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Institute of
Housing
Cymru

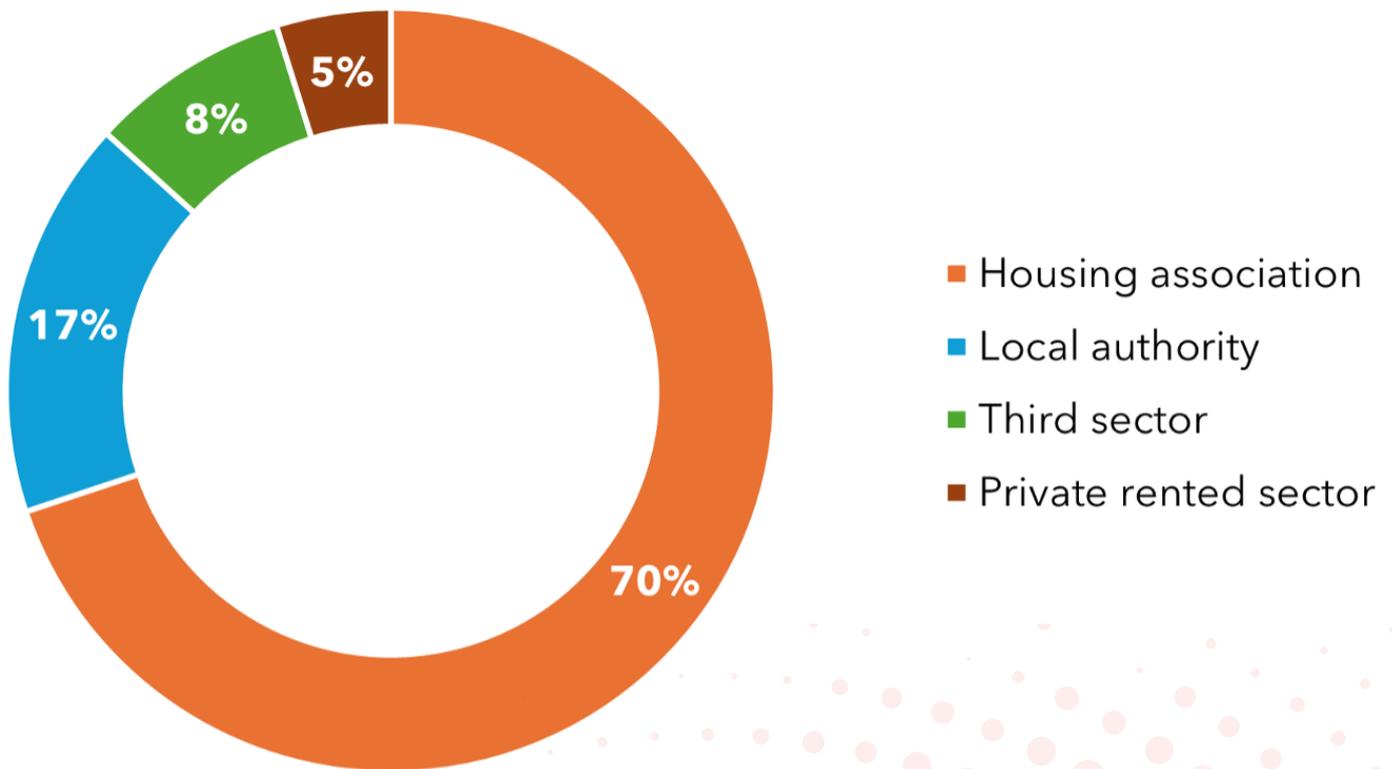
Sector Snapshot Winter 2025/26:

Survey of housing professionals in Wales

Introduction

This report is the latest in a series providing the results of our sector snapshot surveys of housing professionals in Wales. The series of sector snapshots have provided invaluable data on the lived experience of housing professionals in Wales and their priorities for the Welsh government. Previous iterations of this report helped inform our manifesto asks for the 2026 Senedd election.

This survey ran during November and December 2025 and received a total of 86 responses. This is higher than the 69 responses for the snapshot we published in April 2025. The results of the survey continue the narrative of respondents wanting to work in housing to make a difference yet need more resources and support to navigate the pressures they are facing. Our respondents to the survey worked for the following:



NB: Third sector is defined as organisations distinct from the public sector and the market and act as an intermediary to deliver services not provided by other organisations.

Executive summary

As we have seen throughout our series of sector snapshot surveys and reports people continue to work in housing to make a difference, whilst providing support to communities and residents.

“Making a difference to other people’s lives and the fact that housing is so varied and wide reaching.”

Respondents have also been clear that to make this difference they need more availability of housing support and an increased supply of affordable homes. Having the right level of homes coupled with sufficient housing support is seen as some of the key measures to tackle rising homelessness in Wales. Community cohesion is also a growing concern for some residents, reflective of the wider societal divisions we are seeing.

Our housing professionals are still facing pressures from high workloads, a lack of funding coupled with difficulty in recruiting. This is having a significant impact on respondents’ mental health and wellbeing with 74 per cent of respondents stating there has been some level of negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing. More telling than this is a tripling in the proportion of respondents stating that the pressures they are facing is having a major impact on their mental health and wellbeing. In our 2025 sector snapshot six per cent of all respondents stated the pressures were having a major impact on their mental health and wellbeing for our winter 2026 sector snapshot it is 21 per cent.

Respondents to the winter 2026 sector snapshot survey have again highlighted that one of their main asks for Welsh government is for them to listen more to the sector especially when it comes to policy or legislative changes which feel like a top-down approach rather than a collaboration. With respondents being clear about the negative impact this is having on individuals and the wider housing workforce in Wales.

“More and more legislation, even for good reason, creates more and more obligations and stress on existing staff who are already spread thinly and struggling to keep up with existing workloads and the need to satisfy all the other statutory compliance expectations.”

Most people work within the housing sector to make a difference and provide support to their communities and residents. This was the reason for 67 per cent of respondents. Others cited, tackling homelessness, developing homes, working in a role with a social value together with the culture and values of their organisations.

“Helping older homeowners with their worries and knowing you are helping them with a problem that they don’t know how to address themselves and to be somebody to share their concerns with.”

“I enjoy my job because it allows me to help people when they are sometimes at their lowest. I am also interested in continuously learning and developing my career.”

“I am motivated to work in the housing sector because I believe everyone deserves a safe place to call home. After working in the sector for nearly 17 years, seeing the positive impact that secure housing can have on individuals and families is what inspires me to continue working in the sector.”

