



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Annual Report and Analysis of Building Control Performance Indicators

Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group
Report: 2015/16



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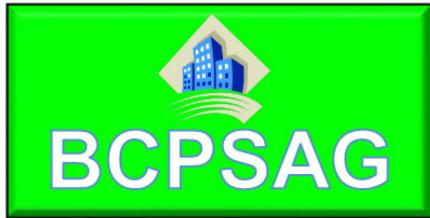
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July, 2017

ISBN: 978-1-4098-5045-8



Contents

Introduction	4
Performance Indicators	12
Summary of findings	13
Analysis	
Process Management	14
Complaints Handling	20
Breakdown of Building Control Work	24
Breakdown of Building Control Work in England and Wales	29
Building Control Staff:	
People and Skills	33
Experience of Staff	38
Specialist Knowledge	39
Age and Gender Profile	41
Staff Retention and Training	44
Explanations of the Performance Indicators	48
Appendix 1 - List of respondents for 2015/16 Survey	
Approved Inspectors	51
Local Authorities in England	53
Local Authorities in Wales	56

Introduction

Welcome to the latest Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group (“the Group”) Report for the survey conducted during 2016.

The primary purposes of the Group are to monitor and review the effectiveness of the Performance Standards and Guidance used by building control bodies, to collect performance based evidence related to those Standards such that assessment can be made that current and future performance outcomes will meet the needs of customers and provide information to support self-improvement, and to report annually to all interested parties.

The Group is a sub-committee of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee for England and the Building Regulations Advisory Committee for Wales. Both Committees have seen and approved the publication of this report.

The 2015/16 survey analysis constitutes the main purpose and body of this report and I want to thank all those building control bodies who submitted their data using the surveymonkey tool. Although the number of respondents at 236 was down on last year, it was the second highest since the survey started. Returns from local authorities in England were down but this was due in part to more local authorities in England being in partnership organisations and so a return from a partnership organisation may cover several local authorities. However, it was encouraging to see an increase in returns from local authorities in Wales and returns from approved inspectors remained roughly the same. It was also encouraging to see some building control bodies submitting a return for the first time.



Picture 1 - Installing a plug socket

The report sets out the key areas where performance is satisfactory as well as those that require improvement. The summary of findings on page 13 provides a comprehensive overview and compares this year’s data with the previous two years. As highlighted in previous years, there are still concerns about the age profile data which continues to show a high level of staff being over 55; creating potential of a serious shortfall in being able to replace older staff heading towards retirement. However, it is encouraging to see the proportion of staff under 24 and women in the building control workforce continuing to rise.

As last year we have included in the report separated data tables for approved inspectors and local authorities as well as time series covering five years where possible. We hope you find this information helpful.

As advised last year, approved inspectors were asked for separate data for England and Wales and so we have been able to include data tables for the breakdown of building control work in England and Wales in the report for the first time. We will continue to review the information the report provides to ensure the information provided is still relevant and of benefit to building control bodies and other interested parties.



Picture 2. – Conversion of goods shed at the terminus at London Kings Cross to a supermarket

We are extremely grateful to Local Authority Building Control (LABC) and CICAIR Limited and others who have contributed to the work and data which forms the basis of this report, and to the Group's Secretariat for carrying out the analysis and producing this report.

For this year's survey there have been minor changes to the section headings. 'Specialist Experience' has been renamed 'Specialist Knowledge' to avoid confusion with 'Experience of Staff'. The Group will continue to review whether additions and/or clarifications are needed to the current performance indicators to reflect the queries that have arisen during the analysis of the 2015/16 data. There will be no significant changes for the next survey period except for clarifications and revised guidance to assist building control bodies in completing their survey returns and to hopefully improve even further the responses.

Finally I would like to place on record my thanks to all the individual members of the Group, who are unremunerated, for their commitment of considerable time and expertise, and where appropriate to their supporting organisations.

Building control continues to be an important public service which is increasingly being put under the spotlight, and this year's report illustrates once again how well you deliver this service notwithstanding scope for improvement; I know you will find it interesting and informative, and I commend it to you.



Picture 3. - Installing PV Solar Panels

Alan Crane CBE, FCIQB, C.Eng, FICE, FCMI.
Chair, Building Control Performance Standards Advisory Group

Data collection process and reporting

Data were submitted to the Group's Secretariat from May until August 2016, using the surveymonkey tool for the third year running. All building control bodies in England and Wales were invited to complete the survey. The analysis of the submissions received has been carried out by the Group's Secretariat and involved four stages of work:

- data preparation – downloading the data from surveymonkey into a single database.
- data validation - this was focused on resolving obvious errors and inconsistencies.
- data analysis - this involved calculating measures of the distribution of each indicator (median, quartiles and deciles - see page 8 for a technical explanation of these measures), as well as other statistical manipulation of the data so that they could be presented graphically in the report.
- reporting - finally, this report was produced to present the results of the analysis and to enable the Group to publish the report so that participants can identify their comparative position on the indicators and help inform policy development in the future.

The Data Annex will be available from LABC Limited and CICAIR Limited for building control bodies to use to be able to compare their performance with other building control bodies.

All the survey questions refer to information from the latest available 12 month period that ends within the survey period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017

Confidentiality

The Group was keen to ensure that all organisations could submit data without fear that their data could be identified. To meet this requirement, we have done our best to ensure that no individual organisation can be identified from this report. We have done this by:

- removing all reference to organisation names
- removing or aggregating any data that would enable readers to identify any participant.

Statistics presented

In this report the main statistics presented a mean, a median or a ratio.

The mean is calculated as the sum of all response values divided by the number of responses; this average can be skewed by a small number of 'outlying' values which are much higher or lower than the majority of results. The median value is the middle value in the distribution of scores, and therefore in some cases provides a better representation of a 'typical' building control body.

Some performance indicators are calculated as a ratio of another measure, so that results are not unduly influenced by a few large building control bodies; for example the complaints performance indicators is calculated as the number of complaints received per building control application. In these cases this percentage is calculated for each respondent, and the 'mean proportion' is the mean percentage achieved by building control bodies. This is rather than calculating overall total complaints received by respondents divided by total applications received.

On measures where the majority of responses take the same value, the median is not the best measure. For example the median value of staff turnover is zero, because over half of respondents had not replaced a member of staff in the 12 month period. In this case the mean gives a more accurate reflection, with the mean staff turnover being 5.6%.

The main body of the report shows the distribution of the results from all participants, and makes use of certain measures of the distribution of results. These are:

Measure	Explanation
Lowest decile	10% of results fall below this figure
Lower quartile	25% of results fall below this figure
Median	This is the mid-point - half of results fall below this figure
Upper quartile	75% of results fall below this figure
Highest decile	90% of results fall below this figure

The measures of distribution are calculated on a purely mathematical basis - we have not made assumptions about the value of indicators, e.g. whether a high figure is good or bad.

Please note that 'average' has often been used instead of 'mean' in the text.

Limitations

In analysing these results, the following should be borne in mind:

- Whilst we have made efforts to ensure the validity of the data, our work in this regard has been limited, and the data are taken from unaudited returns made by individual participants.
- Whilst the number of responses received is reasonable, and similar to previous years, the overall response rate is slightly more than half of all building control bodies. There is therefore the possibility of 'response bias' - that is to say that the responses received are not representative of the population as a whole.
- Readers should be aware that some building control bodies' figures are derived from relatively few responses, which could affect the results. This is more likely where there are small sample sizes.



Picture 4. - Conversion of a former bank building to council offices in Bexley

Participation in the 2015/16 survey

Returns were received from 236 separate organisations, comprising 85 approved inspectors, 132 local authorities in England (including 20 partnership organisations covering 57 local authorities) and 19 local authorities in Wales. This represents a response rate of around 89% for approved inspectors, 48% for local authorities in England and 86% for local authorities in Wales.

The overall response rate from separate organisations is lower than last year but this is partly due to more local authorities working in partnerships and so one return may cover several local authority areas. This included returns from 32 organisations for the first time, comprising of 8 approved inspectors and 24 local authorities in England, including 7 partnership organisations. A detailed breakdown of the total responses can be seen in the table below:

	Local Authorities	Approved Inspectors	Total
2007/8	107	39	146
2008/9	68	36	104
2009/10	60	36	96
2010/11	45	40	85
2011/12	146	53	199
2012/13	82	59	141
2013/14	146 (130 England & 16 Wales)	76	222
2014/15	166 (151 England & 15 Wales)	86	252
2015/16	151 (132 England & 19 Wales)	85	236

Of the 236 respondents who returned this year's survey, as in previous years, not every respondent returned data for every part of the survey. However all respondents answered the process management performance indicator. The table below sets out the response rate for data used in the calculation of the performance indicators. Each section of the report also states the number of respondents to that part of the survey.

For the first time the survey also asked approved inspectors for separate data for England and Wales on the questions for the breakdown of building control work covered in section 3.

Performance Indicator		Number of responses 2015/16	Number of responses 2014/15
Process Management		236 Respondents, 159 with system in place and 77 without	252 Respondents, 182 with system in place and 70 without
Complaints		213 respondents, 128 received at least one complaint and 85 received none	225 respondents, 134 received at least one complaint and 91 received none
Amount of Building Control Work		213	217
Building Control Staff	People & Skills	208	211
	Experience of Staff	204	209
	Specialist Knowledge	208	197
	Age & Gender	203	208
	Staff Retention and Training:		
	Staff Turnover	207	209
	Sickness Absence	187	193
Staff Training	177	188	

Performance Indicators 2015/16, 2014/15 & 2013/14

Performance Indicator Name	Description	Year of Survey:		
		2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Process Management	Rating out of 100 based on coverage and operation of management system. 44 building control bodies in 2015/16 and 39 in 2014/15. scored maximum of 100	Mean 85.4 Median 90	82.1 90	84.5 90
Complaints	Number of complaints received as a proportion of building control applications	Mean 0.20% Median 0.08%	0.26% 0.09%	0.21% 0.08%
Staff turnover	Number of direct employees replaced during the year divided by number of direct employees	Mean 6.4%	5.6%	4.3%
Sickness Absence	Average number of days lost per employee	Mean 3.4 Median 1.6	3.7 1.5	3.1 1.5
Training	Average number of training days given per direct employee	Mean 4.1 Median 2.6	3.2 2.3	3.2 2.3
Staff make-up: proportion under 24	Employees aged under 24 as a proportion of workforce	Mean 4.9% Median 0%	4.0% 0%	3.6% 0%
Proportion 24 to 54	Employees aged between 24 and 54 as a proportion of workforce	Mean 68.9% Median 71.0%	70.0% 72.0%	72.6% 75.0%
Proportion 55 or over	Employees aged 55 or over as a proportion of workforce	Mean 26.2% Median 23%	26.0% 24%	16.8% 12%
Women	Female employees as a proportion of workforce	Mean 28.2% Median 28.6%	26.3% 25.0%	25.2% 25.0%

Summary of findings

- 273 building control bodies participated this year, including 20 local authority building control partnerships covering 57 local authority areas in England.
- Performance in the process management performance indicator for all areas required under the standards was good, with the majority of respondents covering 12 or more of the 14 areas questioned. Four areas were identified as having possible room for improvement; certification before completion¹, customer feedback processes, pre-application advice, and regular checks on dormant, static or mothballed jobs.
- Responses to the complaints handling process performance indicator showed complaints rates were very low, with building control bodies receiving on average only three complaints each in the last 12 months. This suggests that in the vast majority of cases, building control bodies are providing a good service to customers.
- However building control bodies did not perform as well in terms of dealing with complaints that did arise. On average 27% of complaints were resolved in whole or in part in the customer's favour. 13% of complaints were sufficiently severe to be escalated to CICAIR Limited (for approved inspectors) or the Local Government Ombudsman (for local authorities) up slightly from 12% per cent last year.
- The building control work indicator clearly shows that, whilst domestic alterations, extensions and improvements made up on average 78% per cent of applications, this represented only 63% of fees, while for other types of project the percentage of fees was higher than the percentage of projects, the same as last year.
- Responses to the building control staff questions show another slight decrease in the skill level of building control bodies workforces. On average 51% of staff were fully qualified with corporate membership of relevant professional bodies, down from 55% in 2014/15, 57% in 2013/14 and 59% in 2012/13. The weakest area of specialist experience was acoustics with 6% of staff having this experience but this was an increase of 1.5% from last year.
- The age profile of building control bodies suggests that building control bodies may face significant problems replacing experienced staff as their workforce approaches state pension age. 26.2% of the average building control bodies' work force are aged over 55, compared to 68.9% who are between 24 and 54 and 4.9% under 24.
- Over the past year slightly more building control bodies gained employees than lost employees a reversal of last year. However, the majority of respondents reported no change from last year.

¹ Provide a process to allow certification of compliance before completion (Occupation Certificate) on the basis that recorded minor issues will be brought up to compliance.

Analysis

1. Process Management of Building Control Compliance Operations

The survey asked if there was a process or quality management system in place, and if so whether it was accredited and audited by an external quality management system or an International Organisation for Standardization company or by their own system or not accredited or audited. It then asked a series of yes/no questions within the five sections of building control compliance and process management:

- development stages
- resource management
- process management
- customer management
- record keeping

The full detailed questions can be found in figures 1.1.1 to 1.1.5 overleaf.

Numbers of “yes” responses to compliance management questions:

Figure 1.1.1 Development stages

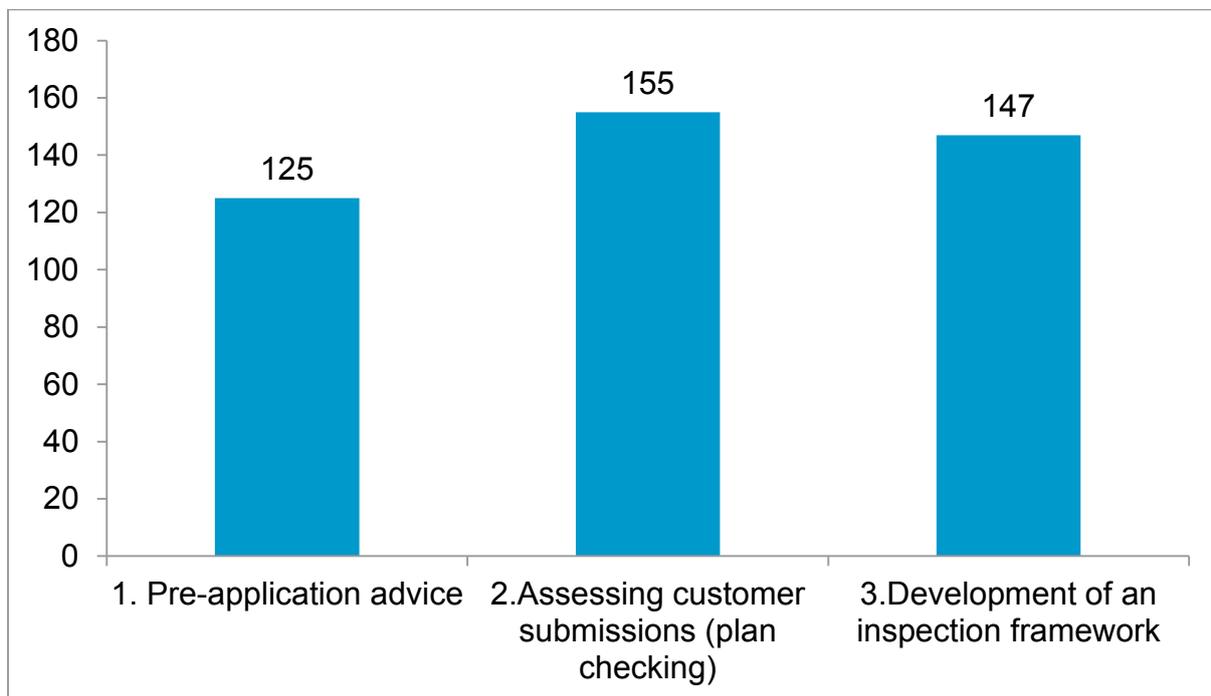


Figure 1.1.2 Resource management

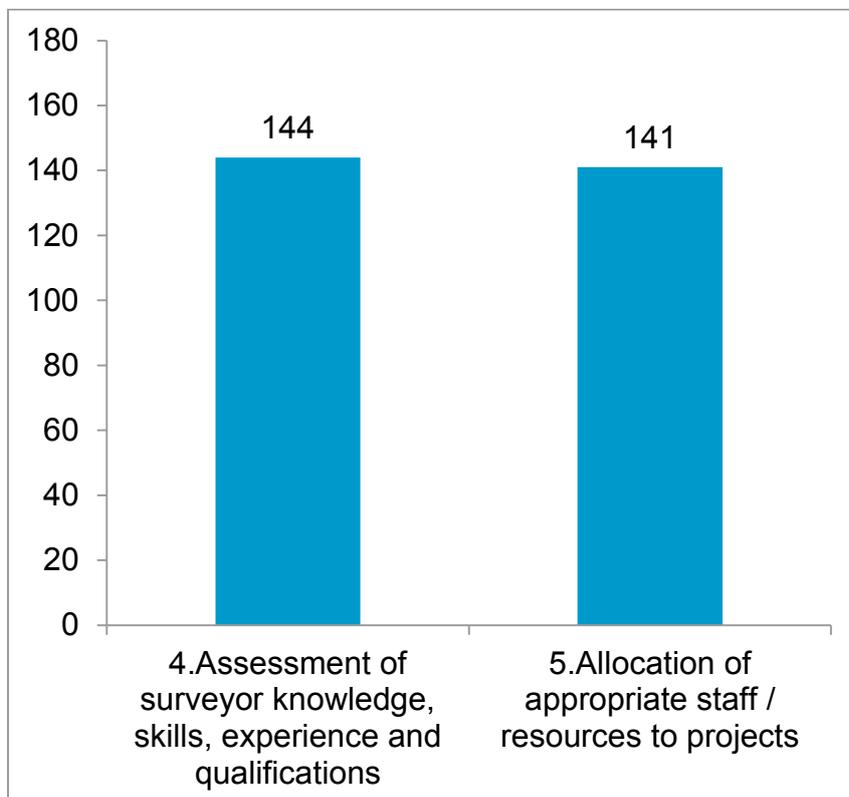


Figure 1.1.3 Process management

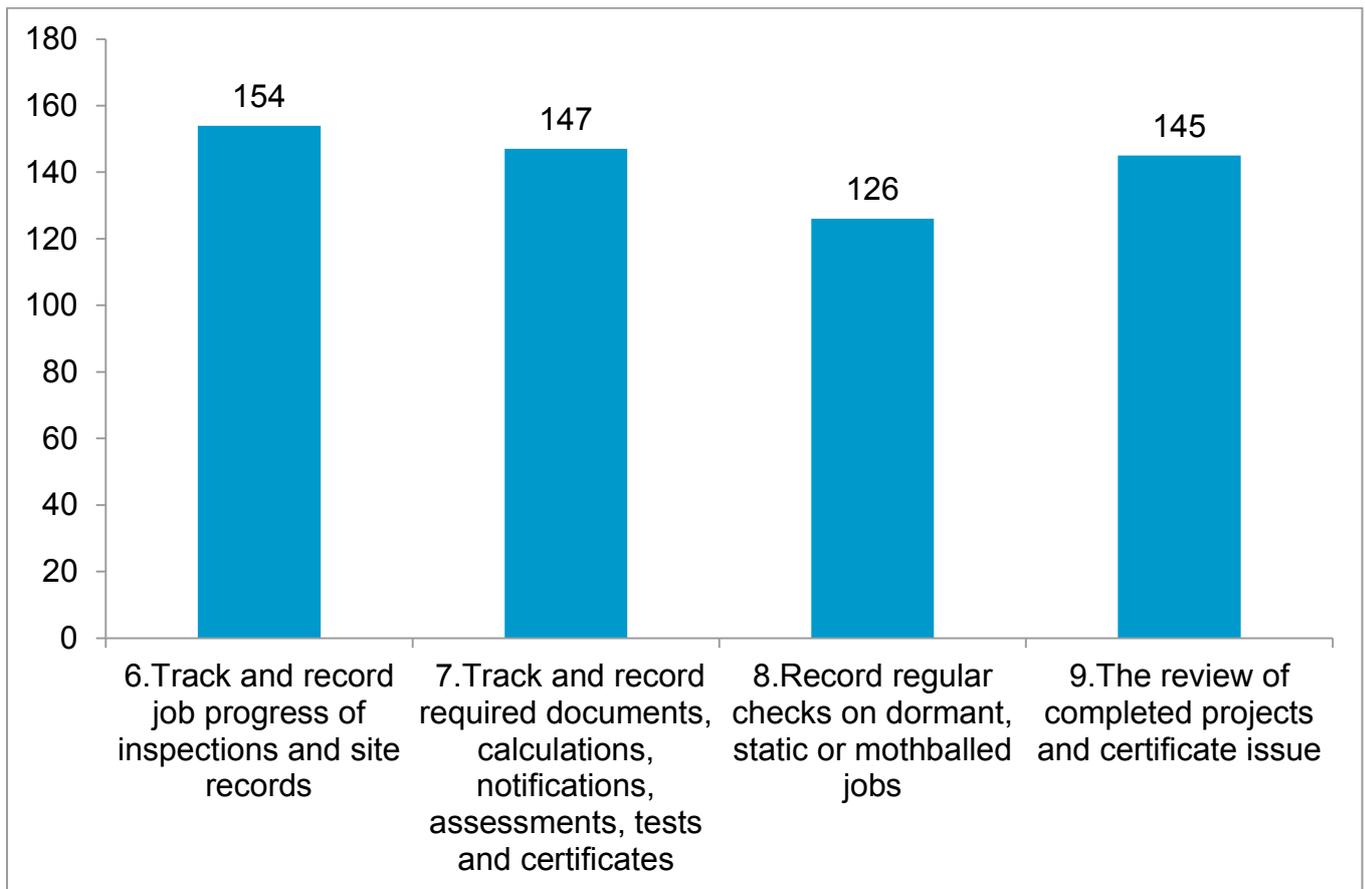


Figure 1.1.4 Customer management

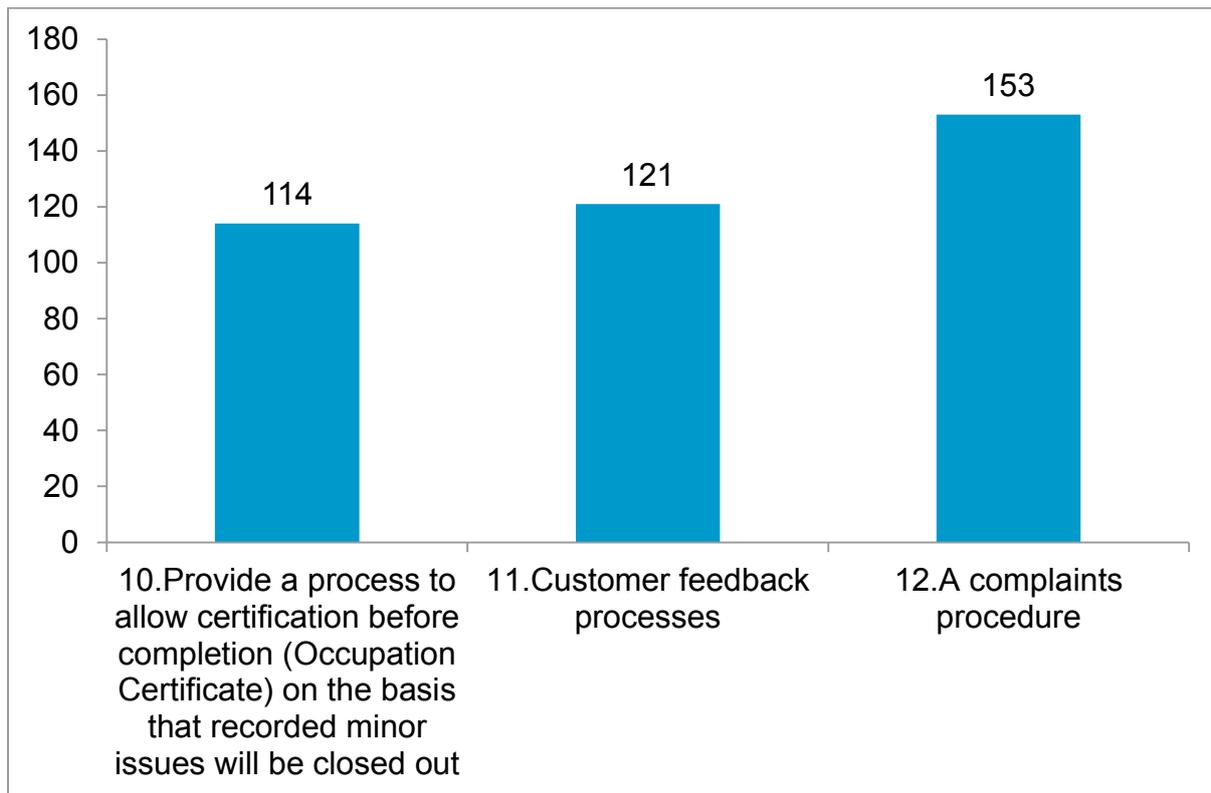
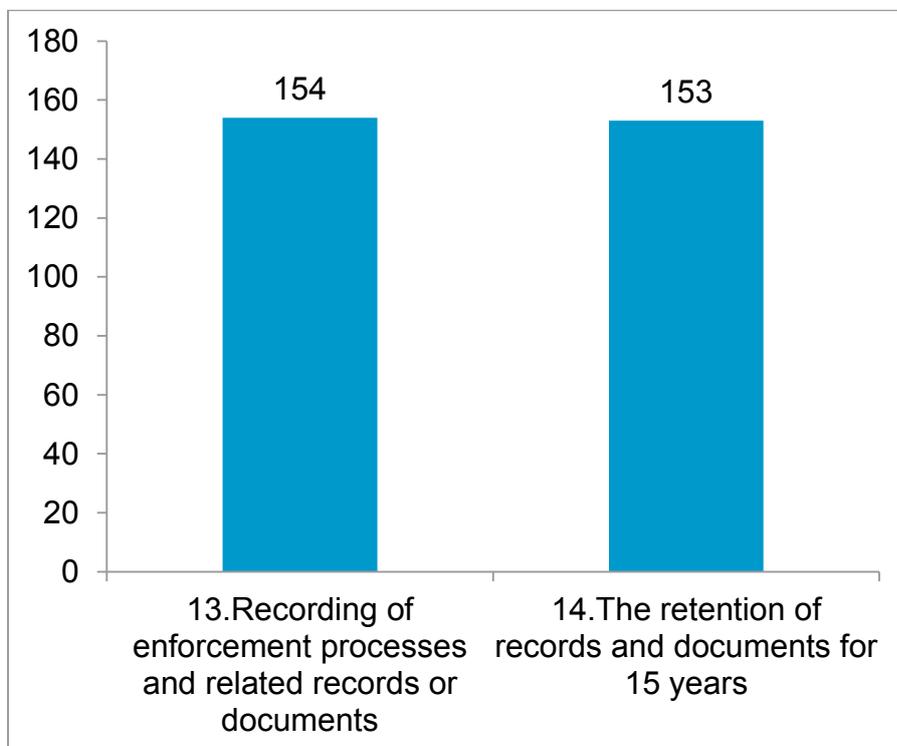


Figure 1.1.5 Record keeping



Based on data from 159 respondents

Based on the responses to the 16 questions a score out of 100 was calculated for the building control body, with 6 points awarded for each 'yes' answer and an additional 10 points if the system was externally accredited rather than internally.

Of the 236 returns received, 159 had a process or quality management system in place. Of these, 53% (50% in 2014/15) were externally accredited or audited, 36% (36% in 2014/15) had their own system and 11% (14% in 2014/15) were not accredited.

The following table shows high 'yes' response rates for questions which are shown in more detail in figures 1.1.1 to 1.1.5 overleaf:

Over 90% 'yes'	9 questions	2, 3, 4, 6,7, 9, 12, 13 & 14
Over 80% 'yes'	1 question	5

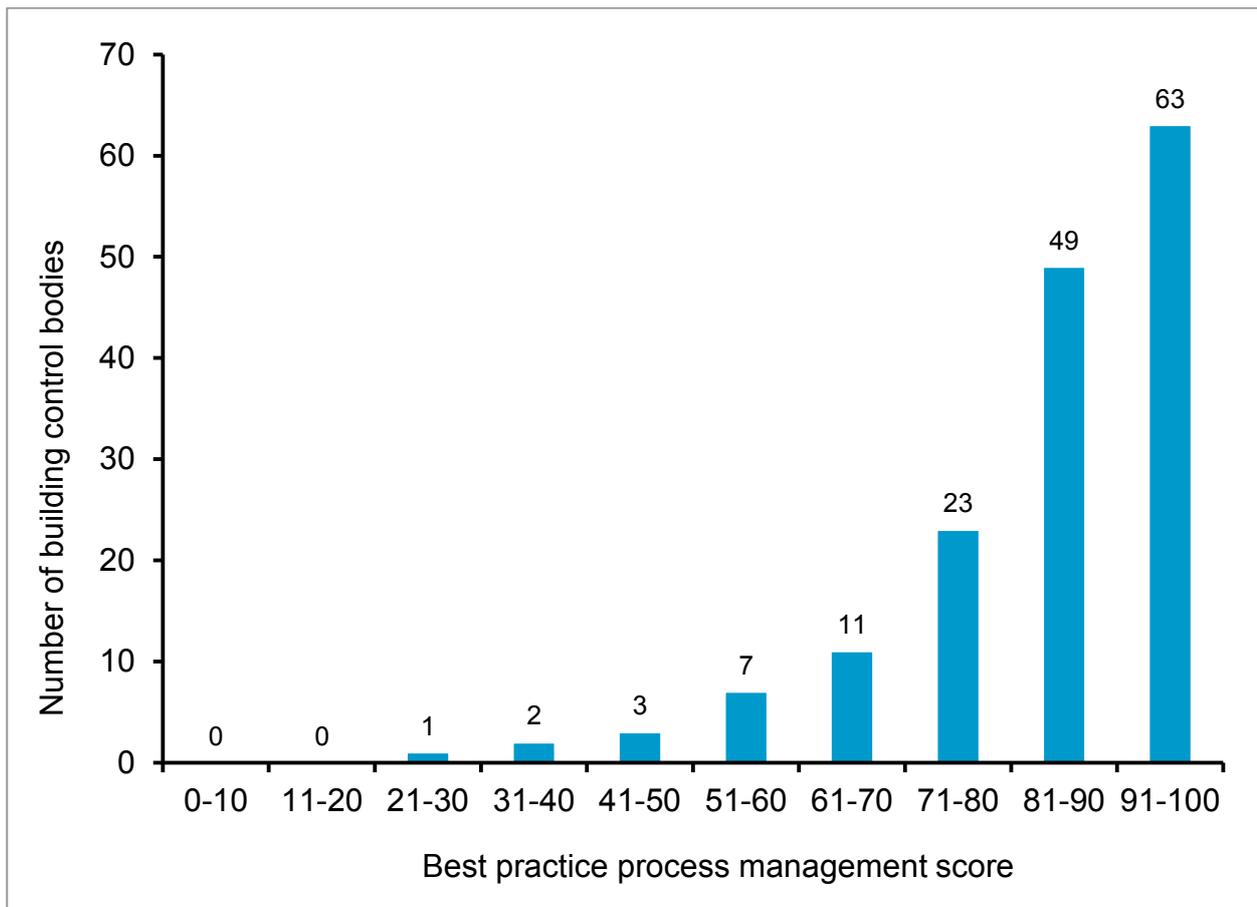
The four questions that had the lowest 'yes' response rate were:

- certification before completion² (72%)
- customer feedback processes (76%).
- Pre-application advice (79%)
- regular checks on dormant, static or mothballed jobs (79%)

Looking at the performance indicator scores for the building control bodies, 44 (28%) of the 159 achieved a score of 100 which means that their system is externally accredited/ audited and covers all of the points questioned regarding process management and building control compliance. This shows an increase on the 21% for 2014/15 but lower than the 30% for 2013/14. This is due to the extra option introduced in 2014/15 of 'not accredited or audited' for the question asking how the organisation's process management system or quality management question is accredited and/or audited. 26 (14%) building control bodies replied yes to this question in 2014/15 and 17 (11%) in 2015/16 which would have given them a lower score than in previous years.

² Provide a process to allow certification of compliance before completion (Occupation Certificate) on the basis that recorded minor issues will be brought into compliance.

Figure 1.2 - Distribution of process management scores:



Based on data from 159 respondents

As in previous years the scores are skewed towards the higher end of the range, with the vast majority achieving a score of over 70.

The median score was 90, and the mean was 85.4 due to a small number of very low scores.

A score of 90 corresponds to an internal system covering all 14 of the areas questioned, and a score of 88 corresponds to an externally accredited/audited system covering 12 out of 14 of the areas questioned.

In general 'yes' responses were high for all the questions with four areas which could be improved; certification before completion (72%) up from 68% last year and the same as 2013/14, customer feedback processes (76%) down from 81% last year, pre-application advice (79%) down from 93% and checks on dormant jobs (79%) up from 74% last year. This is overall a very good performance for the process management performance indicator with all areas having over 70% response rate.

96% of approved inspectors responded yes to this question compared to 51% of local authorities. However, the majority of both approved inspectors (78%) and local authorities (60%) who did respond yes had a score of between 81 and 100.

2. Complaints Handling Processes

Respondents were asked to state the total number of customer complaints they had dealt with in the last 12 months. They were then asked to state how many of these were:

- closed and resolved in whole or in part in the customer's favour
- referred to the Local Government Ombudsman or CICAIR Limited

They were also asked to state how many of these complaints were either domestic or non-domestic work and also whether technical or non-technical related, e.g. customer services. To account for the differing sizes of building control bodies, information from part 3 of the survey is used to calculate these measures as a proportion of total building control applications.

Out of 213 respondents to this section of the survey, 128 (60%), the same percentage as last year, responded that they had received at least one complaint in the last 12 months. We cannot be sure whether other respondents had received no complaints or did not have the information available, so only the 213 building control bodies with complaints are included in our analysis. As such the data presented is likely to be an underestimate of the prevalence of complaints; nevertheless, the rate of complaints is very low. Also, nearly a quarter (24%) of the total complaints received were not about building control matters.

Figure 2.1 below presents the mean proportion of complaints as a percentage of applications. These figures are very low. The complaints between technical and non-technical issues were of a similar proportion. However there were more complaints in relation to domestic projects than non domestic.

As the number of complaints reported was typically very low care must be taken when calculating 'percentage of complaints resolved in whole or in part in the customer's favour'. In many cases the percentage is based on just one complaint; due to this there is a large variation in performance.

The number of complaints reported was slightly higher for approved inspectors than local authorities, with means of 0.23% and 0.18% respectively. The majority of complaints for both approved inspectors and local authorities were in relation to domestic projects.

Figure 2.1 – Complaints as a proportion of building control applications

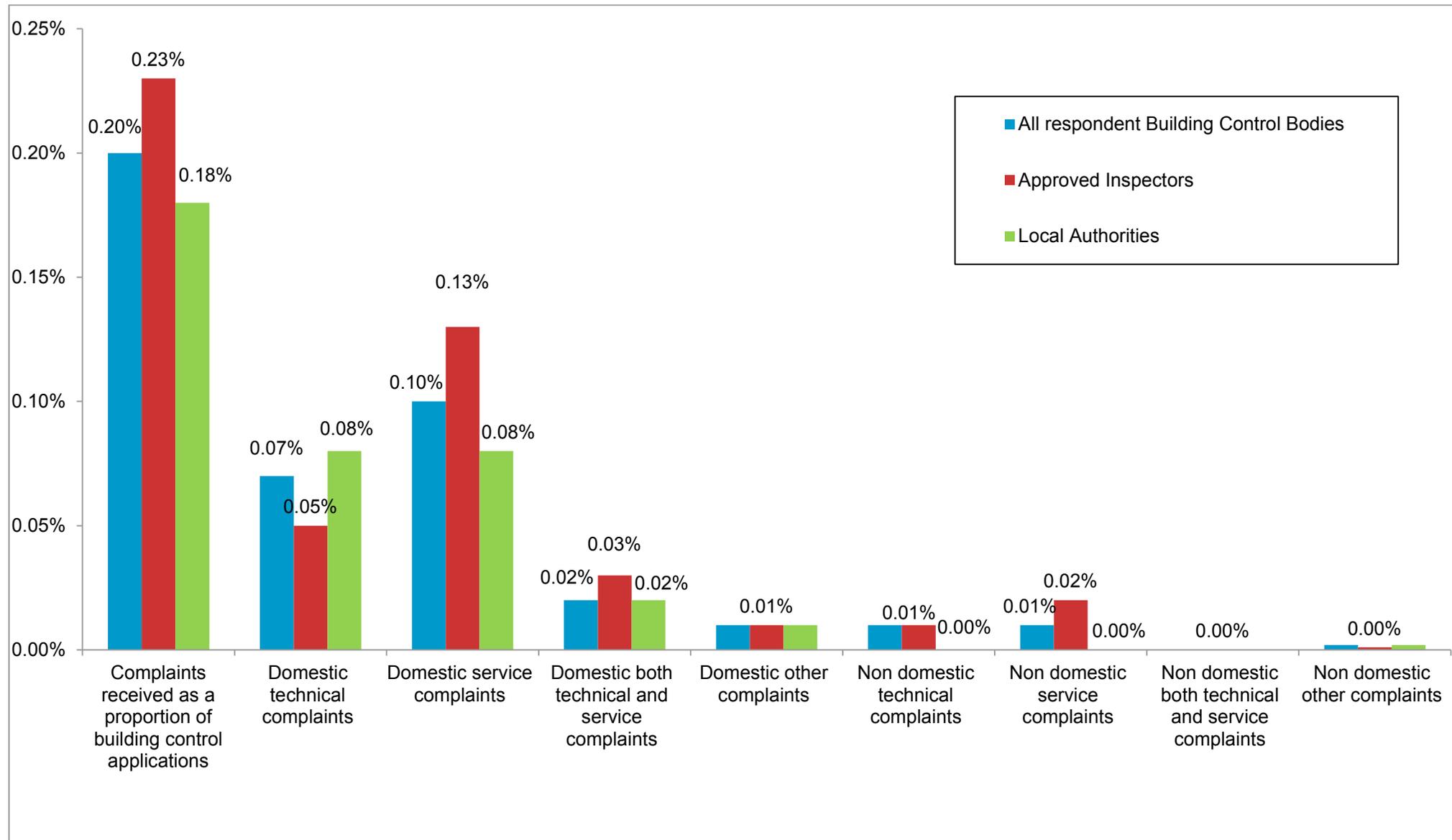


Figure 2.2 below shows that on average 13% of the complaints received from the building control bodies that responded were serious enough to be escalated to an official body. Of the 648 complaints recorded, 50 were escalated to an official body. The percentage for approved inspectors was slightly lower than for local authorities.

