

‘Cracks in the foundations’ – Building safety in Wales

A report by the Auditor
General for Wales

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Outline



- Context - Grenfell and the Building Safety Act
- Our report
- Key findings
- Recommendations
- Next steps
- Questions

Context



- Grenfell Fire
- Hackitt Inquiry
- Building Safety Act:
 - Part 3 in Wales only
 - Other legislation and guidance to support this



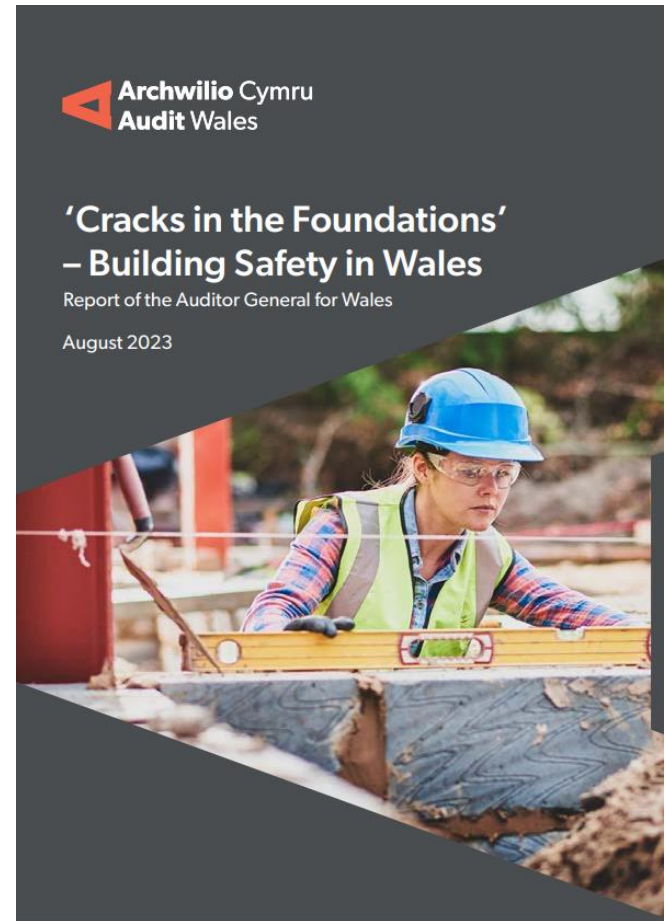
Building a Safer Future

Independent Review of Building
Regulations and Fire Safety:
Final Report

Our report



- Published in August 2023
- Reported to all 22 councils and the Welsh Government
- Has three sections:
 - Response to the Act
 - Resources of the sector
 - Evaluation of the sector



Key findings



- Responsible bodies are yet to develop comprehensive plans that set out how the new and revised responsibilities introduced by the Building Safety Act will be addressed
- Resourcing issues make it unlikely that councils can successfully implement the new building safety regime or that services are fit for purpose
- There is little evaluation of building control services across Wales and no national comprehensive system of building safety assurance

Workforce survey findings

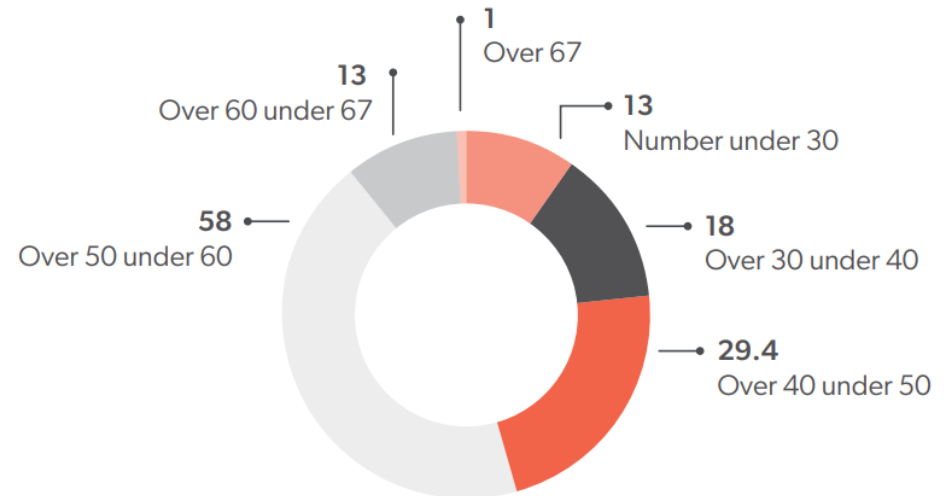


We concluded that:

- Building control is no longer seen as a good career choice and the challenging demographics are severely impacting the short and long-term resilience of services
- Access to training is limited and staff are not being supported to enhance and maintain their skills and knowledge

Exhibit 1: building control managers and surveyors by age March 2022

The ageing building control workforce represents a major risk for the implementation and delivery of the new building safety regime.



Source: Audit Wales survey

Welsh Government recommendations



- The Welsh Government should provide greater clarity on the implementation and expectations of the Building Safety Act to ensure local authorities are able to deliver their new responsibilities and duties.
- The Welsh Government should ensure that it has sufficient resources to deliver the legislative and policy changes for Building Safety to reduce implementation risks.
- The Welsh Government should review the mixed market approach to building control and conclude whether it continues to be appropriate and effective in keeping buildings in Wales safe.
- The Welsh Government should increase its oversight and management of the building control sector to ensure there is a robust assurance system in place for building control and safety.

Council recommendations



- Councils should develop local action plans that articulate a clear vision for building control to be able to plan effectively to implement the requirements of the Act.
- Councils should urgently review their financial management of building control and ensure they are fully complying with Regulations.
- Councils should work with partners to make better use of limited resources by exploring the potential for collaboration and regionalisation to strengthen resilience through a cost benefit analysis of partnering with neighbouring authorities, establishing joint ventures and/or adopting a regional model where beneficial.
- Councils should review risk management processes to ensure that risks are systematically identified, recorded, assessed, mitigated and subject to regular evaluation and scrutiny.

Any questions?