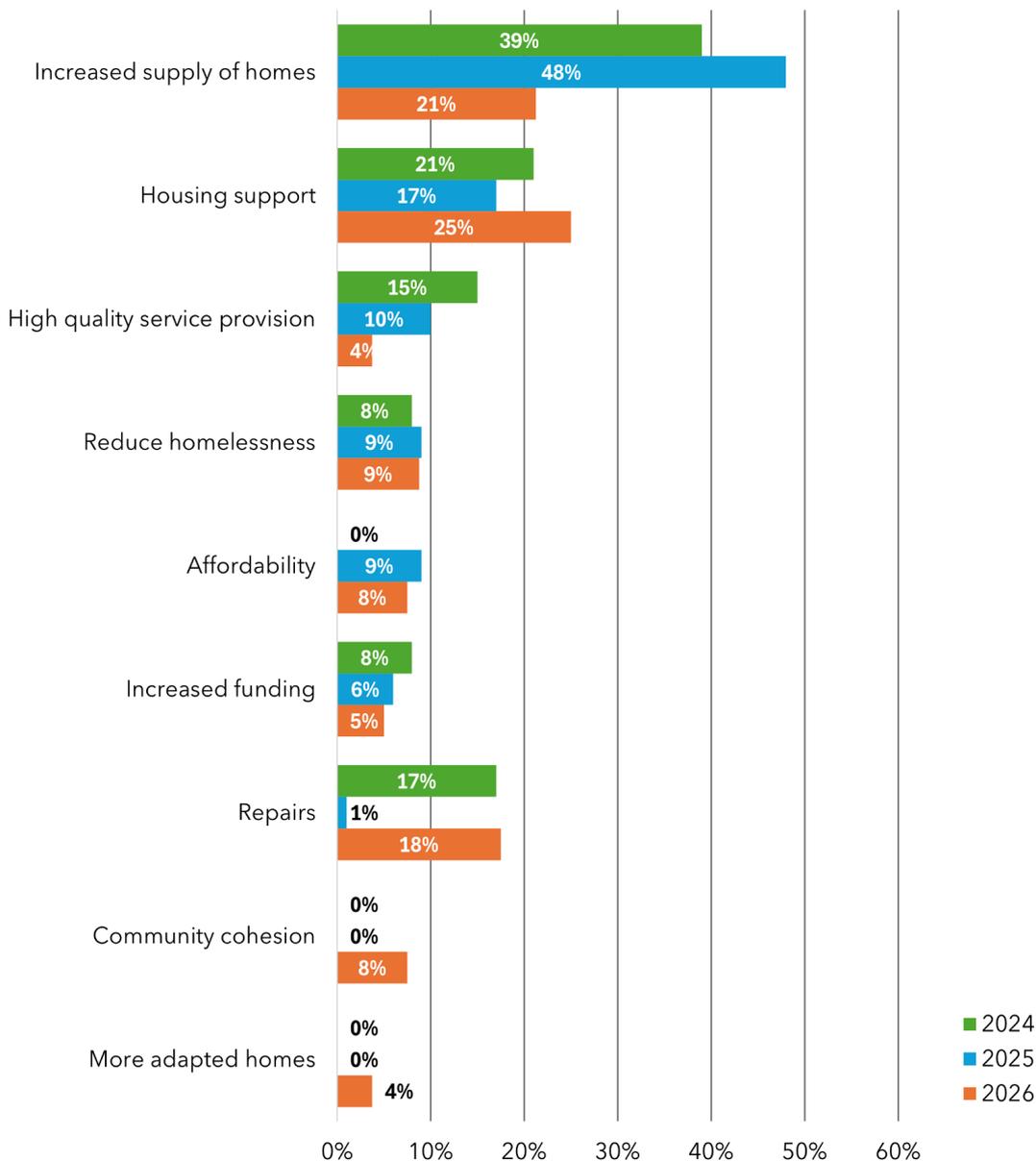
Survey results

What is the number one housing priority

For respondents to our winter 2026 sector snapshot the main housing priority was housing support (25 per cent) with an increased supply of homes being the second highest priority (21 per cent). This is a change to previous years where an increased supply of homes was consistently the top priority for respondents. It is likely that this is reflective of the increased levels of homelessness and housing support needs being seen by our members coupled with changes proposed to support provision in the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocations (Wales) Bill.

As seen in figure one community cohesion is a new priority for winter 2026 with eight per cent of respondents citing this as their top priority. With the majority of these respondents working within a housing association. Perhaps reflective of the wider social change we are seeing as a housing sector.

