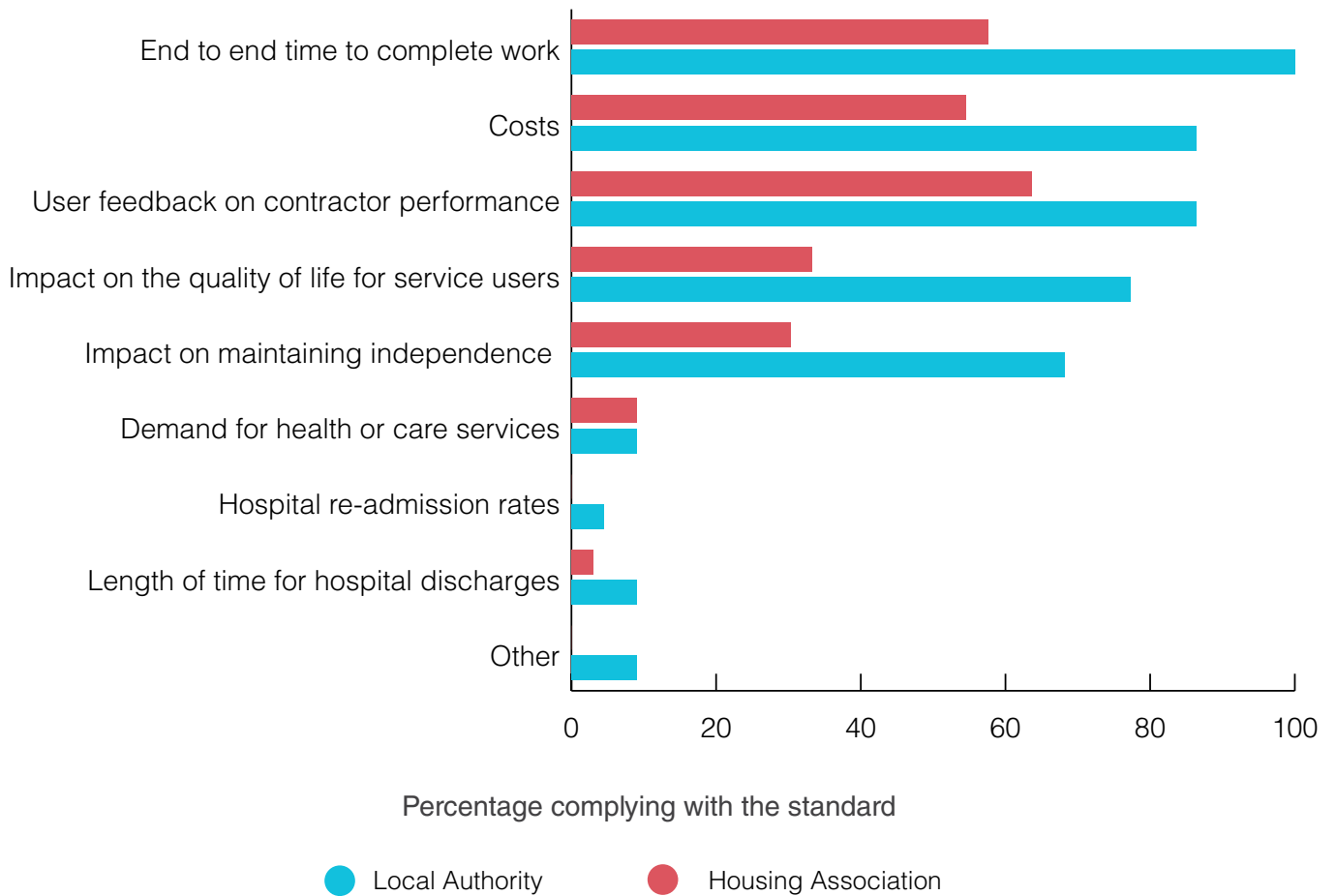
Performance management focuses too much on individual organisation inputs and outputs rather than improving outcomes and the preventative benefits of adaptations

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.²⁴ 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.

²⁴ 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

Local Authority	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	% change
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%

Local Authority	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	% change
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%
Wales	251,188	278,422	311,163	347,518	381,580	34.17%

Source: Welsh Government, Daffodil projections

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

Local Authority	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	% change
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%

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

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

Local Authorities	Member of cross-sector group	Regular meeting	Informal contact	Sharing information	Collocated staff	Pooled resources	No partnership arrangements
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.

Wales Audit Office

24 Cathedral Road

Cardiff CF11 9LJ

Tel: 029 2032 0500

Fax: 029 2032 0600

Textphone: 029 2032 0660

We welcome telephone calls in
Welsh and English.

E-mail: info@audit.wales

Website: www.audit.wales

Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru

24 Heol y Gadeirlan

Caerdydd CF11 9LJ

Ffôn: 029 2032 0500

Ffacs: 029 2032 0600

Ffôn Testun: 029 2032 0660

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau
ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

E-bost: post@archwilio.cymru

Gwefan: www.archwilio.cymru