Note: the percentages are arithmetical, so do not sum to 100%. They would have to be weighted to do so.

Figure 2.2 - Mean proportions of resolutions of complaints.

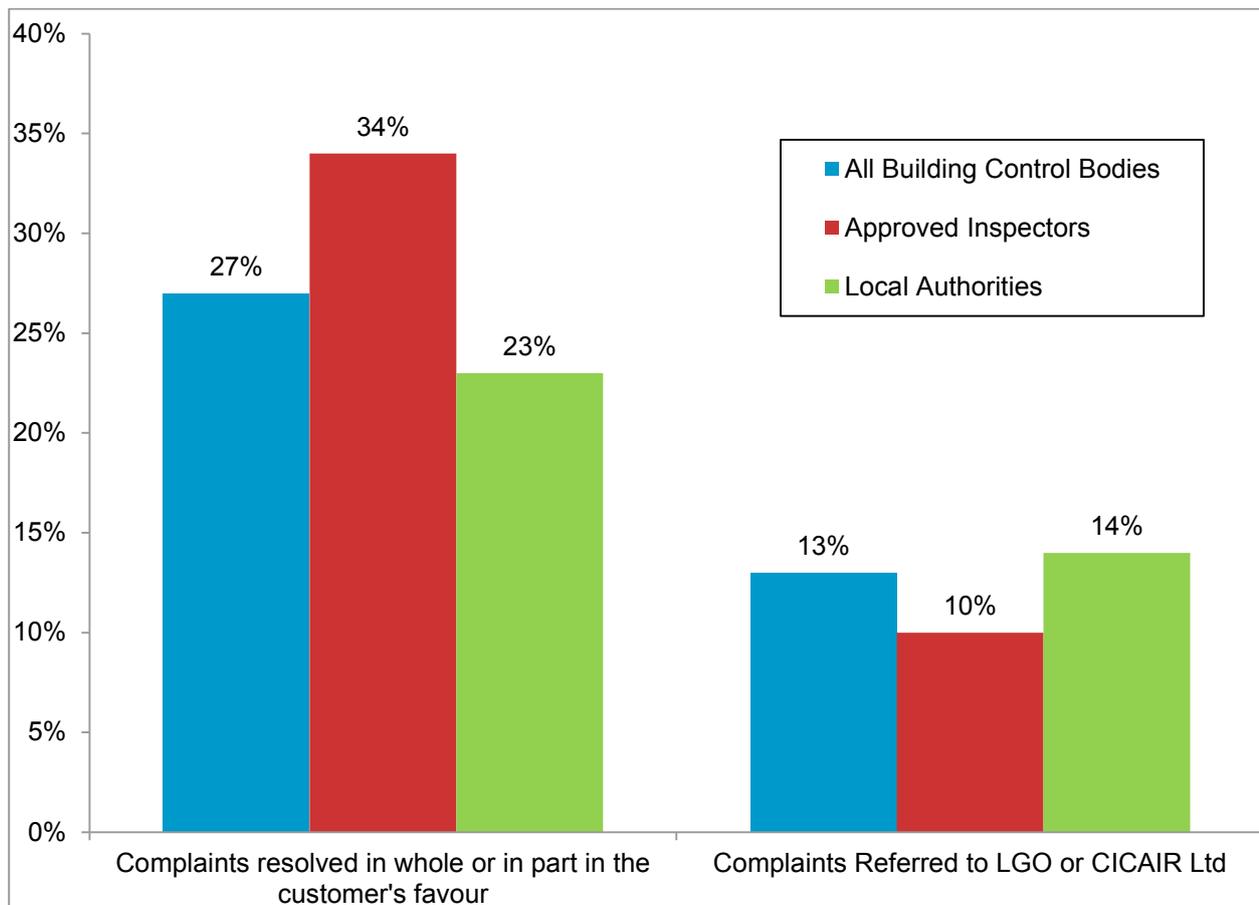


Figure 2.3 – Complaints closed but not resolved in favour of the customer

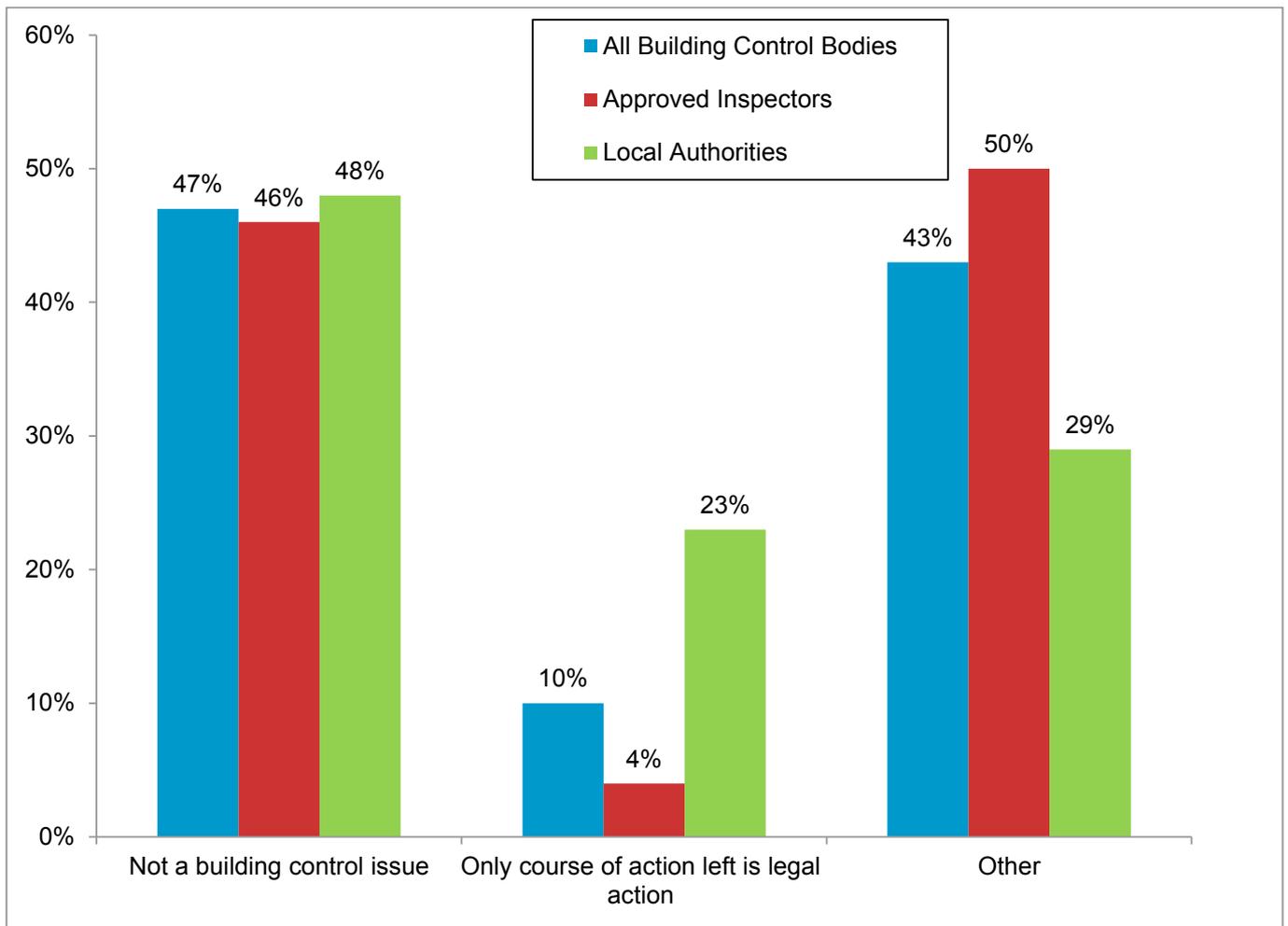


Figure 2.3 shows the percentage of complaints that were closed and not resolved in favour of the customer. For all building control bodies the majority (47%) of complaints closed but not resolved in favour of the customer were not about building control issues. The percentage was similar for both approved inspectors (46%) and local authorities (48%). The number of complaints where the only course of action left was legal action was lower for approved inspectors (4%) than for local authorities (23%). For approved inspectors the majority (50%) of complaints that could not be resolved were for other issues.

3. Breakdown of Building Control Work

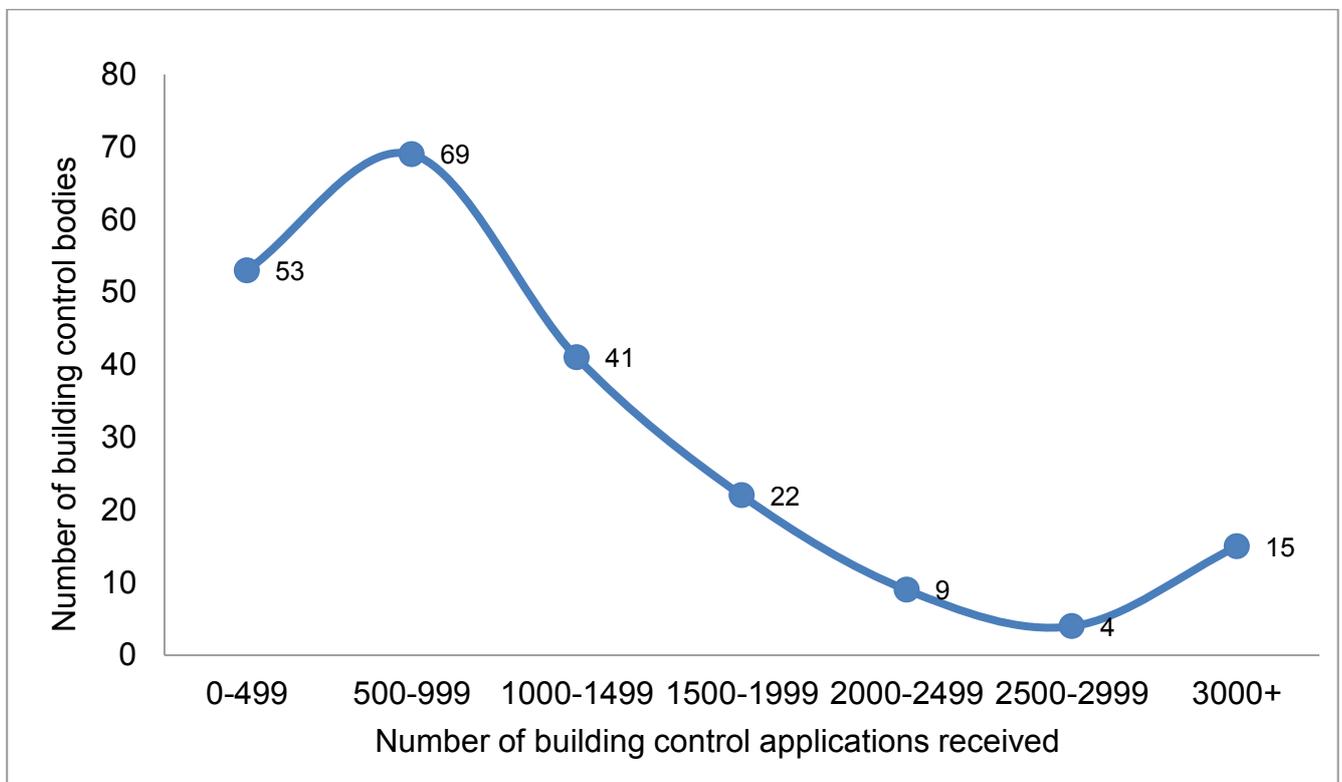
The survey asked for the number of building control applications received in the last 12 months, how many of these had started construction and of those, how many were still incomplete. The total amount building control fees charged in the last 12 months was also asked for.

Finally, the breakdown of building control projects in terms of percentage of total projects was asked for, as well as the percentage of the total fees that were charged for that type of project. There were 6 types of projects defined:

- new build homes including new homes created by conversion or change of use
- all other domestic work e.g. domestic alterations, extensions & improvements
- new build commercial/retail/industrial/hospitality
- all other commercial/retail/industrial/hospitality e.g. alterations or extensions
- new build education/health/justice/community/public building
- all other education/health/justice/community/public building alterations & extensions

Of the 236 returns received, 213 provided a figure for the number of building control applications received in the last 12 months. The distribution of these results is displayed in figure 3.1 below. In total 281,789 applications were received by respondents to the survey.

Figure 3.1 – Distribution of total number of projects by building control body



Based on data from 213 respondents

The median number of applications was 814 (866), and the mean was higher, at 1,323 (1,310) due to a small number of building control bodies having a very large number of applications received. This can be seen from the distribution in figure 3.1: 15 building control bodies received 3,000 or more applications. The vast majority of building control bodies received less than 2,000 applications in the last 12 months the same as last year's survey.

The majority of approved inspectors, 31 (36%), who responded received between 0 and 499 applications while the majority of local authorities, 51 (40%) received between 500 and 999 applications. There were significantly more approved inspectors, 13 (15%) than local authorities, 2 (2%) that received 3,000 or more applications the same as the last two years.

The median number of projects which had started construction was 544 (653) which is 67% (75%) of the total number of applications received. On average, 54% (53%) of these projects which started construction in the last 12 months were still uncompleted.

Overall the mean building control fee charged per application was £604 (£581). However as figure 3.2 below shows, average fees varied depending on the size of building control body. These calculations include data from the 189 returns that had responded with answers to both the questions required.

As the chart shows, by far the highest average fees were earned by building control bodies that received less than 500 applications in the year 2015/16, the same as the three previous years. Average fees charged then fluctuate, with the lowest fees for building control bodies that received between 1000 and 1499 applications at £409 a change from last year which was 2500 and 2999 applications at £333.

The average fees for all categories were significantly higher for approved inspectors than local authorities as shown in Fig 3.2. However, a few building control bodies were unable to provide application and/or fee information due to commercial reasons and difficulties in extracting the information from their computer systems.