Figure one: Number one housing priority



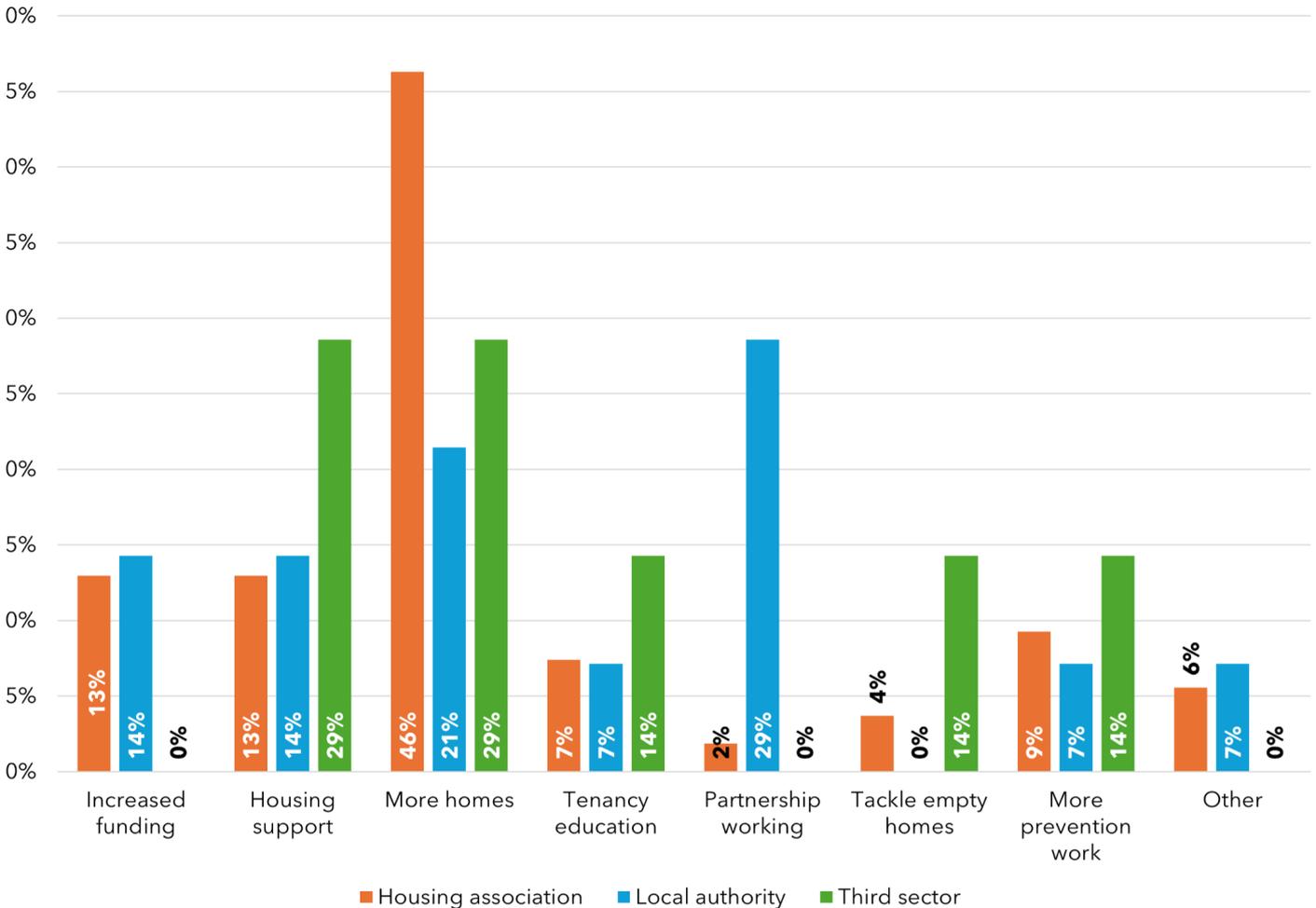
"My number one housing priority is assisting in creating comfortable, well-maintained homes in a safe neighbourhood that supports a good quality of life."

"More homes, it tackles a number of issues - housing prices, housing availability, homelessness, employment, economic growth and more"

What additional measures are needed to adequately tackle homelessness in Wales?

In previous sector snapshots respondents tended to be of the same view that in order to adequately tackle homelessness we need more homes. Whilst this is still an important measure for housing association respondents (46 per cent) for third sector and local authority respondents housing support and partnership working (both 29 per cent) were also seen as a vital component to tackling homelessness. Also as shown in figure two, third sector respondents also saw more prevention work and tackling empty homes a key measure to tackling homelessness.

Figure two: Additional measures needed to tackle homelessness

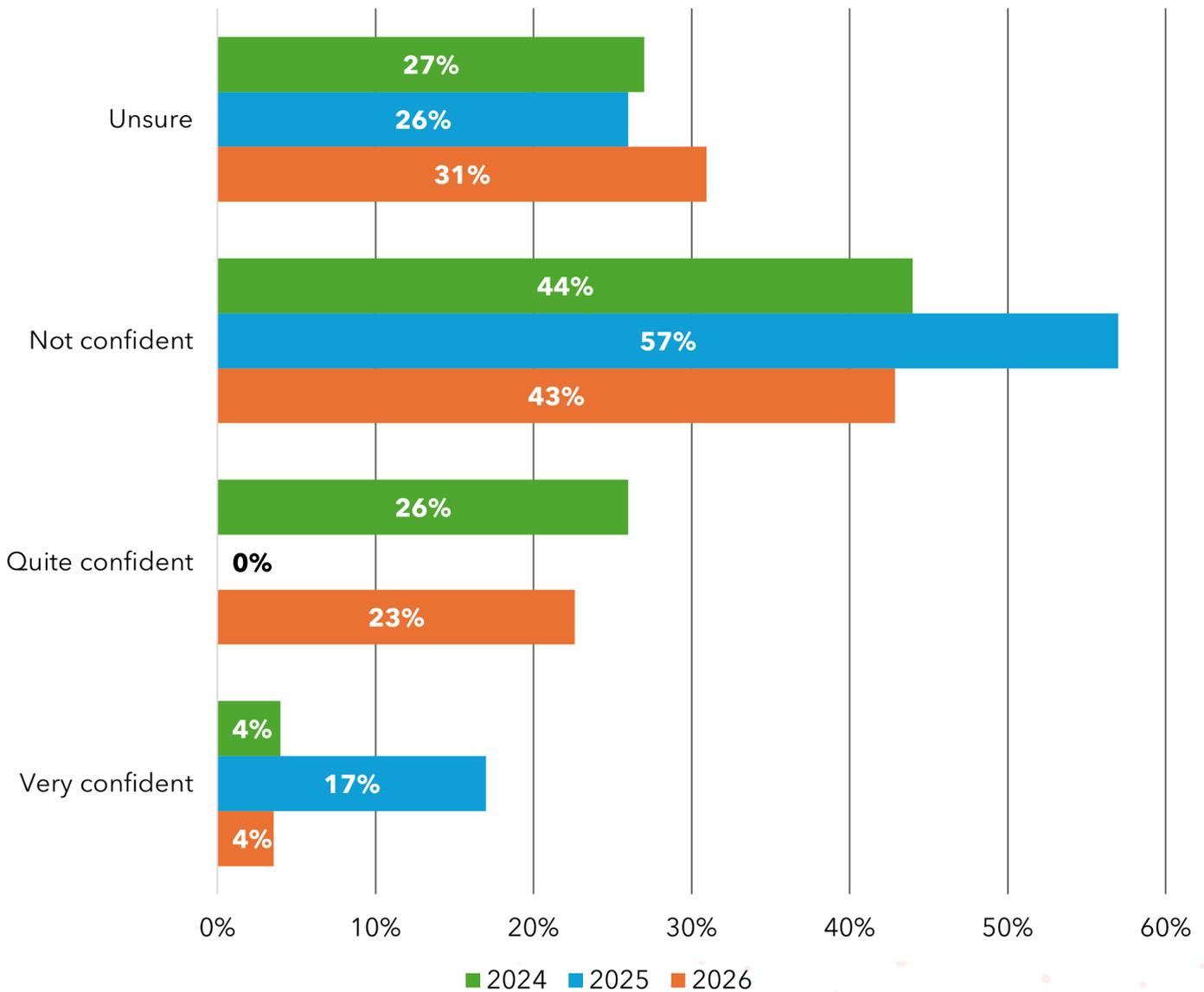


"I think we need to be working more joined up, with other agencies and other sectors, including probation, Police, social services, adult services, health we seem to be working in silo and this does not work. We need to build better relationships and invest in better IT systems to manage cases successfully so like the Welsh government want homelessness is a one off and short lived."

