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# **QUANTIFYING LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY CONSERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY STAFFING IN WALES**

**Supported by**





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### **Executive Summary**

This report examines staff resources for building conservation services within local authorities , including the related activities provided by the Archaeological Trusts where there is an involvement in the planning process.

This project was carried out by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) supported by Cadw and developed with the assistance of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO Cymru). The survey covered all the 29 Local Planning Authorities and Archaeological Trusts in Wales between December 2011 and February 2012. The survey also included a review of recent changes in capacity over the past two years.

There is currently a full time equivalent of 48 staff working in the 25 Local Authority conservation services across Wales. Seventy percent, or 33.5 posts, of these are skilled trained conservation specialists in permanent posts (those with specific conservation training, extensive experience or IHBC full membership). Of the remaining staff 15%, or 7.2 posts, are temporary specialist staff and 15%, or 7.3 posts, are non-specialist conservation staff. There are an average of 1.34 permanent specialist conservation staff, within each Authority along with 0.29 temporary staff and 0.29 non-specialist staff.

The largest number of authorities, sixteen or 64%, have just one full or part time permanent specialist staff member. Eight authorities, or 32%, have more than one permanent specialist staff member but none have more than three permanent staff. One Local Authority, 4%, has no specialist in house conservation adviser.

Only two local Authorities, 8%, have an internal archaeology service but this does not mean they are without appropriate archaeological advice. Archaeological input for

development management is received in all cases through the curatorial or heritage management services in the four advising Archaeological Trusts.

There are 26.65 development related archaeologists in Wales. This would average out at around one full time member of staff per authority, which is also the number of permanent staff employed by each of the authorities with in house staff.

The survey also included a review of recent changes in capacity over the past two years. There has been a good deal of change in staffing levels over the past two years from 31 December 2009. The overall change when losses and gains are added is a loss of 11.1 posts over all historic environment services from an assumed total in 2009 of 85.75 to the current total of 74.75. This is a 12% decrease in overall staffing levels.

In conservation the levels dropped by 4.5 posts, a 8.6% drop. In archaeology posts 6.6 posts were lost, a decline of 20%. In general losses and gains were a single post except in archaeology where some gains and losses went as high as +4 or -5.6.

## **Introduction**

This project was carried out by the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) supported and part funded by Cadw and developed with the assistance of the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO Cymru). The Wales Branch of the IHBC contributed significantly to the development of the project by helping establish the survey material required and ensuring co-operation for the survey.

The survey covered all the 29 Local Planning Authorities and Archaeological Trusts in Wales between December 2011 and February 2012. The survey also included a review of recent changes in capacity over the past two years.

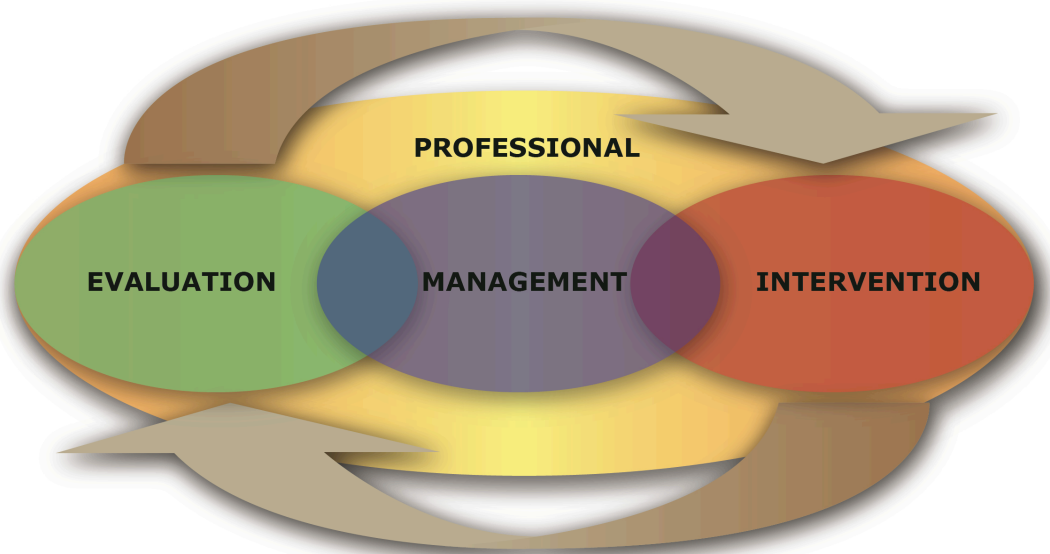
The findings provided here are a stand-alone snap shot of conservation and historic environment staffing in 2012. They are especially valuable because it is a fully comprehensive survey covering all local planning authorities, based on one-to-one discussions with senior professional officers. It is not either a sample or an incomplete full survey. Also it is the first national mapping exercise of lead staff responsible for delivering conservation and archaeology in all Welsh Local Planning Authorities. The assessment is informed by the IHBC's experience of surveying Local Authority provision

in England, and its scoping of provision in Scotland. It will also help inform the understanding of conservation and Historic Environment service provision at the UK level when the IHBC surveys of Scotland and Northern Ireland are completed.

By establishing the capacity of the sector the survey helps inform the proposed Heritage Bill and other related policy developments and to contribute to the more general debate on Local Authority services in Wales following on from the Simpson report.