Figure 3.2 – Average fee per building control application

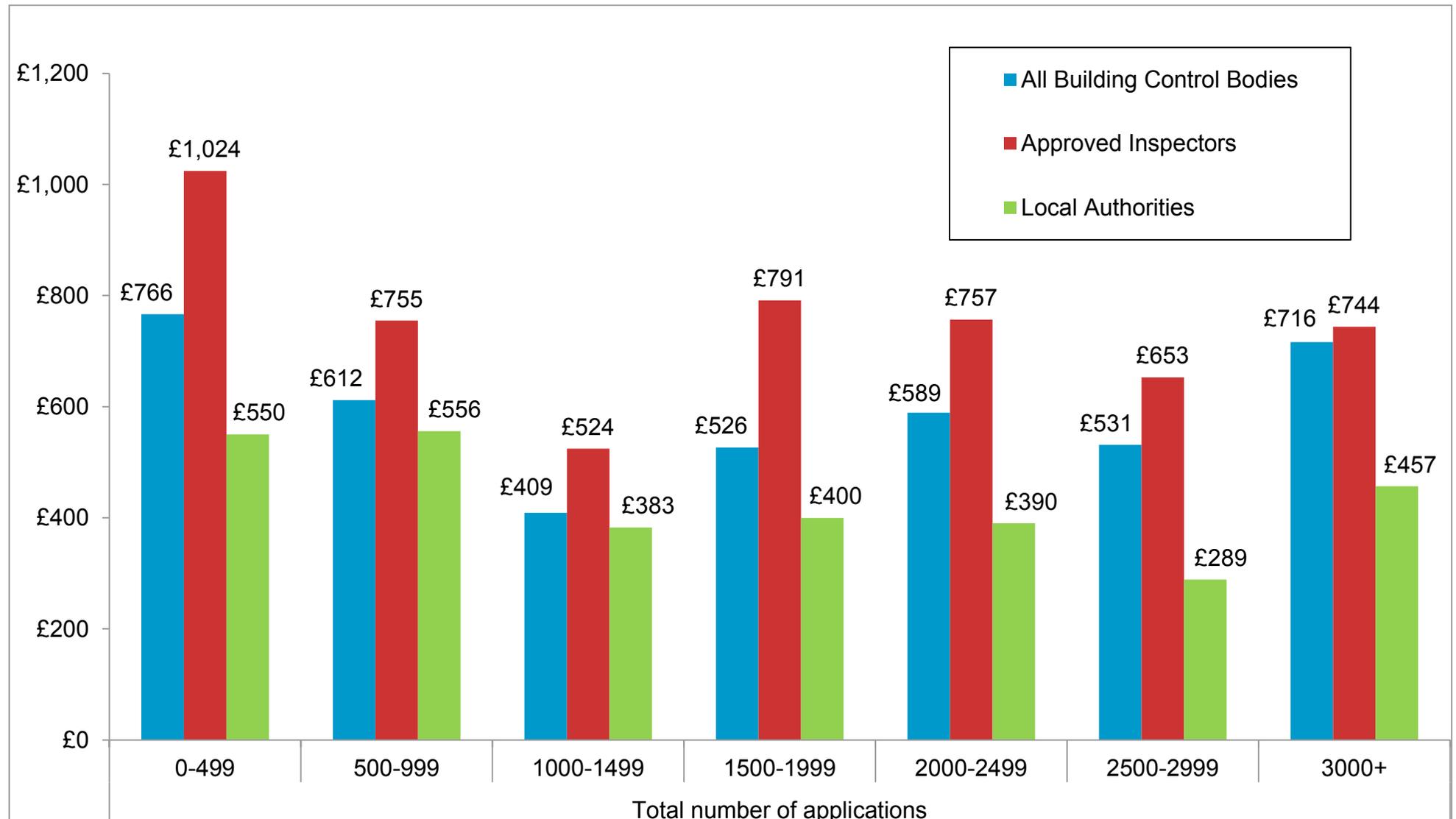


Figure 3.3 – Breakdown of projects

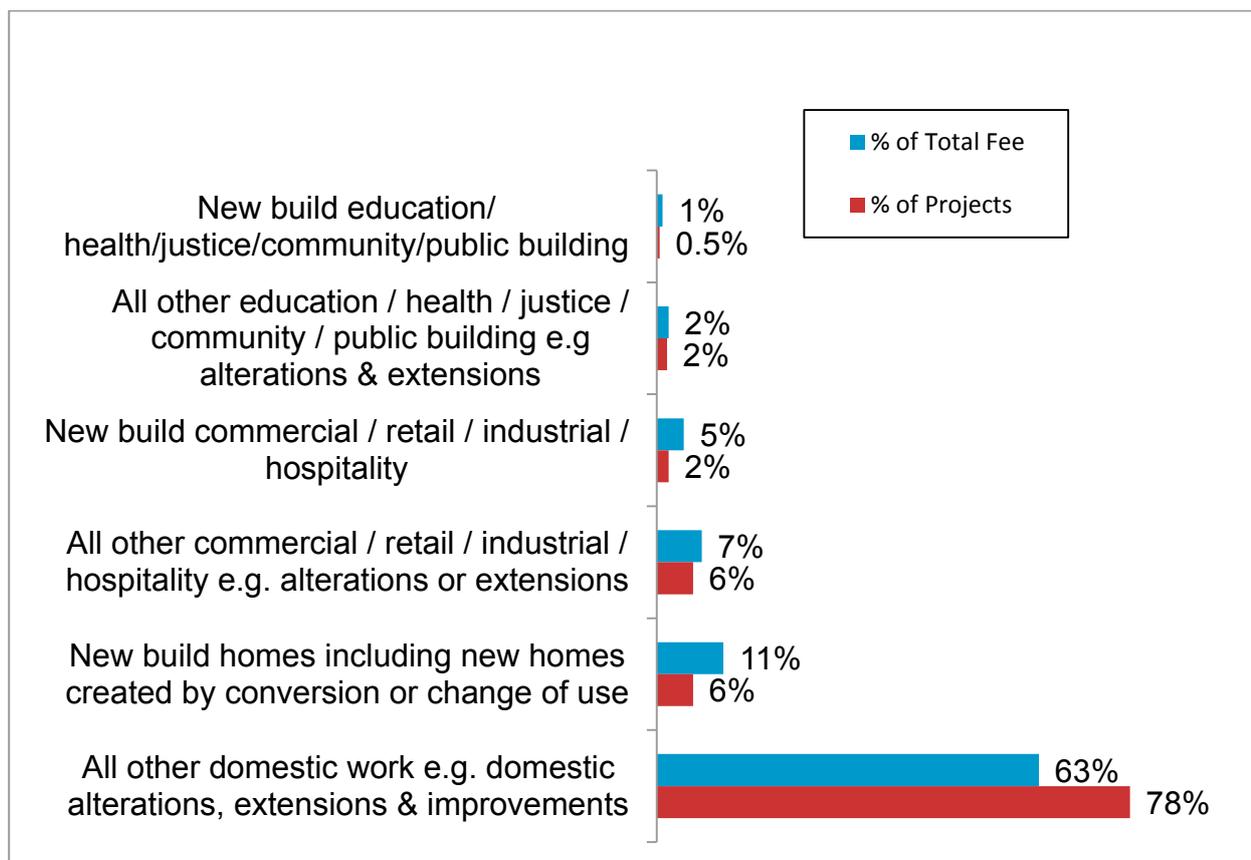


Figure 3.3 shows the median percentages of projects for 152 responses to this part of the survey. The majority of projects were domestic alterations, extensions and improvements etc. In general these projects earned lower building control fees, reflecting the complexity of work and level of interaction needed. Also there were relatively smaller numbers of new build homes, commercial and public building alterations, and commercial and public new builds but these earned the same or higher building control fees. The low number of new build homes was probably due to the fact that one application can cover several houses.

This is much the same as in the 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 reports but note the category headings were amended slightly in 2014/15 for clarity.

However, as figure 3.4 and 3.5 below show, the majority of projects for both approved inspectors and local authorities were domestic alterations but approved inspectors had a smaller percentage of 68% than local authorities at 83%. Both approved inspectors and local authorities have seen an increase in the number of projects for this category in the last two years. Approved inspectors also had double the percentage (10%) of commercial extensions than local authorities (5%) similar to last year. The other categories were evenly split between approved inspectors and local authorities.

Figure 3.4 – Breakdown of projects for approved inspectors

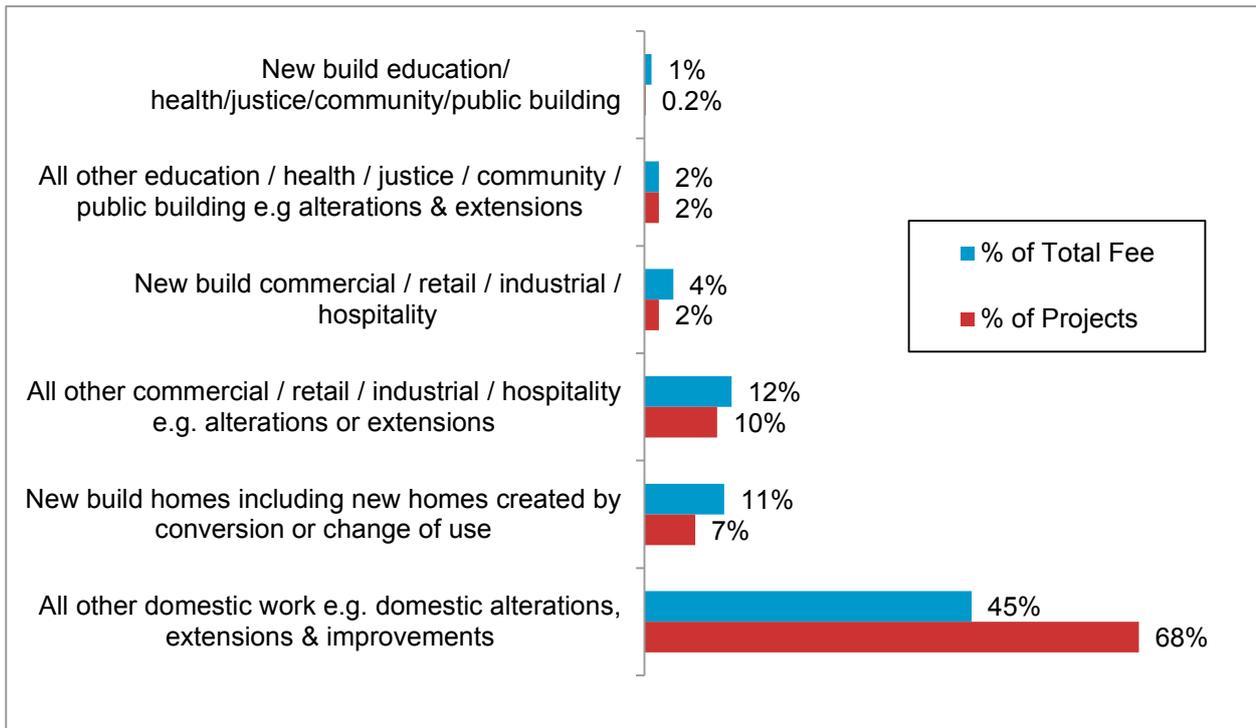
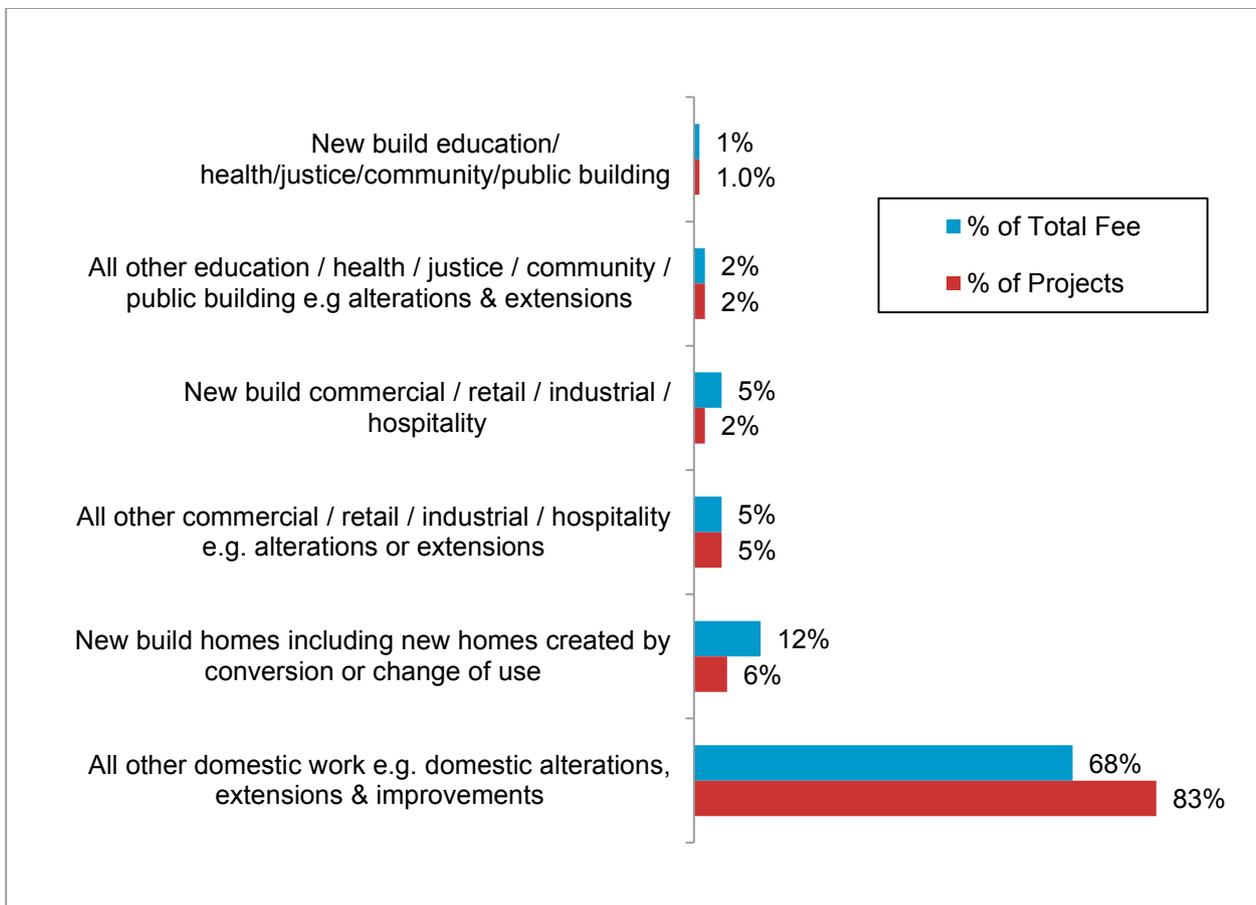


Figure 3.5 – Breakdown of projects for local authorities



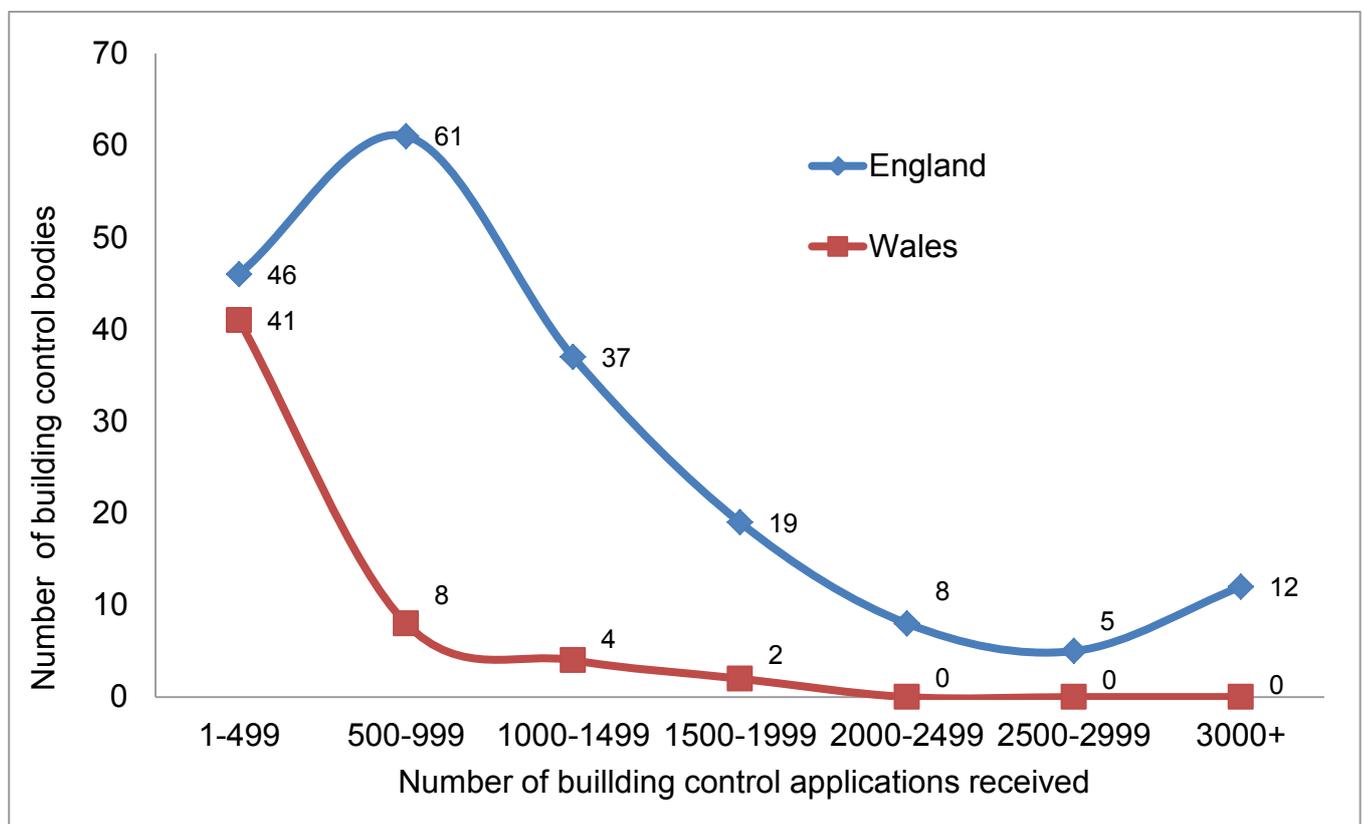
3a. Breakdown of Building Control Work in England and Wales

For the first time the survey also asked approved inspectors for separate data for England and Wales on the number of building control applications received and the total amount building control fees charged in the last 12 months. Approved inspectors were also asked for the breakdown of building control projects in terms of percentage of total projects, as well as the percentage of the total fees that were charged for the six types of project for England and for Wales. Please note that not all approved inspectors that responded to Section 3. Building Control Work also responded to this section and vice versa so the data sets used for these two sections are not directly comparable.

Of the 85 returns received from approved inspectors 80 also provided a figure for the number of building control applications received in the last 12 months in England and for Wales. The approved inspector data was combined with the responses received from 112 local authorities in England and 16 local authorities in Wales. The distribution of these results is displayed in figure 3.1a below. In total 248,399 applications were received in England and 17,322 applications were received in Wales by respondents to this part of the survey.

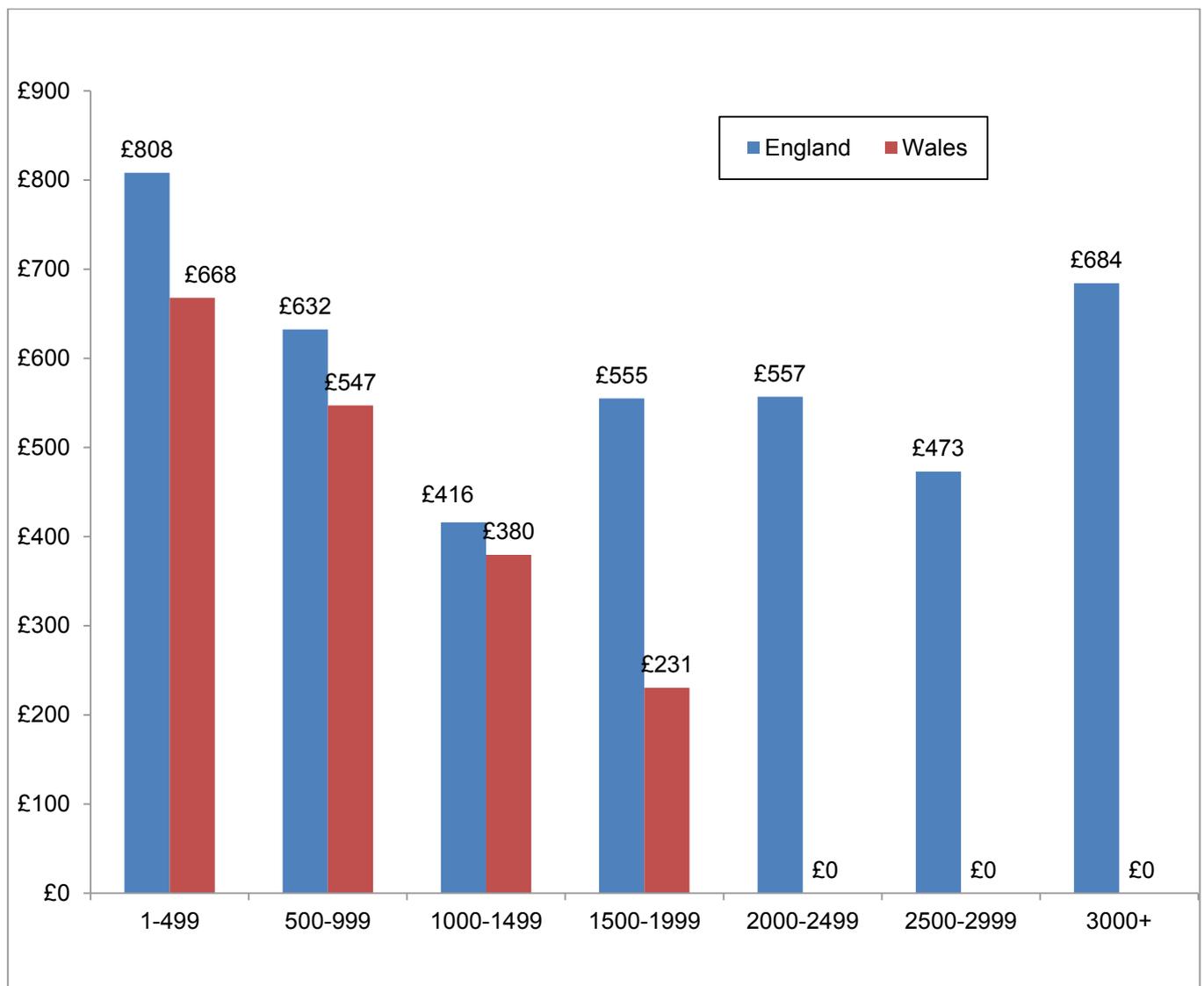
Of the 80 approved inspectors who responded 4 reported receiving no building control applications for England and 41 reported receiving no building control applications for Wales.