How confident are you in the housing sector meeting the Welsh government's target of 20,000 low carbon social homes?

Since we opened our survey Welsh government provided data for 2024/25 which seems to suggest that the 20,000 low carbon social homes target will not be met by the end of this Senedd term but rather by the end of 2026. This was cited in the narrative around this question by several respondents. Despite the wider data landscape, we have still provided in figure three the current levels of confidence in meeting the target which shows that 74 per cent of respondents are still unsure or not confident that the target will be met. This is lower than the level seen in 2025 (83 per cent) but higher than in 2024 (71 per cent).

Figure three: Level of confidence in meeting 20,000 additional homes target



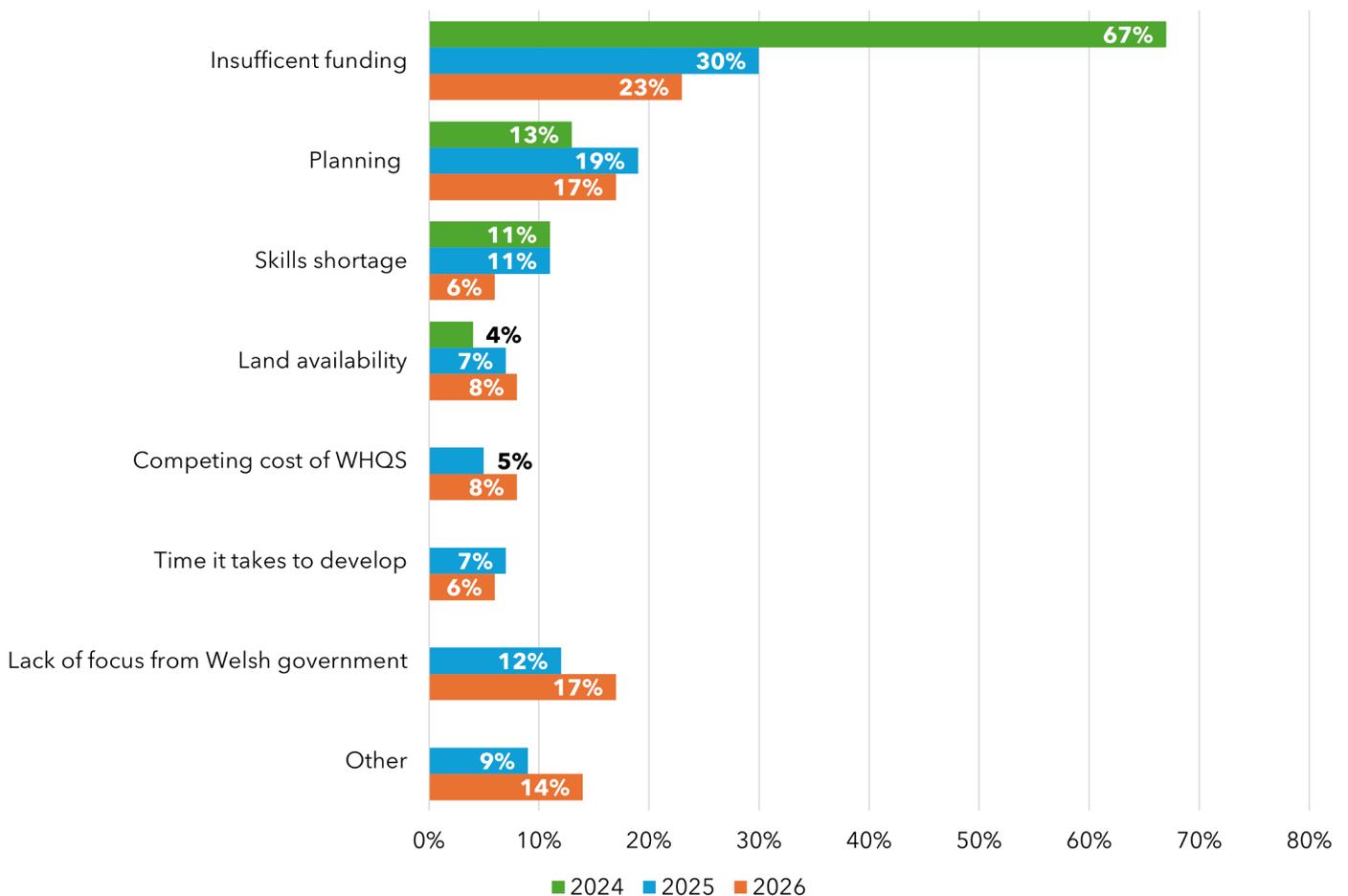
Reason for level of confidence in meeting the Welsh governments target of 20,000 low carbon social homes

Respondents can provide their own reasons for the level of confidence as part of our collation of qualitative data for the sector snapshot.

As most respondents to the previous question were not confident or unsure that the target would be met, figure four provides the reasons for this low level of confidence. As shown in the graph the main reason for the low level of confidence is insufficient funding with 23 per cent of respondents citing this reason. Since 2024 the proportion of respondents citing this reason had fallen significantly as other reasons have come to the fore.

Respondents also highlighted ongoing issues with planning and stated that they felt there was a “lack of focus” from Welsh government (both 17 per cent) These were the second largest reasons cited by respondents to the 2026 winter sector snapshot survey. There were also several other reasons in 2026 which included recalculating housing need coupled with too much red tape in the procurement process.