Figure 3.1a – Distribution of total number of projects by building control body



The median number of applications was 828 in England and 53 in Wales, and the mean was higher in Both England and Wales at 1,321 and 315 respectively. The majority of building control bodies in England received between 500 and 999 applications while the majority of Building Control Bodies in Wales received between 1 and 499 applications. Also in England there were 25 building control bodies that received more than 2,000 applications while in Wales there were none.

Figure 3.2a – Average fee per building control application



The mean building control fee charged per application in England was £600 and in Wales it was £457. However as figure 3.2a above shows, average fees varied depending on the size of building control body. These calculations include data from the 76 approved inspectors and 115 local authorities that had responded with answers to both the questions required.

As the chart shows, the highest average fees were earned by building control bodies that received less than 500 applications in the year 2015/16. The average fees for all categories under 2,000 applications were significantly higher for England than Wales as shown in Fig 3.2a.

Figure 3.3a – Breakdown of projects England

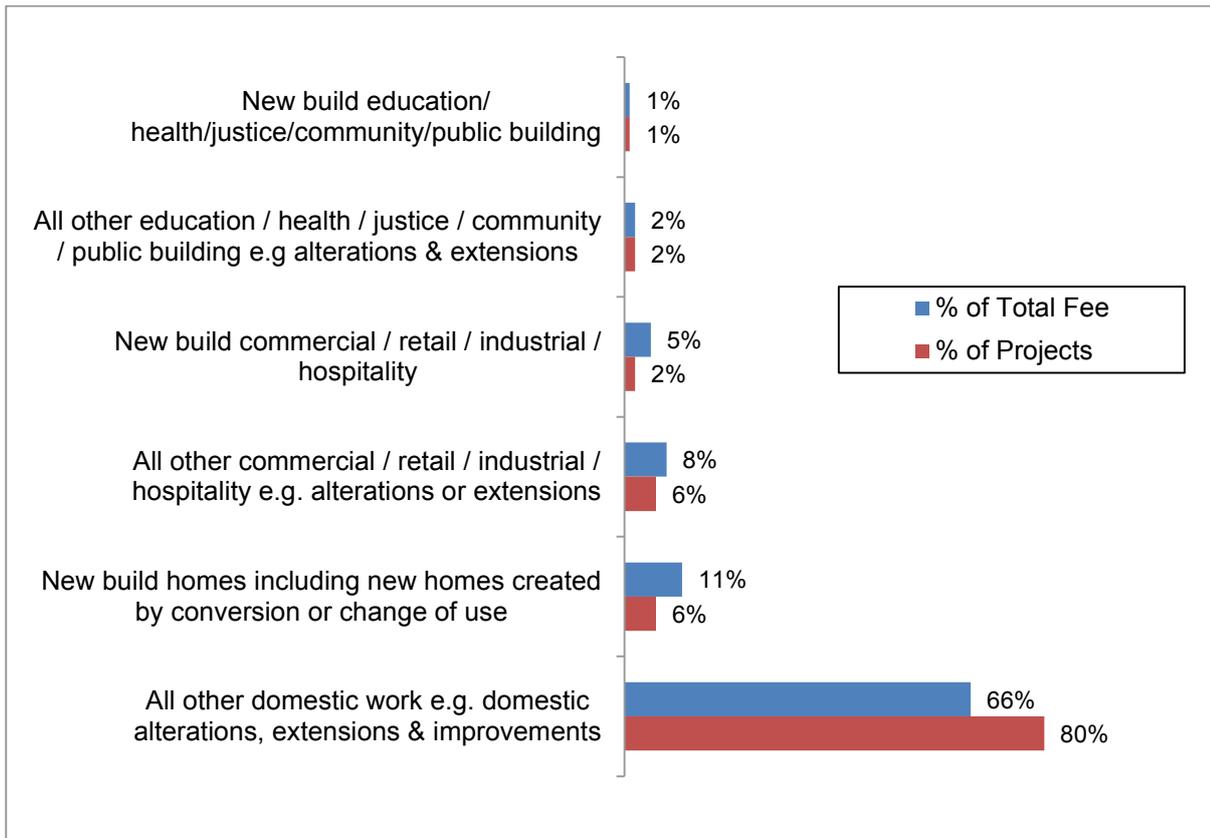


Figure 3.4a – Breakdown of projects Wales

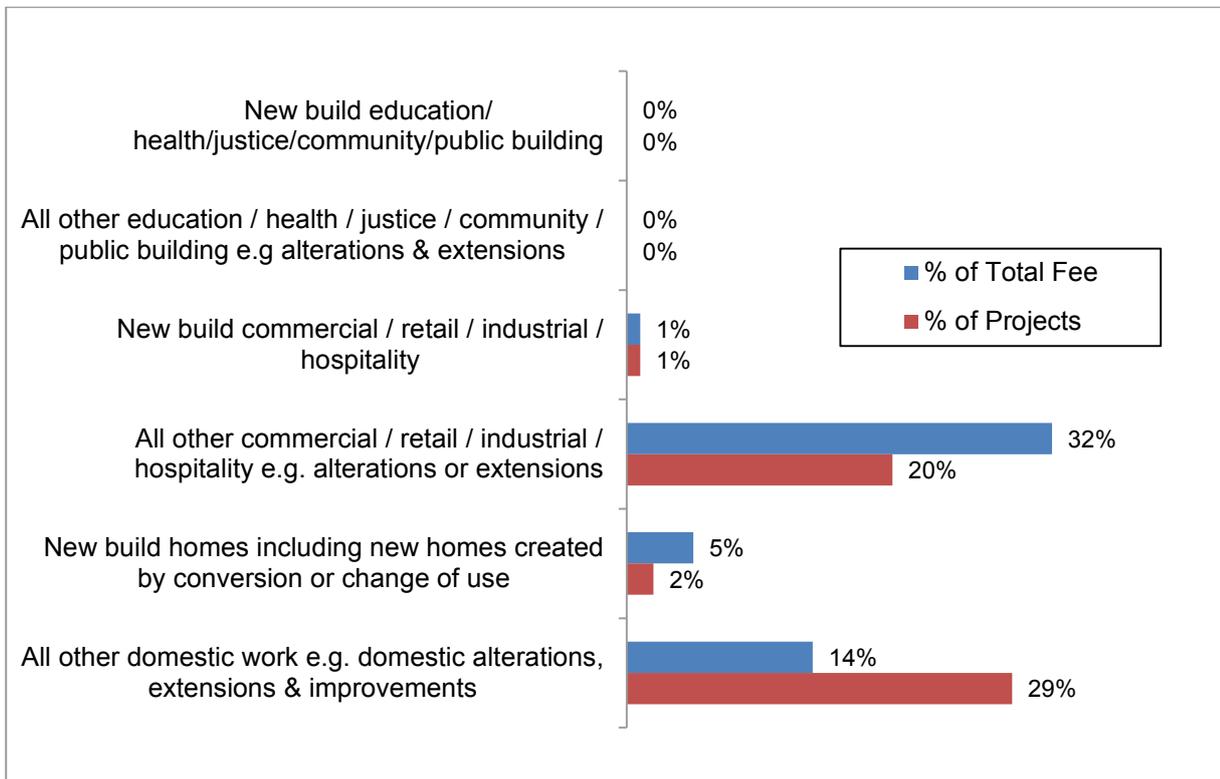


Figure 3.3a shows the median percentages of projects for 136 (66 local authorities and 70 approved inspectors) responses to this part of the survey for England and Figure 3.4a shows the median percentages of projects for 47 (10 local authorities and 37 approved inspectors) responses to this part of the survey for Wales. The majority of projects in England (80%) and Wales (29%) were domestic alterations, extensions and improvements etc. but that in general these projects earned lower building control fees, and that there were relatively smaller numbers of new build homes, commercial and public building alterations. However there were more commercial and public new builds in Wales at 20% than in England at 6% but these earned higher building control fees. The other categories were similar in England and Wales.

4. Building Control Staff

This part of the report is split into 5 sections:

People and Skills (4.1),

Experience of Staff (4.2)

Specialist Knowledge (4.3),

Age and Gender profile (4.4), and

Staff Retention and Training (4.5).

4.1 People and Skills

The survey asked respondents to give their total number of staff in 11 categories, which covered:

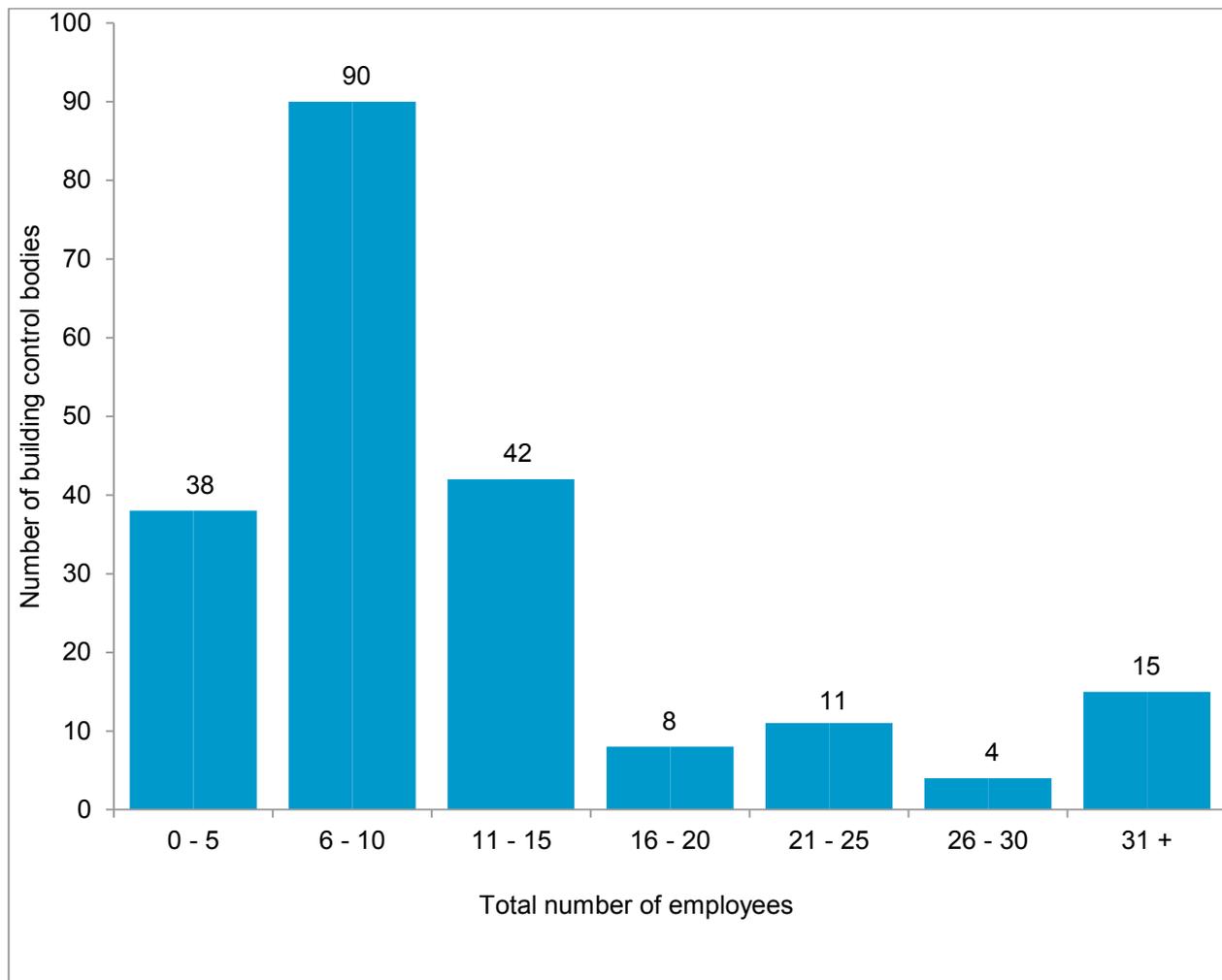
- direct and contract employees
- full time and part-time employees
- employees' qualifications.

The specific questions are set out in figure 4.1.2.

For part-time workers respondents were asked to provide full-time equivalent values, for example an employee working two days a week would be denoted as 0.4.

208 respondents provided information for this section. The median total number of employees was slightly lower than last year at 8.6 (9.2), with a mean of 13.4 (13). Figure 4.1.1 shows the distribution of building control bodies by total staff numbers. The mean is higher than the median as it is influenced by a few building control bodies with very large workforces.

Figure 4.1.1 – Distribution of total number of staff

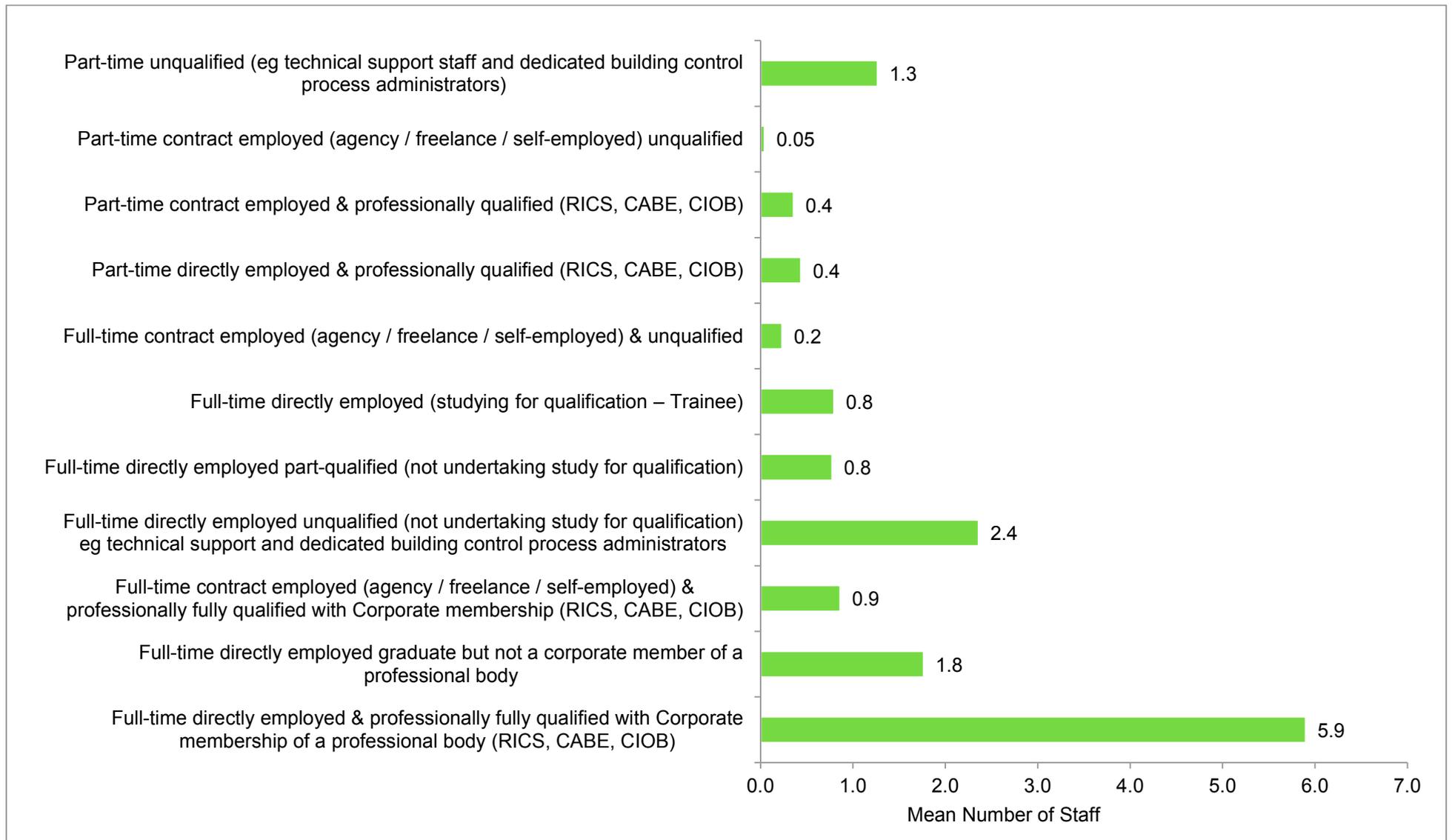


The majority, 62% (58%), of building control bodies responding to the survey had 10 employees or fewer, and 82% (80%) of respondents had 15 employees or fewer. The majority of approved inspectors (33%) and local authorities (50%) had between 6 and 10 employees. However as last year approved inspectors had a higher percentage, 14% (13%) of having 31 employees or more than local authorities 2% (2%).

Figure 4.1.2 overleaf shows building control bodies' mean number of staff by qualification and employment type.