Figure four: Reason for level of confidence in meeting the 20,000 low carbon social homes target



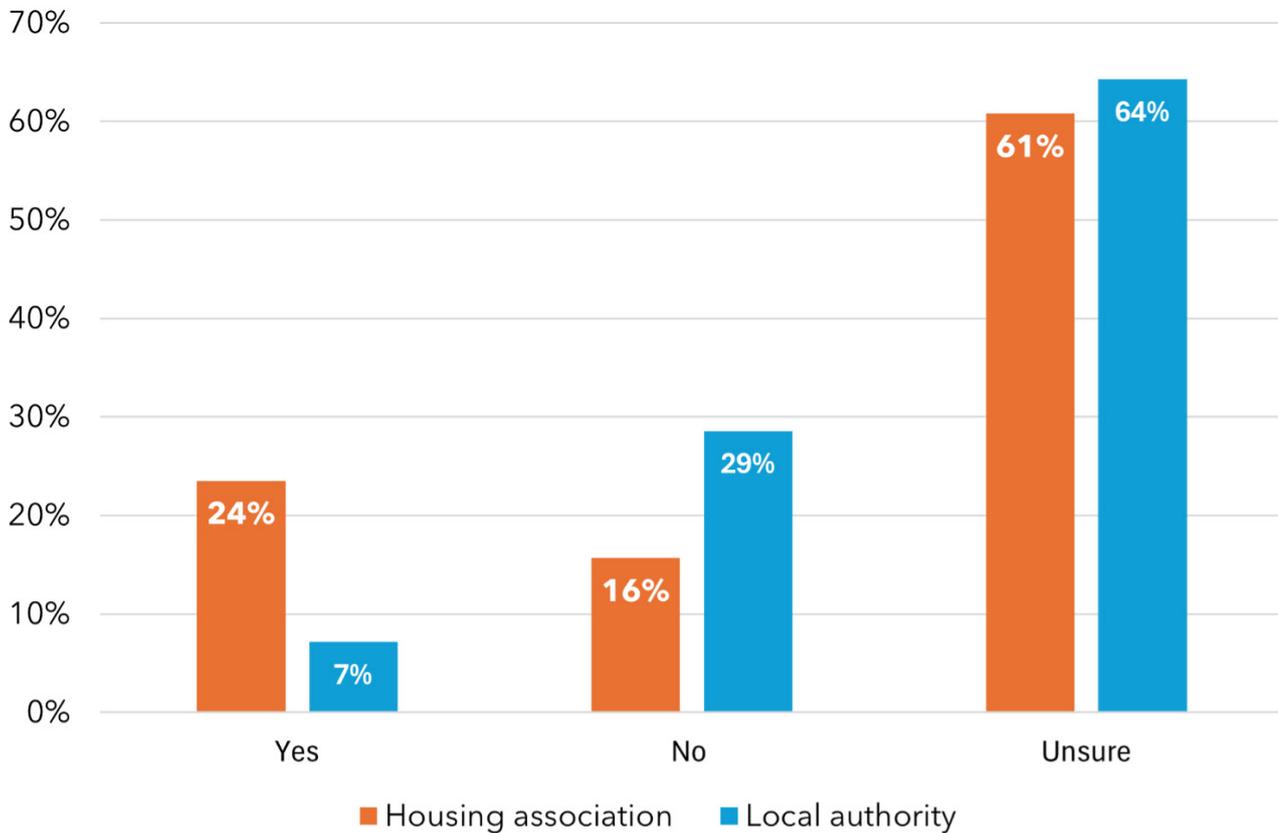
“The introduction of more and more red tape and administrative burdens, protocols and hurdles that hinder and slow down the entire development process”

“Current completion rates are way below target. We should have been much bolder in tackling phosphate issue when there was still a chance of meeting the target. Also action across Wales to recruit construction apprentices by social landlords, in partnership with further education colleges.”

Is your organisation's current development and decarbonisation ambitions compatible with the current level of funding received from Welsh government?

This was a new question for the 2025 sector snapshot and after having repeated conversations with members about these competing priorities we repeated it for the winter 2026 survey. As we saw in 2025 most respondents to our winter 2026 survey were unsure that the targets were compatible though a quarter of housing association respondents did think the targets were compatible with the level of funding.

Figure five: Are development and decarbonisation targets compatible with level of funding?



"We cannot afford to build more homes than we do - there isn't enough capacity. Decarbonisation of all the existing stock without real government input would simply bankrupt the sector."

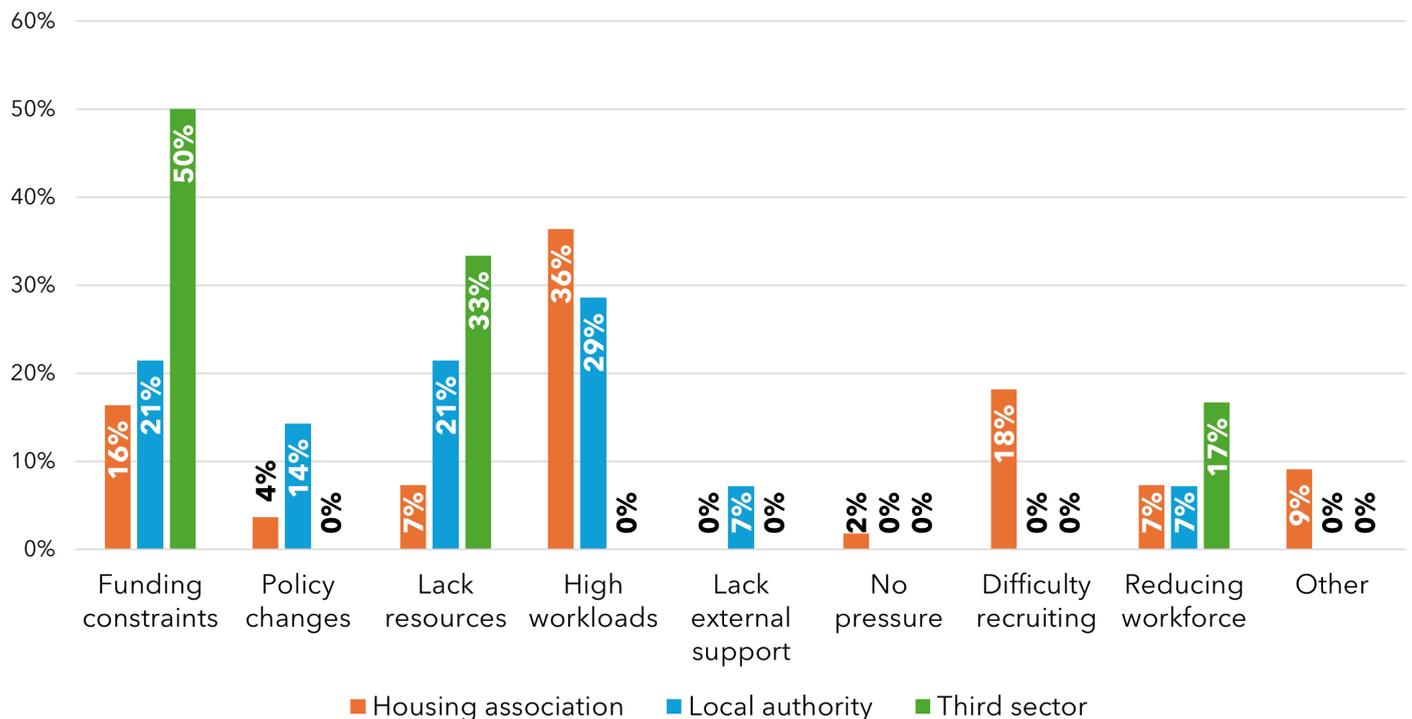
"We need engagement with Welsh government to talk about how we can generate income (whatever happened to UNNOS) and proactive leadership."

What are some of the current pressures you are facing in your role?

Respondents to the winter 2026 survey outlined that their biggest pressure was a high workload (32 per cent) and a lack of funding or resources (33 per cent). This is similar to 2025 where a lack of funding or resources was the top priority for 40 per cent of respondents.

When we look at the pressures by organisation type as shown in figure six, funding constraints was a pressure for 50 per cent of respondents working in a third sector organisation. For housing association respondents' difficulty in recruiting (18 per cent) and high workloads were significant pressures. Local authority respondents saw high workloads (29 per cent) and policy changes (14 per cent) as their biggest pressures. Policy change as a pressure for local authorities is perhaps not surprising as the building safety and homelessness legislation is likely to have more impact for them.

Figure six: Current pressures

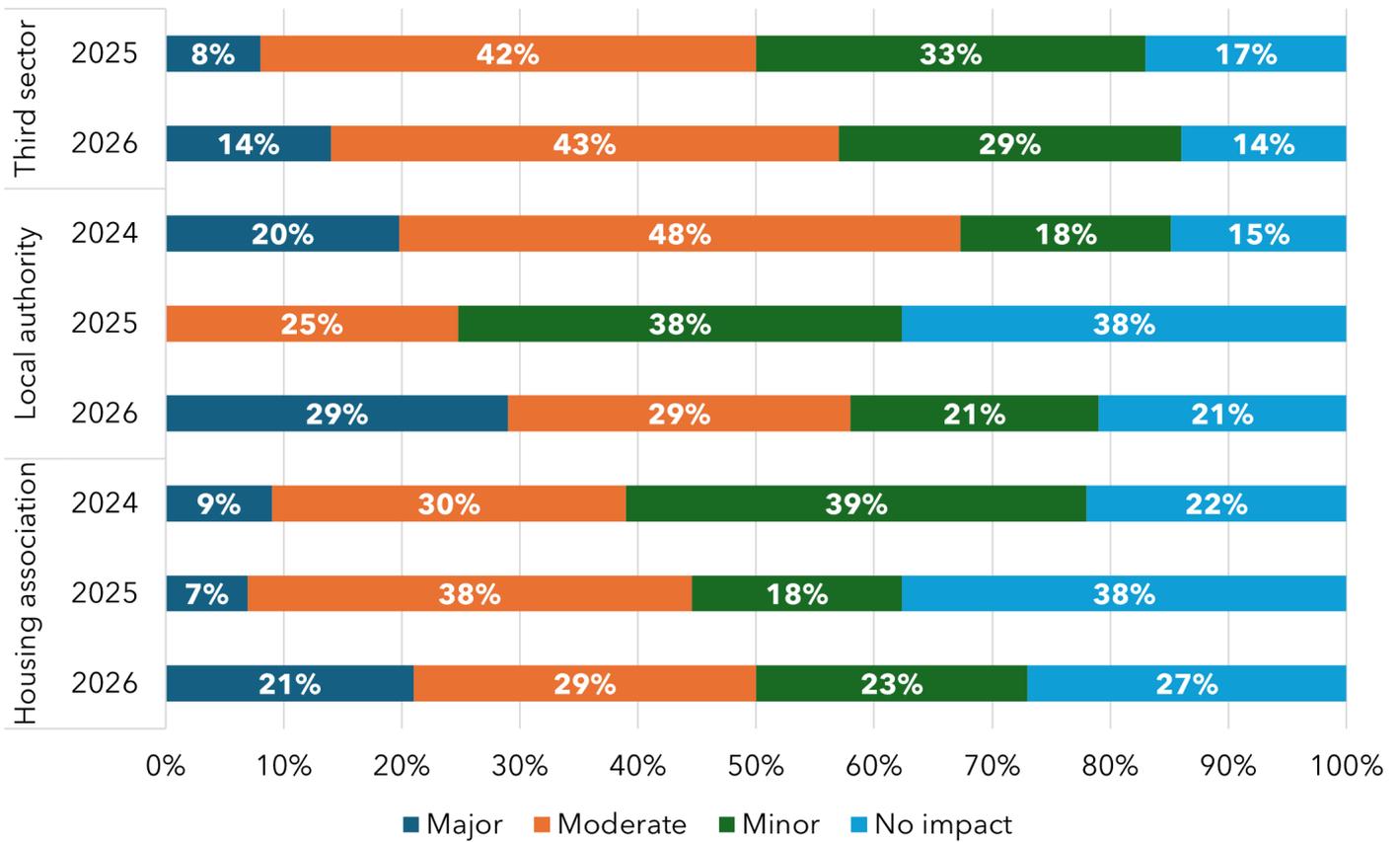


What impact are these pressures having on your mental health and wellbeing?

Nearly three quarters of respondents (74 per cent) to our winter 2026 survey outlined that the pressures they were facing had some impact to their mental health and wellbeing. This is higher than in 2025 when 66 per cent of respondents experienced a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

The responses to the winter 2026 survey also seem to be showing an overall trend where there is an increase in the proportions of respondents who are experiencing a major impact on their mental health and wellbeing. As shown in figure seven the proportion of respondents who state the current pressures are having a major impact on their mental health and wellbeing has nearly doubled for those working in the third sector and in housing associations. For local authorities in 2025 no respondents stated there was a major impact on their mental health and wellbeing this is now 29 per cent of respondents in 2026. The proportion of respondents stating there has been a worsening impact on their mental health and wellbeing is a concerning trend and shows the ongoing impact of pressures on Welsh housing professionals.

Figure seven: Impact of pressures on mental health and wellbeing of individuals



"Increased anxiety over job failure and worry that residents will die."

"At the moment it is minor, but there have been times in this job that I have been ready to pack it all in. Lack of staff was a major issue. Which created unrealistic workloads. Yes, we have now expanded to one extra housing officer, but it will come to a time where that needs to be changed, and we will need more again."

"Pressures seem to be increasing within the team. Management is also feeling the pressure. The uncertainty on the new bills coming into place is leaving everyone feeling on edge. There is no support for staff dealing with complex issues. I often finish work and continue working at home. I find it difficult to switch off from work."