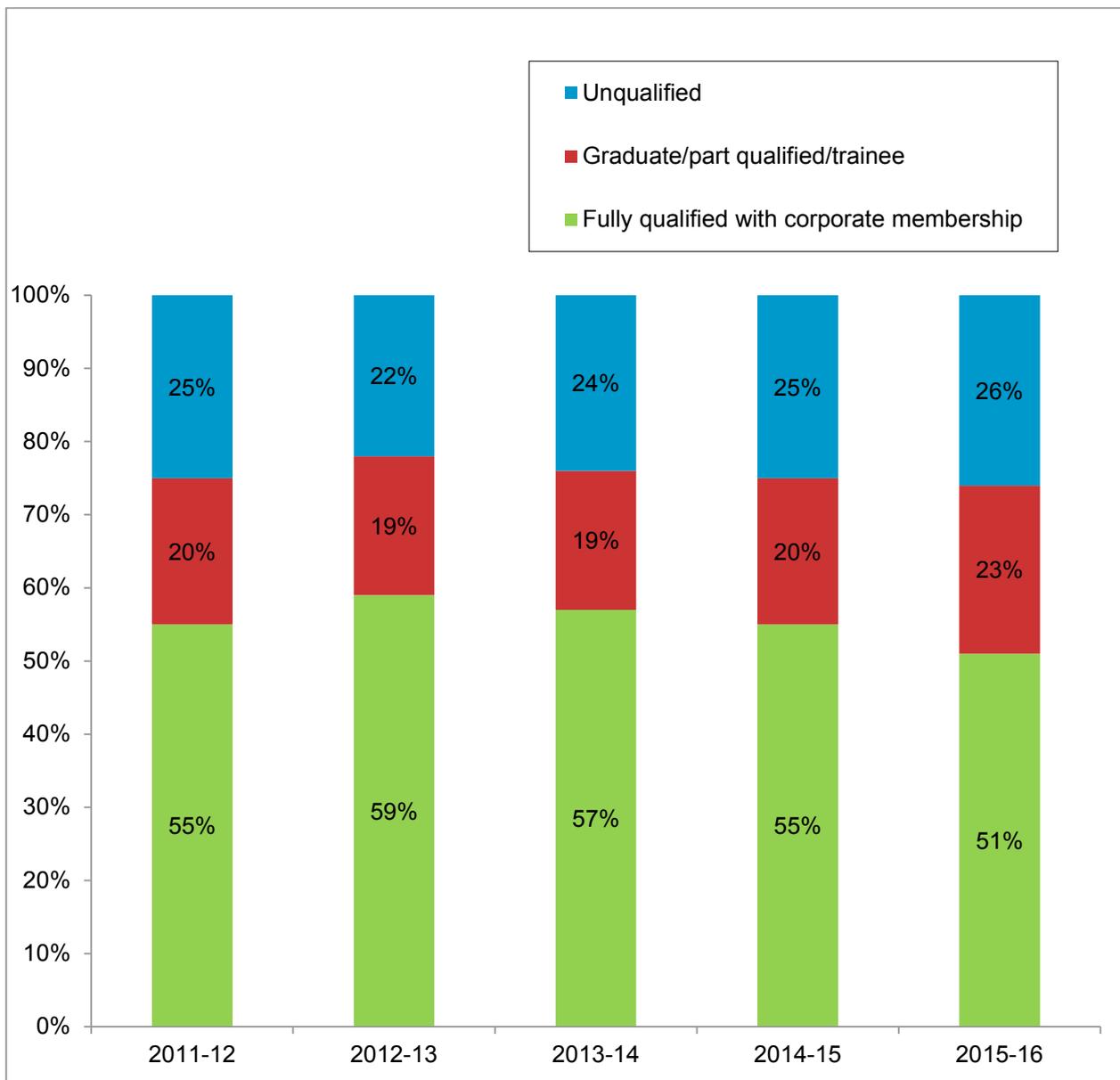
Of the 13.4 mean total number of employees, 5.9 (44%) were full time directly employed fully professionally qualified with corporate membership, with a further 1.8 (13%) full time directly employed graduates without corporate membership. The two other relatively large proportions are full and part time direct employees with no qualifications, which are presumed to be mainly administrative staff. Building control bodies tend to employ a smaller proportion of trainees than of part-qualified staff not undertaking further study.

Figure 4.1.2 – Staff classification



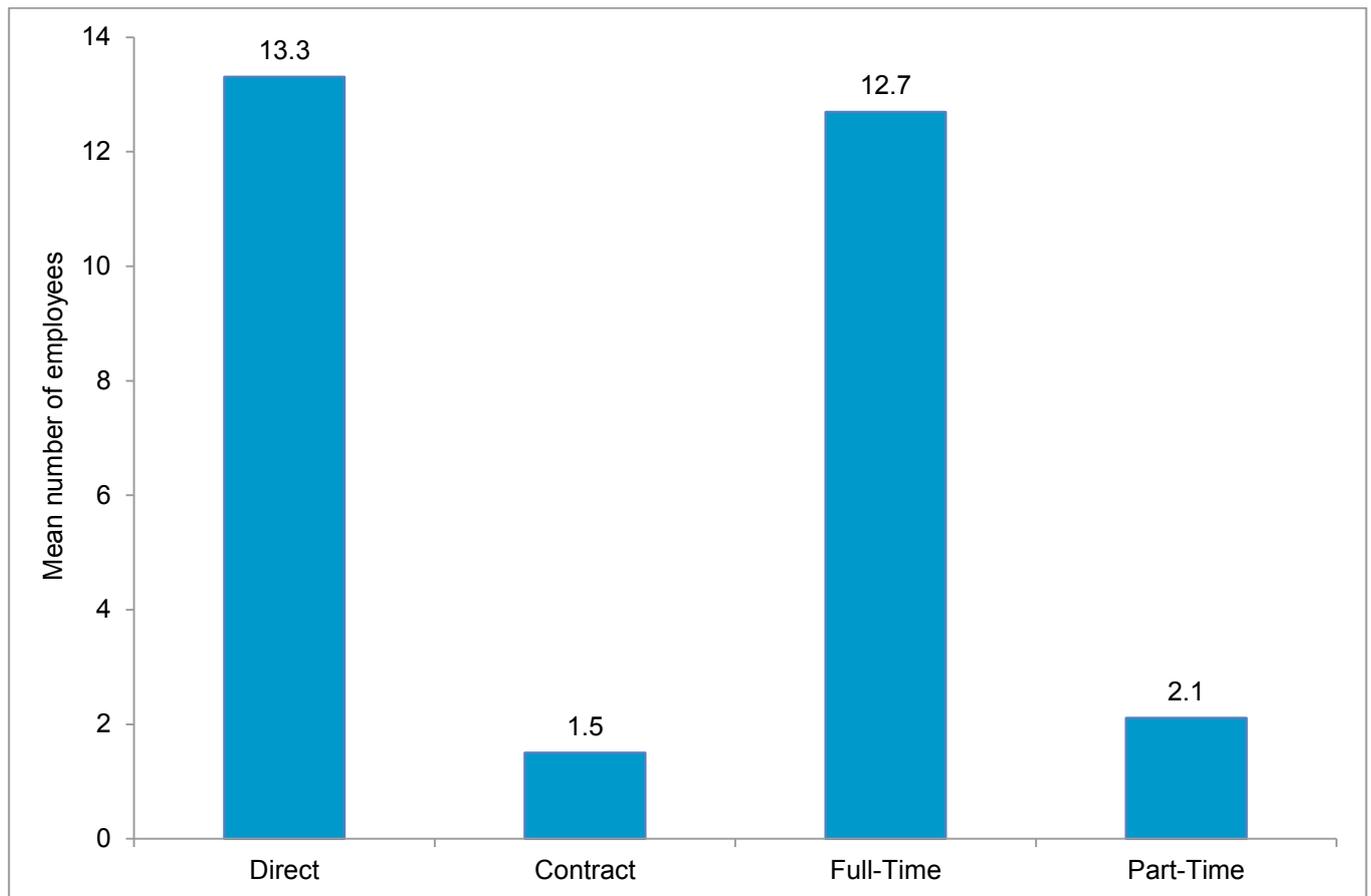
Including those working on a contract basis or part time, professionally qualified staff with corporate membership made up 51% (55%) of the average building control body's workforce. As figure 4.1.3 below shows, this is a decrease in this performance indicator, compared to 55% in last year's survey while there has been a slight increase in unqualified staff to 26% from 25% last year and for graduate/part qualified/trainee to 23% from 20%. The percentage of unqualified staff was slightly more for approved inspectors (27%) than for local authorities (26%). However, as last year approved inspectors had a higher proportion 55% (58%) of staff fully qualified with corporate membership than local authorities 47% (55%). This means that approved inspectors have a lower proportion 19% (17%) of graduates, part qualified/trainee staff than local authorities 27% (20%).

Figure 4.1.3 – Mean proportion of staff by qualification



As in previous years there are higher mean numbers of direct and full time employees than part-time and contract employees, which can be seen in fig 4.1.4 below.

Figure 4.1.4 – Staff by employment type



The use of contract staff seems to have stabilised after increasing every year since 2011/12. In 2014/15 and 2015/16 the mean number of contract staff employed was 1.5 while in 2013/14 it was 1.3 and in 2012/13 1.2 double the number reported in 2011/12. The overall mean number of staff directly employed has increased slightly from 13 to 13.3 similar to the 2013/14 number of 12.4 and the 2012/13 number of 13.2. This may imply that building control bodies continue to meet demand with flexible contractors rather than permanent staff. Three quarters of contract employees were fully qualified with corporate membership, equally split between part-time and full-time, the same as last year's survey.

Part time workers are more likely than full time workers to be unqualified (e.g. technical support staff and dedicated building control process administrators); over half of part time staff were in this category. Around 35% of part time workers were professionally qualified, with slightly more (19%) employed directly than on a contract basis (16%).

The mean number of employees in each category was slightly higher for approved inspectors but the split between the four categories was similar for approved inspectors and local authorities. Both had higher mean numbers of direct and full time employees than part-time and contract employees the same as last year's survey.

4.2 Experience of Staff

The survey asked building control bodies how many of their staff employed had extensive experience in domestic and non-domestic work as well as how many support staff they have. This set of questions was introduced for the first in 2014/15.

Figure 4.2.1 – Staff experience

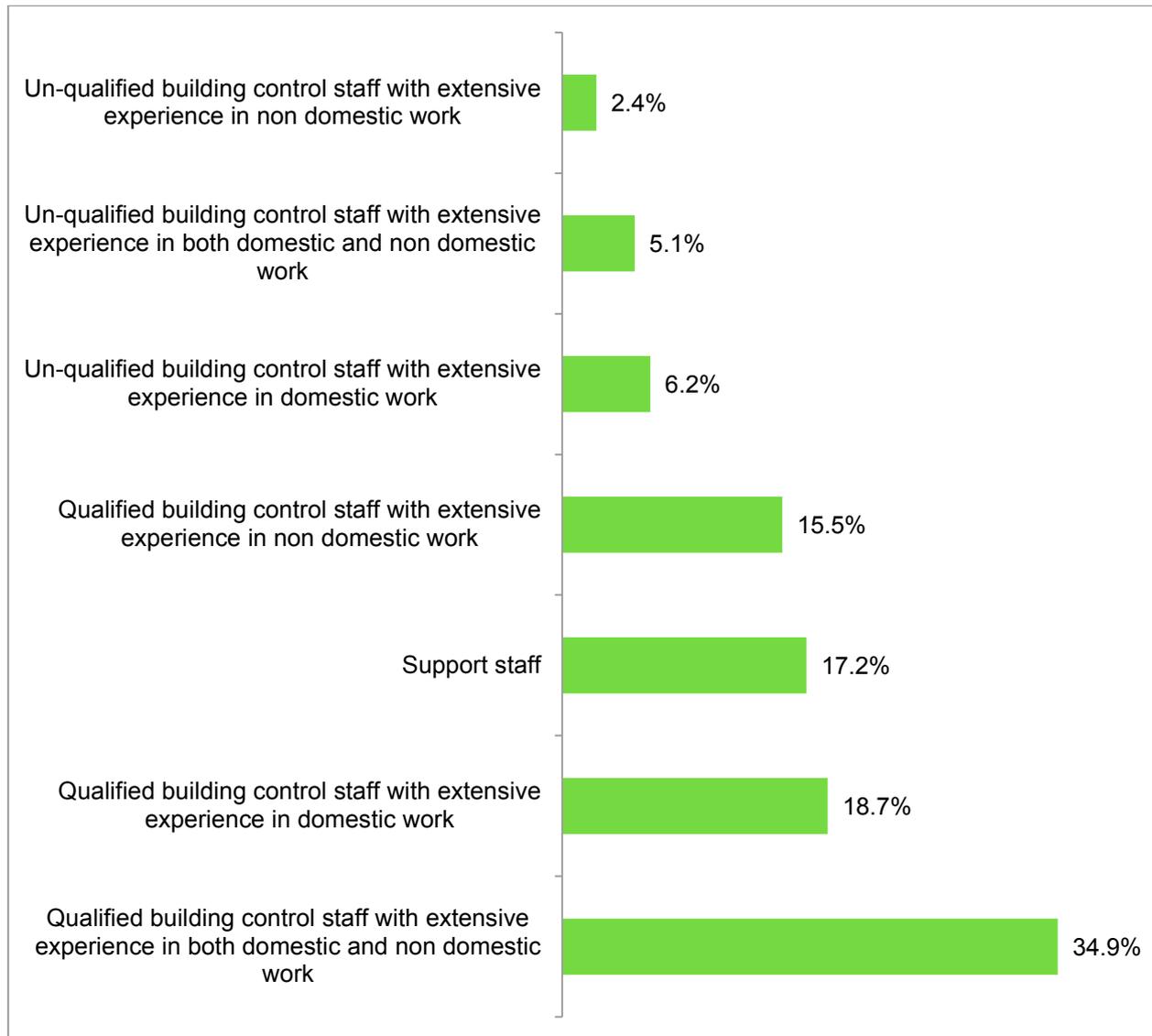


Figure 4.2.1 uses data returned from 204 building control bodies. It shows the mean percentage of staff having each type of experience.

The data shows that most building control staff (34.9%) are qualified with extensive experience in both domestic and non domestic work. This was the same for both approved inspectors and local authorities. This represents the wide range of building work that building control bodies are required to supervise. The next highest was qualified building control staff with extensive experience in domestic work at 18.7%. The lowest number of building control staff were unqualified with extensive experience in non-domestic work at 2.4%.

4.3 Specialist Knowledge

The survey asked for the building control bodies to input how many of their staff had knowledge in each of 9 specialist areas of building control, as well as an 'other' category if staff have specialist knowledge in an area not mentioned.

Figure 4.3.1 – Staff specialist knowledge

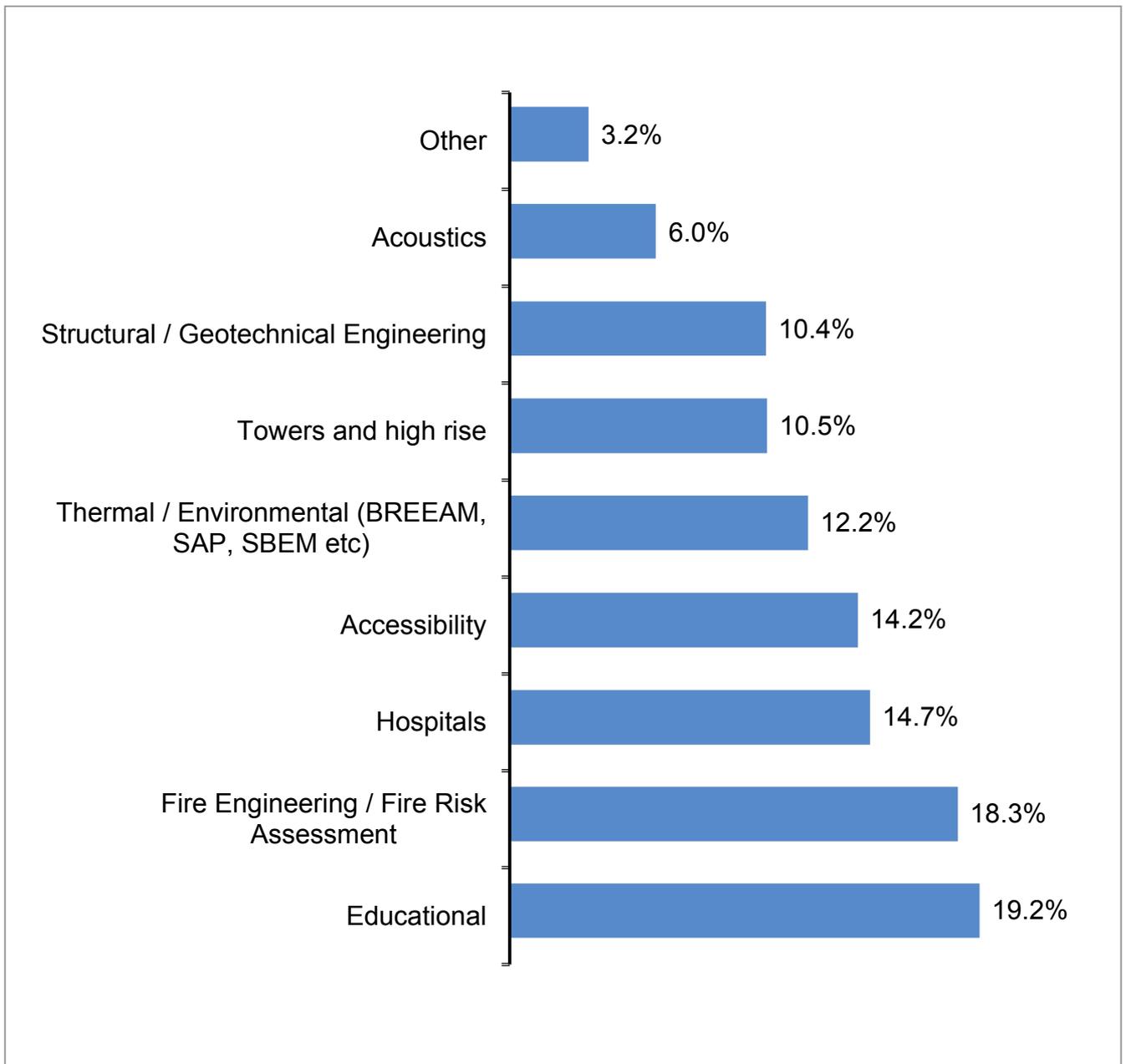


Figure 4.3.1 uses data returned from 208 building control bodies. It shows the mean percentage of staff having each type of specialist knowledge. The data shows that staff have the highest level of experience in educational buildings expertise, followed by the second highest in fire engineering and risk assessment.

This was the same as last year's position and for local authorities. However, for approved inspectors the highest level of experience was in fire engineering and risk assessment, followed by the second highest in educational buildings expertise. The weakest area appears to be acoustics, as only 6% of staff had extensive experience but this is an increase of 1.5% from last year's survey following two years of decline. This was also the weakest area for both approved inspectors and local authorities. Most categories, except accessibility, acoustics and thermal/environmental, have seen a decrease since last year's survey of between 0.2% and 1.5%.

The low level of expertise in acoustics may reflect the fact that many projects use Robust Details to satisfy the sound insulation requirements of the Building Regulations where building control expertise is not needed.