"I am just in a constant rush and chasing my tail not allowing me to relax or give full focus to my own life as you are mentally drained at the end of a day/week."

How would you address some of these pressures?

Unsurprisingly many of the suggestions made to ease the pressures face relate to an increase in funding, and more workforce resource to help ease the size of workloads individuals are currently managing. Also as seen in previous sector snapshot survey's respondents were clear that other public services need more funding as often housing organisations are having to step into the gap when someone reaches a crisis putting their tenancies at risk.

What is different in the winter 2026 sector snapshot is respondents highlighting a need for more focus on partnership working with other public services, wanting mandated qualifications, centralised systems to prevent duplication of work and a relaxation of some housing standards to enable empty homes to be brought into use. This mirrors what we are hearing from members as we engage with them around policy and legislative changes.

"I believe that housing needs to be able to just deal with accommodation, however it appears to be the panacea of every other service within social care. more attention needs to be directed to working in unison with other statutory services."

"It's not enough anymore to perform the role required. People can't continue to work for less while there are private sectors offering way more. Other issues include the housing act, RHW and housing benefit regulations - navigating around HSG funding. It's all come together and hasn't been thought out as to how they all interact with each other. This means that the rules are constantly changing and it's becoming very difficult to remain up to date on these."

"The rise in caseload is mainly due to cutbacks in other services/agencies - mental health for example, long waiting lists for substance issues, counselling etc ... cost of living has also had a huge impact both on tenants directly but also on funding to our team."

"Welsh government need to acknowledge that new legislation requires a shed load of work and executive oversight which diverts us from other more pressing matters such as building new homes and tackling damp and mould. They have left a lot of major changes to the last six months of the Senedd rather than introducing changes over their five year term."

"Better resource other services to take the strain off housing professionals - at the moment we end up standing in for social services, the police and mental health healthcare as these bodies don't have resource to deal with people until they're in crisis which is often too late to help them stay in their home or out of prison/health institutions."

What factors are having a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing?

As well as asking for the negative impact on mental health and wellbeing our series of sector snapshot surveys has also sought to share some of the good practice organisations and individuals are undertaking to build resilience within the housing workforce. The winter 2026 sector snapshot echoes previous surveys by highlighting the positive impact knowing that someone is thriving due to support provided has on a colleague's mental health and wellbeing. Support within teams is also highly valued as is flexible working enabling individuals to have a good work life balance.

"Housing people who are genuine in their need, and how grateful they are for a lovely home. It's my only win at the moment."

"My colleagues are incredible, and my line management is excellent. They've taken the time to understand my disabilities and learn from me. Rather than focusing on the negatives, they recognise the value I bring to the team."

"Resolving the issues for my clients, knowing that I have assisted them to repair, maintain or adapt their homes and they can feel happy in their own homes. Job satisfaction has positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing."

"One of the most rewarding aspects of my role is seeing the real impact our work has on people's lives. Supporting clients to access the right benefits and secure stable housing often leads to life-changing outcomes. Hearing success stories and knowing that I've helped someone avoid homelessness or improve their situation has a genuinely positive effect on my mental health and wellbeing. It reminds me why the work matters and keeps me motivated, even during challenging times."



Increase in workforce needed to implement the Homelessness and Social Housing Allocations (Wales) Bill

During our engagement with members on the proposed bill, and its likely impact on organisations, we repeatedly heard that the implementation would depend on a sufficient level of workforce. The current level of statutory homelessness workforce was not seen as sufficient to work to the current legislation and so would need to be increased to implement the changes proposed. In order to quantify this, we added a series of new questions for the winter 2026 sector snapshot survey to specifically ask the sector on how many individuals are needed currently in statutory homelessness services and if the workforce was increased to this number whether it would be enough to implement duties included in the proposed homelessness legislation.

The majority of respondents (53 per cent) outlined that more individuals were needed as part of the current homelessness legislative and policy structure. The remaining 46 per cent were not sure or did not work within the statutory homelessness system. As the homelessness bill is a change of duties for statutory homelessness teams within local authorities, we have only considered the additional number of individuals that local authority respondents have outlined.

For those local authority respondents who quantified, they said that the size of the workforce needs, on average, to be increased by around five officers per team to deliver on current statutory requirements. This increase would then be seen as sufficient to meet the new requirements of the bill for nearly two thirds of local authority respondents (64 per cent).

Some local authority respondents did not provide a number of individuals needed but provided narrative around some of the current issues the size of the homelessness team was causing or outlined how the current team could work in a different way to meet demand.

“Although my role sits outside the statutory homelessness duty, I regularly see the pressures it places on my colleagues who are directly involved.

The uncertainty around funding can make it difficult to plan and deliver consistent support for clients. It affects how services are coordinated and can lead to delays or limitations in the help available, which ultimately impacts the people we’re trying to support.”

“I don’t believe that we need more staff we need better staff who have the compassion, skills and flexibility to cope in this sector.”

Increase in workforce needed to implement the Building Safety (Wales) Bill

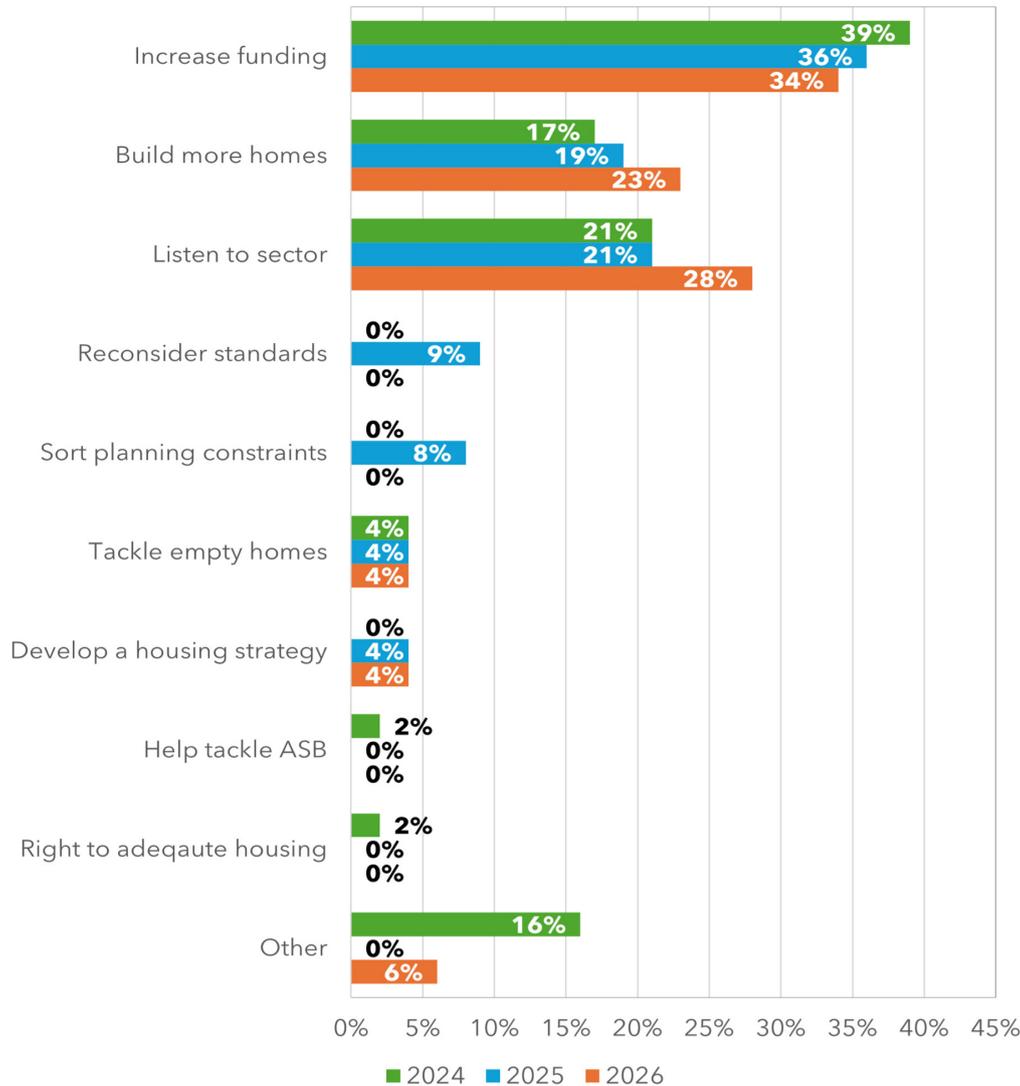
As seen in our engagement for the homelessness bill, CIH Cymru members also raised concerns about the proposed building safety bill and whether the current level of workforce would be sufficient to implement it. They said that an increase in workforce would be needed in local authority building control teams, within housing associations, housing teams for stock holding local authorities and some impact for private landlords.

When we look at the responses to the winter 2026 sector snapshot as a whole, they seem to be telling us the opposite to what we have heard in our engagement with members. They felt that the current workforce would be sufficient to meet the requirements of the proposed bill (57 per cent). Yet when we look at the roles of respondents those who work within repairs teams or in senior management the consensus matches what we saw during our engagement with 58 per cent of respondents in senior management stating that the workforce is not sufficient to meet the requirements of the proposed bill. Yet when asked to quantify how many additional individuals would need to be employed the general view was it was not possible to quantify enough as the legislation was unclear. Two respondents did provide a number with one respondent stating five additional team members would be needed and the other over 10 would be needed.

What is the one thing you would ask the Welsh government to do in relation to housing?

Mirroring what was seen as the top priority in 2024 and 2025 respondents to the winter 2026 sector snapshot were clear that Welsh government needed to increase funding to the sector. Respondents were also clear that Welsh government needed to build more homes. As shown in figure eight there has been an increase in the proportion of respondents stating that Welsh government need to listen to the sector.

Figure eight: One thing Welsh government can do in relation to housing



“To be more realistic about its expectations, new legislation is going to put more pressure on an already exhausted workforce, regardless of staffing numbers. Concentration should be on more social housing focusing on single person accommodation.”

“Continue to commit to funding the targets set. Biggest challenge is funding decarb.”

“I would ask the government to genuinely listen to the people who work in housing every day. We’re the ones delivering these policies on the ground, and we see the practical challenges first hand. There needs to be meaningful engagement before legislation is rolled out, not just a top down approach that feels like it’s steamrolling through. Time and consideration are essential to make this legislation work in practice. I’d also urge government to look at the root causes of why housing delivery is failing particularly the barriers to building homes and address those alongside new policy. Without tackling those fundamentals, we risk adding layers of complexity without solving the core problem”

Reflections

The winter 2026 sector snapshot has continued the conversation of previous sector snapshot reports. People work in housing to make a difference but need more resources both monetary and workforce. Without these increasing respondents are informing us that the pressures this lack creates due to increasing workloads and a lack of housing is significantly impacting their mental health and wellbeing with 74 per cent of all respondents citing a negative impact. For 21 per cent this is a major impact.

“My role has more of a mental strain. It’s meant that I have had to work from home more so I can use the commuting hours as working hours. I now take days off using my annual leave to recover. I’m just exhausted.”

This is now leaving some respondents considering leaving the housing sector as often the lack of resources across Welsh public services are resulting in housing having to pick up support issues that should be dealt with by other public services.

“To be completely honest, I’m feeling overwhelmed most days. Customer expectations have never been higher, and we’re being asked to deliver on every piece of legislation and policy change while services around us are pulling back. For example, the police no longer carry out welfare checks, yet I’m now being asked to go into people’s homes to do them. IDVAs have asked me to go because they can’t for their own safety, but I can? That feels like a huge responsibility and risk. Trying to get Social Services to engage with a customer is almost impossible, and the safeguarding implications are falling back on us. It’s a massive weight, and it’s impacting my wellbeing. I trained in housing, I have a degree in housing, but the role now feels so far removed from what I signed up for. Honestly, I’m questioning whether I can stay in this sector much longer”

The housing sector keeps repeating that they need more support and better partnership working but as we have seen over the last three years little is changing. Perhaps then it is not surprising that one key ask for the Welsh government by respondents is for the Welsh government to listen more to the sector with 28 per cent of respondents listing this as their number one priority.

This repeated ask for Welsh government is why one of our key asks in our 2026 manifest ‘A plan for housing’ is for the next Welsh government to commit to a professional and resilient workforce in Wales. CIH Cymru believes that housing in line with other key professions should be seen as a key pillar to supporting the delivery of public services in Wales. This must include the development of a workforce strategy for housing professionals in Wales aimed at supporting the communities we serve and ensuring an equitable housing system where everyone has the legislative right to a safe, suitable and affordable home. As one respondent to our 2024 sector snapshot survey said:

Housing is not an after thought. This should be one of the top priorities in Wales and the UK. It is time housing is put front and centre”.

This must include investing in and supporting our workforce to be both professional and resilient. Now is the time to ensure our housing workforce is truly valued and recognised for their expertise.



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