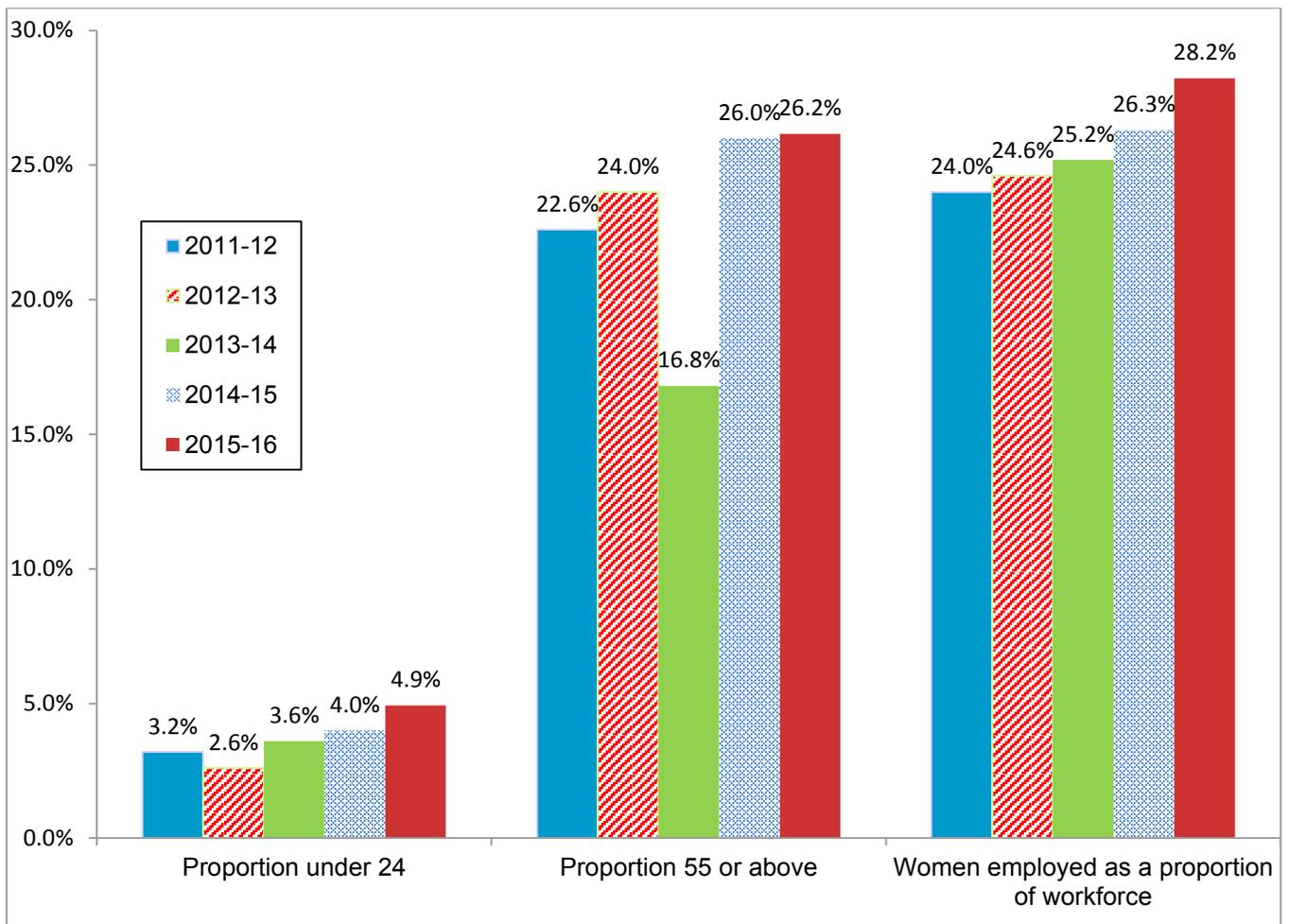
4.4 Age and Gender profile

The survey asked respondents to give the number of male and female staff within the following age ranges:

- Under 24
- 24-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-54
- 55-60
- 61+

Respondents were asked to include direct, full time, part time and contract staff. Figure 4.4.1 overleaf summarises the performance indicators from section 4.4 of the survey. 203 respondents provided data for this section of the survey.

Figure 4.4.1 – Mean performance indicator scores for age and gender distribution in the workforce

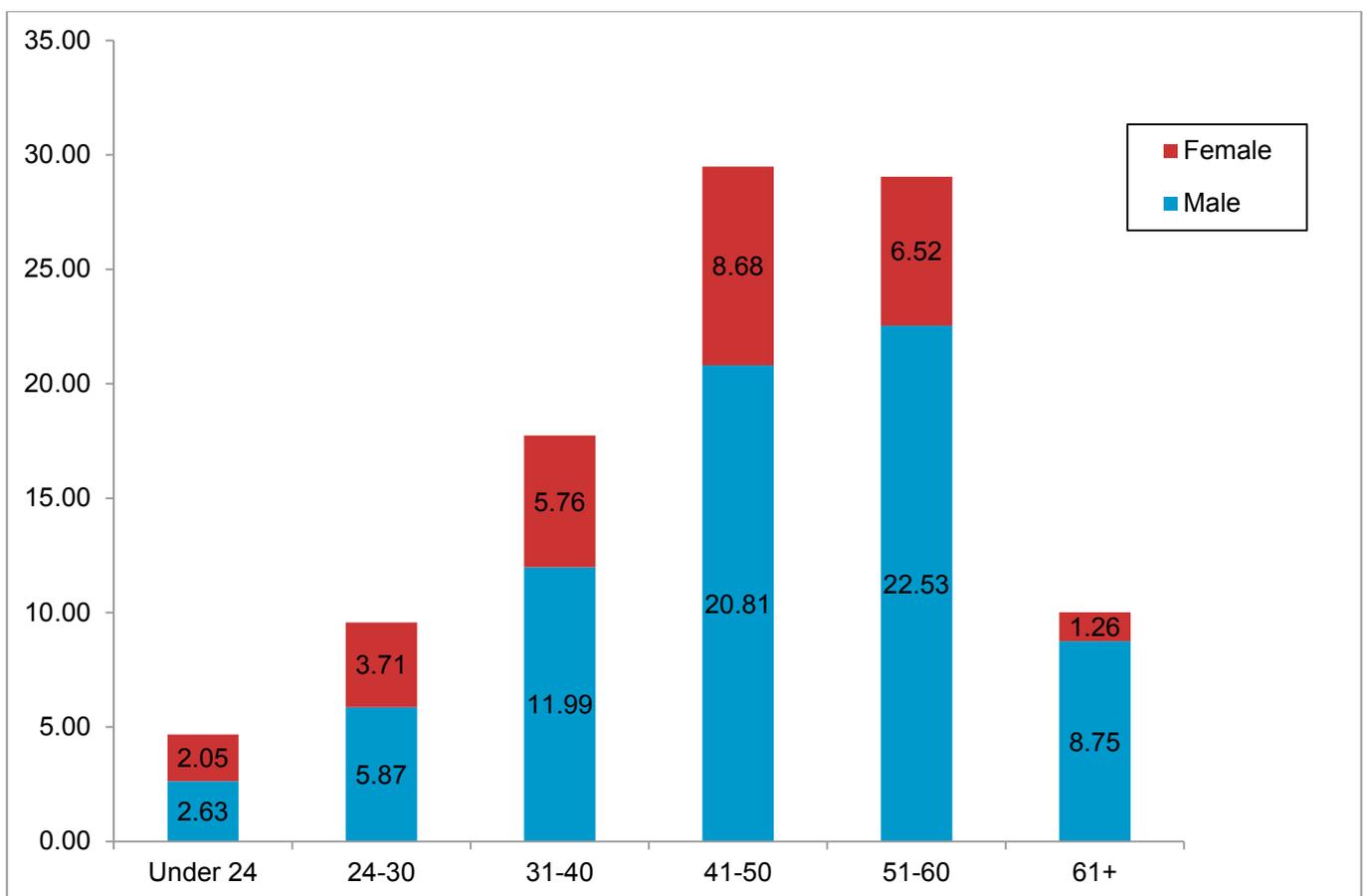


Overall performance on these indicators is mixed. The mean proportion of staff under 24 has increased again this year from 4% to 4.9%. As last year it is higher for approved inspectors at 6.5% (4.4%) and lower for local authorities at 3.9% (3.8%). The mean proportion of the workforce who are 55 or above has increased slightly to 26.2% (26%). As last year it is slightly lower for approved inspectors at 22% (22.5%) and higher for local authorities at 28.9% (28.1%). This shift is not encouraging as there still appears to be a shortfall to be able to replace older staff heading for retirement.

The mean proportion of women in the workforce is over a quarter (28.2%) and was 1.9 percentage points higher than in last year’s survey; this is another small change in line with the trend over the past four years. It is also higher than the average for women in construction sector as a whole which is only around 11%.

The Group’s survey methodology asked respondents for information on staff based on full time equivalent numbers³. Across the UK as whole, women have a greater likelihood of working part time. Estimates of the female proportion of the UK workforce in terms of full time equivalent figures are closer to 40%. This is still some way above respondents’ average figure of 28.2%. The mean proportion of women for the approved inspectors who responded was 28.5% compared to a similar percentage of 28.1% for local authorities.

Figure 4.4.2 – Mean proportion of total staff by age and gender



³ For example: A part time employee who worked 3 days a week would be counted as 0.6.

Figure 4.4.2 shows a more detailed breakdown of staffing profiles⁴ and illustrates as last year that employees' ages are heavily weighted around the 41-60 age ranges: the mean proportion of workers between these ages being 59% (60%), similar to last year's survey. There is a sharp drop in workforce proportion for the 61+ age group, the same as in last year's survey. This is the same for both approved inspectors and local authorities.

This chart also illustrates the proportion of women in each age group; this diminishes steadily as age increases. Women on average make up 40% of employees under the age of 30. For employees between the ages of 30 and 50, this proportion falls to around a 31%. Women account for just over a fifth of the 51-60 band and less still of those over 60.

Figure 4.4.3 – Distribution of over 50s in the workforce

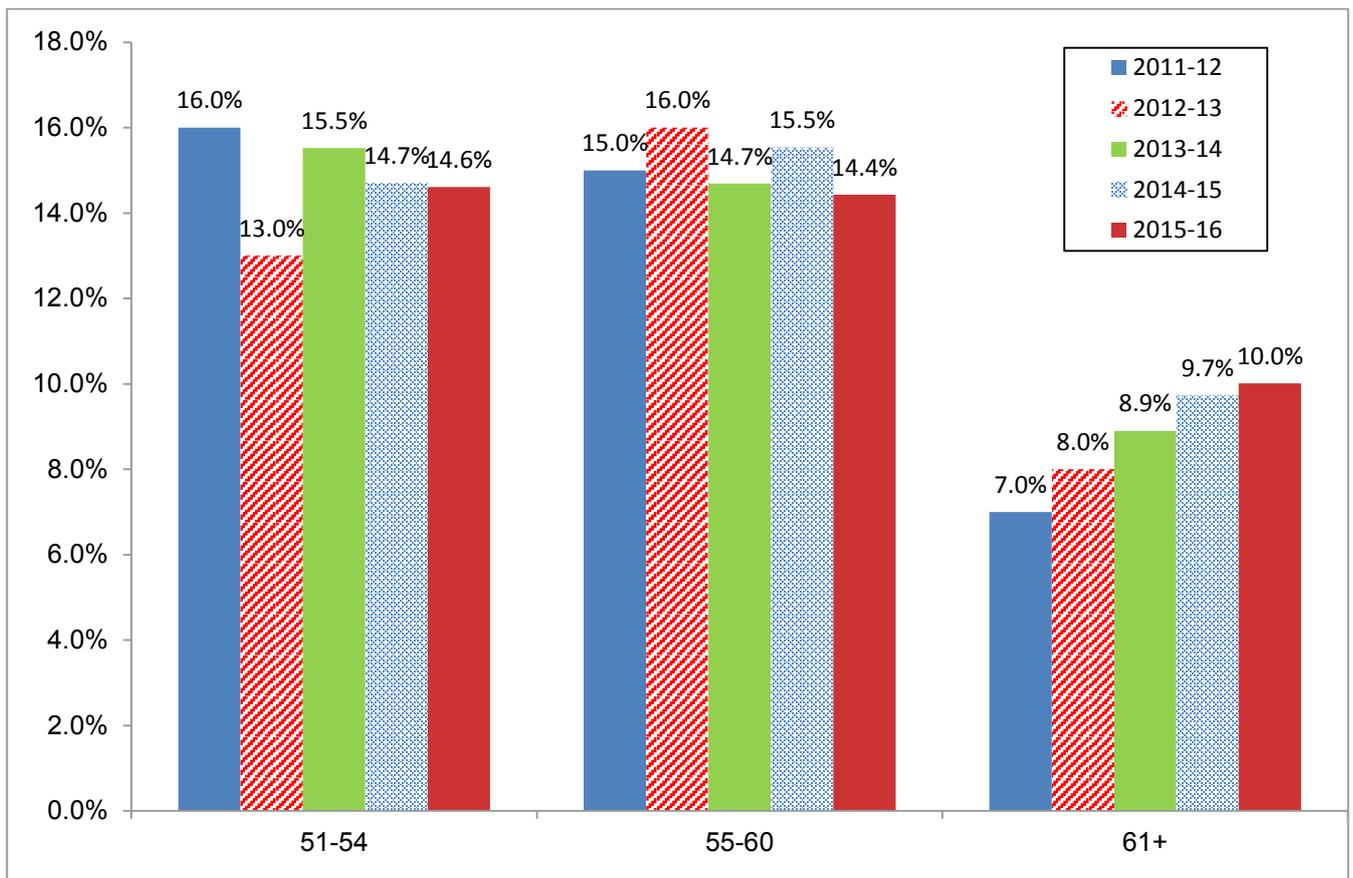


Figure 4.4.3 gives a more detailed distribution of the aggregated groups. The proportion of employees in the bands aged 55 to 60 and over 61 have both increased slightly by 0.9% 0.3% respectively. While the proportion of those aged 51 to 54 has fallen slightly by 0.1% in the mean proportion of employees. Figure 4.4.3 above shows that if the current trend continues, building control bodies will have to replace their workforce at an accelerating rate over the next decade, and of course accommodate the issue of relative dilution of experience in the workforce.

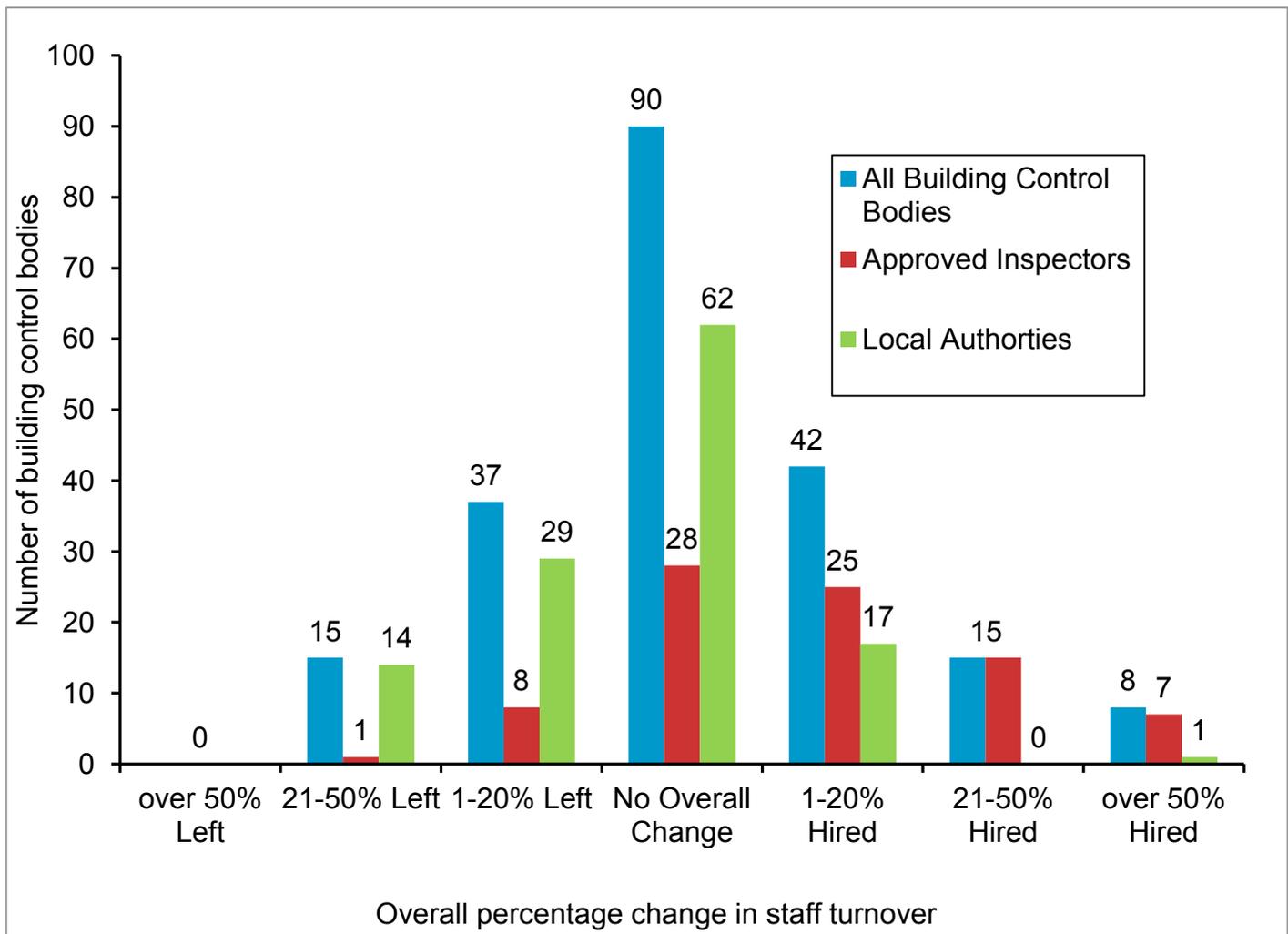
⁴ Age bands 51-54 and 55-60 have been combined to aid visual comparison.

4.5 Staff Retention and Training

The survey asked for the building control bodies to give for the past twelve months the number of direct employees that left, the number that were hired, and the number of employees that left and were replaced in their specific role.

The survey then asked for the total number of days that were lost due to sickness absence across all directly-employed staff, and the total number of training days provided for direct employees.

Figure 4.5.1 – Staff turnover

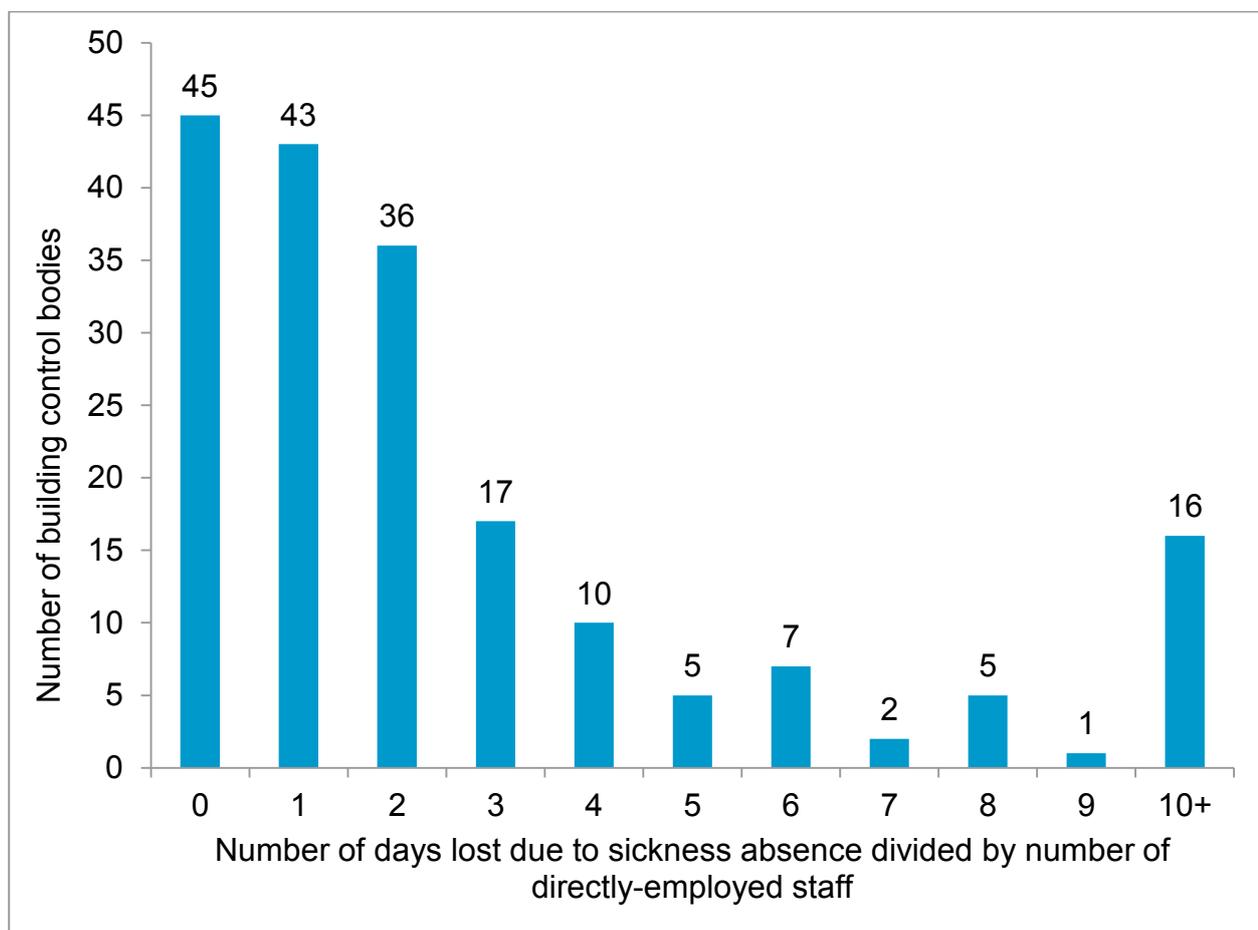


As shown in figure 4.5.1, slightly more building control bodies showed an overall increase in the number of employees than those that showed a decrease. This is a reversal from last year's survey. However, as last year, the majority of building control bodies recorded no overall change in the size of their workforce. So in general numbers of employees have risen very slightly. This was the same for approved inspectors with 28 (33%) of respondents having no overall change and 62 (50%) of local authorities. However more local authorities 43 (35%) had direct employees that had left compared with 9 (11%) of approved inspectors. Local authorities also hired less direct employees 18 (15%) compared with 47 (56%) of approved inspectors.

The mean level of staff turnover, defined as the number of direct staff who left and were replaced divided by the total number of direct staff was 6.4%. This is low, but has increased compared to the 5.6% in last year's survey and the 4.3% in 2013/14 and 4.0% in 2012/13. This small upturn in staff turnover could be a result of increased staff movement between building control bodies, or an accelerating need to replace retired workers. 78 of 204 building control bodies that responded had not hired any direct staff during the last 12 months.

Figure 4.5.2 below shows the distribution of sickness absence per employee. It includes data from the one hundred and eighty seven (187) building control bodies that responded to this performance indicator.

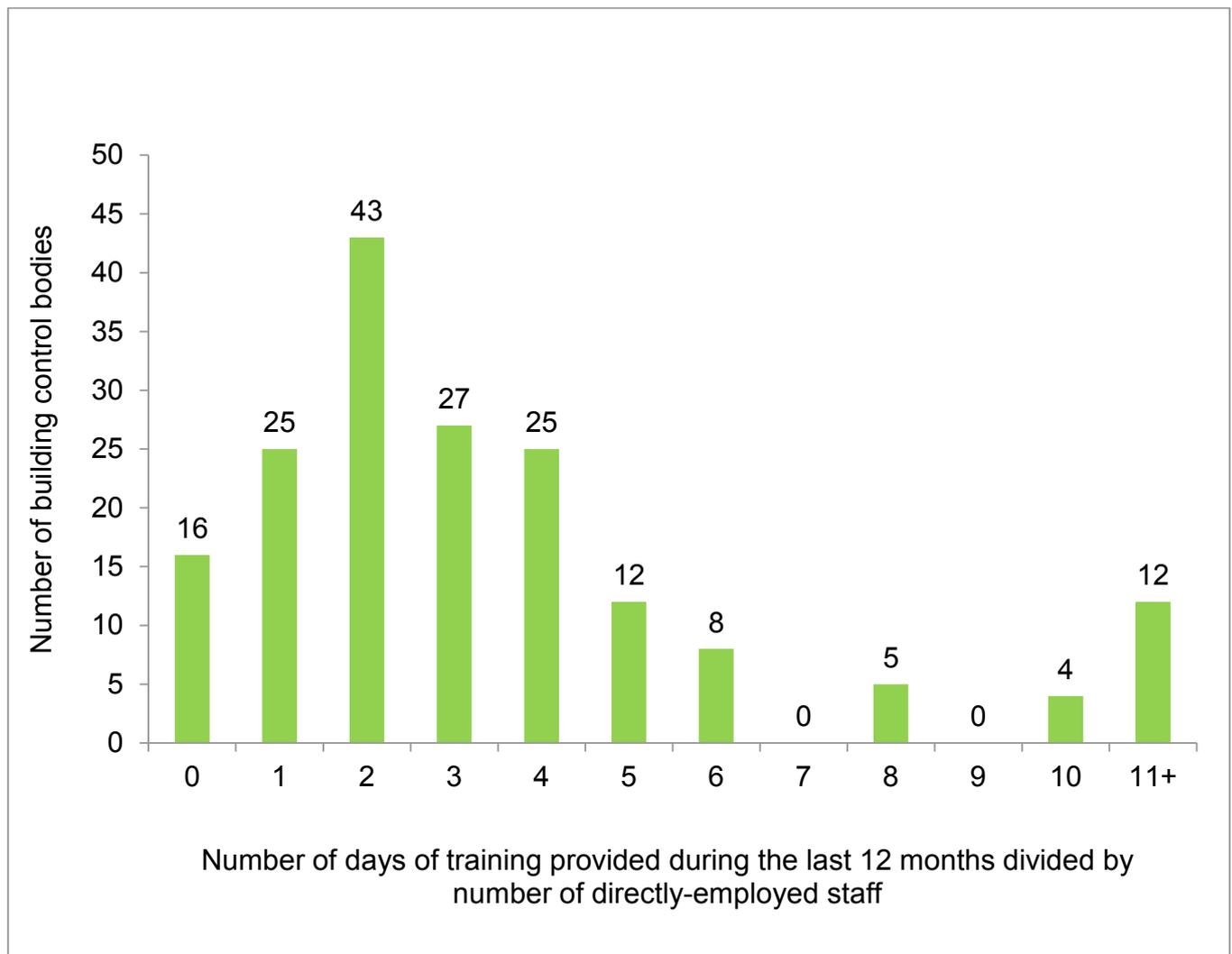
Figure 4.5.2 – Distribution of sickness absence



The distribution is weighted towards lower sickness absences which is an encouraging result. The median is 1.6 days per direct employee, and the mean is higher at 3.4 but is

lower than the national mean of 4.4 from the ONS Labour Force Survey in 2013⁵. This performance indicator has stayed nearly the same as last year's survey which had a median of 1.5 and mean of 3.7. However, approved inspectors had a lower median of 0.9 per direct employee compared to 2.2 days for local authorities. The mean for approved inspectors was also lower at 1.9 compared to 4.7 for local authorities. This was due to fewer approved inspectors (6%) having 7 or more days than local authorities (20%). This also reflects the findings of the ONS Labour Force Survey which found public sector workers having a higher percentage (2.9%) of working hours lost to sickness absences than workers in the private sector (1.8%).

Figure 4.5.3 – Distribution of training days given to direct staff



5

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsen ceinthelabourmarket/2014-02-25>.

Figure 4.5.3 above shows the distribution of the mean number of training days provided for each employee. One hundred and seventy seven (177) building control bodies returned data for this performance indicator.

This distribution shows that 76.8% of building control bodies gave their employees up to 4 training days each, slightly lower than last year which was 79.1%. The median number of training days given was 2.6, and the mean was higher at 4.1 due to a few reports of 11 or more training days being given, the same as last year.

Approved inspectors had a slightly higher mean of 4.2 and but a lower median of 2.4 compared to local authorities who had a mean of 4.0 and median of 2.8. This was due to a few approved inspectors reporting over 280 training days being given.

Explanations of the Performance Indicators

Process Delivery

1. Process Management of Building Control Compliance Operations

Measure: Ranking score of the building control body's coverage and organisation of their process management system.

The aim of this performance indicator is to assess the coverage and depth of the building control body's process management system. A ranking score for the process/quality management system in place is calculated based upon the extent of the building control process covered by the system and whether the system covers:

- appropriate resource allocation
- customer feedback
- record keeping
- third party accreditation & audit

Customer Satisfaction

2. Complaints Handling Processes

Measure: Number of complaints received as a proportion of building control applications

This headline indicator is calculated using total number of complaints during the last 12 months as a proportion of the number of building control applications received during the same period.

Building control bodies can also derive subsidiary indicators from the survey data to assess split complaints between technical and non technical including customer services (process and operational matters), domestic and non domestic, and the proportion that were closed and resolved in whole or in part in the customer's favour.

It should be noted that as projects will run across the year end, any complaints received will not necessarily relate to building control notices issued during the year. In addition the number of active projects during the year is likely to be greater than the number of applications, while it is possible that multiple complaints could be lodged against one project. Accordingly, whilst the performance indicator is a valuable management tool for assessing a body's relative performance, it does not provide a definitive calculation of the proportion of projects against which complaints are lodged.

3. Breakdown of Building Control work

Measure: Number of building control applications received and how many of these applications have started construction as well as the total value of the building control fees for these applications.

Subsidiary indicators are also included to assess the split of applications and fees by market segment and as a percentage of the total.

4. Building Control Staff

4.1 People and Skills

Measure: Proportion of staff in a building control office role that are fully qualified with corporate membership (The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE), Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)).

This is a headline indicator of the building control body's ability to deliver a quality service by ensuring that the advice provided to applicants has a sound basis and that regulation is consistent and well-grounded through the use of appropriately skilled staff.

4.2 Experience of Staff

Measure: Proportion of staff in a building control office role that have extensive experience in domestic and non domestic work and support staff.

4.3 Specialist Knowledge

Measure: Proportion of staff in a building control office role that have additional qualification or extensive knowledge in a specific area (e.g. structural/geotechnical engineering, educational).

4.4 Age and Gender Profile

Measures: The collected data on staff profile provides a suite of indicators on staff make-up by gender and age.

4.5 Staff Retention and Training

Staff turnover and sickness absence are valuable indicators of staff morale. They are Respect for People Performance Indicators included in the UK Construction Industry Key Performance Indicators as:

- they provide insight into staff morale
- the performance indicators have implications for the delivery of an effective service to customers. High rates of staff turnover or sickness absence could potentially adversely affect the quality of service or even technical advice provided
- the data is readily available to managers.

The measures cover training which is an indicator of the organisations commitment to and investment in developing its staff resources, that can have implications for the long term performance and success of the organisation. The measures on staff make-up provide indicators of social inclusiveness that also have potential implications for the longer term success of the organisation.

Staff turnover

Measure: Number of direct employees that left the company during the year as a proportion of all direct employees.

Sickness absence

Measure: Number of working days lost due to sickness absence per direct employee.

Training

Measure: Average number of training days provided by the building control body across all direct employees.

Staff Composition

Measures: The collected data on staff profile question provides a suite of indicators on staff make-up by age and gender including:

- women as a proportion of the workforce
- people under 24 as a proportion of the workforce
- people over 55 as a proportion of the workforce.

List of respondents for 2015/16 survey

Approved Inspectors

A.B.C. Certification
Acivico Building Consultancy Limited
Act Surveyors LLP
Active Building Control
Adrian Thomas Building Control Limited
Aedis Regulatory Services Limited
Align Building Control Limited
Approved Design Consultancy Limited
Approved Inspector Services Limited
Approved Inspectors Limited
Ask Building Control Limited
Assent Building Control Limited
Assure Survey Limited trading as Assure Building Control
Ball and Berry Limited
BBS Building Control Limited
Bespoke Building Control Limited
BlueKeep Building Control Limited
BRCS (Building Control) Limited
Build Insight Limited
Building Consents Limited
Building Control Approved Limited
Building Control Partnership Limited
Building Control Services AI Limited
Building Control Surveyors Limited
Butler & Young Limited / Butler & Young Residential Limited
Capita Building Standards Limited
Capital and Counties Building Control Services Limited
Capital Approved Inspectors Limited
Carillion Specialist Services Limited
Celtech Consultancy Limited
Clarke Banks Limited
Coast 2 Coast Building Control Limited
Complete Building Control Limited
Cook Brown Building Control Limited
Cornwall Building Control Limited
CPR (Construction Plans & Regulations) Limited
Darren Ettles (Integral BCS)
Dunwoody Building Legislation Limited

Evolve Building Control Consultants Limited
Gateway Building Control
Greendoor Building Control & Specialist Services Limited
Guy Shattock Associates Limited
Harwood Building Control Approved Inspectors Limited
HCD Building Control Limited
Head Projects Building Control Limited
J M Partnership (Surveyors) Limited
James Anthony Bourje Approved Inspector Limited
jhai Limited
LB Building Control Limited
LBC (South) Limited
Lexicon Approved Inspectors Limited
LHR Building Control Services Limited.
London Building Control Limited
MC Plan & Site Services Limited
Meridian Consult Limited
MFA Building Control Limited
MLM Building Control Limited
Morgan Wolff Limited
NHBC Building Control Services Limited
Oculus Building Consultancy Limited
OnSite Building Control Limited
Owl Building Control Solutions Limited
Premier Guarantee Surveyors Limited
Prime Construction Consultants Limited
pt Building Standards Limited
PVM Building Control Services Limited
PWC Building Control Services Limited
Quadrant Approved Inspectors
RH Building Consultancy Limited
Ryan Property Consultants Limited
Salus Approved Inspectors
Scotts AI Limited
Shore Engineering Limited
Spire Building Control Services Limited
STMC (Building Control) Limited
Studios Limited
Thames Building Control Limited
The Building Inspectors Limited
ToP Building Control Limited
Total Building Control Limited
Turton Building Control Limited
Wilkinson Construction Consultants Limited
Yorkshire Building Control Limited
Yorkshire Dales Building Consultancy Limited

Local Authorities in England

Acivico Building Consultancy Limited - Birmingham City Council
Allerdale Borough Council
Arun District Council
Ashfield District Council
Ashford Borough Council
Babergh District Council
Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council
Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Bassetlaw District Council
Bath & North East Somerset Council
Bedford Borough Council
Blackpool Council
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council
Borough Council of Wellingborough
Borough of Broxbourne
Borough of Poole
Boston Borough Council
Bournemouth Borough Council
Bracknell Forest Council
Braintree District Council
Brentwood Borough Council
Bristol City Council
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Calderdale Council
Cannock Chase and Stafford Building Control Service*⁶
Canterbury City Council
Carlisle City Council
Central Bedfordshire Council*
Chelmsford City Council
Cheshire East Council*
Chichester District Council
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
City of Lincoln Council
City of London Corporation
CNC Building Control*
Copeland Borough Council
Cotswold District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council*
Coventry City Council
Dartford Borough Council
Devon Building Control*
Dorset Councils Partnership*

⁶ Local authorities with an * refer to partnerships covering more than one local authority area.

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
East Lindsey District Council trading as Lincs Building Consultancy
East Midlands Building Consultancy*
East Northamptonshire Council East Northamptonshire Council
East Staffordshire Borough Council
East Sussex Building Control Partnership*
Eden District Council
Elmbridge Building Control Services Limited
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Erewash and Broxtowe Building Consultancy*
Gloucestershire Building Control Partnership*
Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Harborough District Council
Harlow District Council
Hartlepool Building Control
Herefordshire Council
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Ipswich Borough Council
Kirklees Building Control
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
London Borough of Barking and Dagenham
London Borough of Barnet
London Borough of Bexley
London Borough of Bromley
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London Borough of Harrow
London Borough of Havering
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
London Borough of Southwark
London Borough of Sutton
Manchester City Council
Mid Suffolk District Council*
Mid Sussex District Council
Newcastle City Council
North Dorset District Council
North Kesteven District Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North Norfolk District Council
North West Leicestershire District Council
North Yorkshire Building Control Partnership*
Northumberland County Council*
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Peterborough City Council
Preston City Council
Reading Borough Council
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Rochford District Council
Rother & Hastings Building Control Partnership*
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Royal Borough of Greenwich
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Runnymede Borough Council
Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council
Sevenoaks District Council and Tonbridge & Malling Building Control Partnership*
Sheffield City Council
Shepway District Council
Slough Borough Council
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
South Gloucestershire Council
South Holland District Council
South Lakeland District Council
South Ribble Borough Council
South Somerset District Council
South Worcestershire Building Control Partnership*
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
St Albans District Council
St Helens Council
STG (South Thames Gateway) Building Control Partnership*
Surrey Heath Borough Council
Sussex Building Control (Horsham & Crawley) *
Tandridge District Council
Tendering District Council
Thanet District Council
Thurrock Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Uttlesford District Council
Warrington Borough Council
Watford Building Control
Waveney District Council
Waverley Borough Council
West Berkshire Council
West Lancashire Borough Council
West Suffolk Building Control Partnership*
Westminster City Council
Winchester City Council
Wirral Council
Wycombe District Council
Wyre Council

Local Authorities in Wales

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Bridgend County Borough Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Carmarthenshire County Council
Ceredigion County Council
City and County of Swansea
Conwy County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Isle of Anglesey County Council
Monmouthshire County Council
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Newport City Council
Pembrokeshire County Council
Powys County Council
Torfaen County Borough Council
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Wrexham County Borough Council