The operational information on Historic Environment services provided here covers conservation and archaeology services in and on behalf of local authorities in Wales. This includes both professional resources and the corporate framework within which those services operate. The core activities and personnel involved in the delivery of conservation services have been identified as a snap shot picture to develop the understanding of the corporate context, resources and capacity of these services.

The core roles of the conservation services can be broadly classified into three key priorities for the Welsh Government and, particularly, its Housing, Regeneration and Heritage Department: education, management, and regeneration. These classes also correspond to key parts of the conservation process - evaluation (establishing values and significance); management (policy for planning and investment) and intervention (conserving through change). These also correspond to the IHBC's classification of its members' roles in conservation, and how it assesses competence in line with the Conservation Cycle (illustrated below).



This project is part of a wider response to the need to understand service provision, capacity, staffing and resources in more detail. The need to understand the services in greater depth has been given real urgency by the proposals to fundamentally review the Welsh historic environment. To understand the potential of the changes there must be an informed understanding at a national level of how LPAs currently deliver and receive conservation and archaeology services across Wales, and what capacity and resources are there. There is a need to understand the capacity of local services in much greater detail prior to progressing any new initiatives.

The Welsh Government needs more detailed data on the operation of statutory heritage protection in local authorities. Understanding in this area has come a long way since the start in 2006 of Cadw's series of position papers but it has been developed using available data and thus has tended to monitor the management of historic buildings on the basis of available data such as grant giving and buildings at risk. The success of both of these indicators relies heavily on adequate provision in local authorities and without an understanding of the capacity available and the work it is doing, interpretation of these points could be seriously misguided.

## **1. Research methods**

Conservation and Archaeology services in twenty-two local authorities, three national park authorities and four archaeological trusts were contacted during from December 2011 to February 2012.

Each service was asked for contact details for the senior conservation or archaeology contact in the Authority or body. They were also asked to quantify the size and type of their service providing information on job titles etc of all their relevant staff. This included gathering information on how many permanent and temporary in house conservation staff were employed by each authority along with an assessment of use of consultants to provide all or an additional part of the service or making use of services from other authorities through a service level agreement or similar.

## **2. Information gathered**

The following information was gathered in each case:

<b>Name of authority or organisation</b>	<i>The full name which is normally used</i>
<b>Department in which service sits</b>	
<b>Address of Local Authority</b>	<i>Postal address including postcode</i>
<b>Type of organisation - Local Authority or Archaeological Trust</b>	
<b>Name of senior contact</b>	<i>Respondents were asked who they considered the senior conservation or archaeology contact in the organisation. In the main they saw this person as the team leader or specialist historic environment professional, that is the person who directly managed the service and made day-to-day specialist decisions. In a few cases the name of the departmental manager was given.</i>
<b>Job title of senior contact</b>	<i>Job title as provided by senior conservation contact</i>
<b>Other professional memberships</b>	<i>Membership of professional institutes and bodies including IHBC, IfA, RICS, RTPI, RIBA, AIOB, LI, ARB etc</i>
<b>Telephone number of senior conservation contact</b>	

<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Main function of service</b>	<p><i>Interviewees were given four options;</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Research and investigation,</i></li> <li><i>2. Project development including regeneration work, grant work, enhancement and project management</i></li> <li><i>3. Development Management and statutory work relating directly to the planning system such as development control advice, planning and strategic policy etc.</i></li> <li><i>4. Combination of two or more of the above functions</i></li> </ol>
<b>Other related services in Local Authority</b>	<p><i>This question sought to establish if any other conservation or archaeology services were provided in other departments of the organisation. This was intended to draw out any instances such as those where authorities employ conservation specialists in Regeneration to run conservation led regeneration grant projects or Estates to manage council owner historic buildings. The relationship between these two groups of people can be strong and co-operative but it can also be tenuous. Without this question important related services could have been ignored.</i></p>
<b>Full Time Equivalent directly employed permanent specialist trained staff</b>	
<b>Full Time Equivalent temporary</b>	

<b>specialist conservation staff</b>	
<b>Full Time Equivalent non specialist conservation staff</b>	
<b>Service Level Agreement or other formal agreement for service with other Authorities or Trusts</b>	
<b>Outsourced conservation services</b>	<p><i>The use of consultants for conservation work was recorded in two ways:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>1. Where the consultant provides a regular weekly or monthly service for a set number of days to carry out the same work as a conservation or archaeological officer (Development control advice, planning policy or advice to the public). It is the equivalent to that which could be carried out by an in house appointment and if possible an estimate of the full time equivalent of this contribution was made</i></li> <li><i>2. Where consultants are employed for one off easily defined projects. Employment of consultants is based on completion of discrete projects rather than on the amount of days worked. These projects can include work on Conservation Area appraisals and management plans, buildings at risk surveys, project management of enhancement or building projects or structural engineering, architectural or other</i></li> </ol>

	<i>specialist advice on a particular project.</i>
<b>Changes in staffing since 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009</b>	
<b>Case officer or consultee on development management applications</b>	<i>Either acting as a consultee on conservation or archaeology aspects of an application or direct handling of all aspects of the case including formulating recommendation.</i>
<b>Percentage of service time spent on statutory work</b>	<i>This includes Development Management work relating directly to the planning system such as development control advice, planning and strategic policy etc.</i>
<b>Name and Job Title of other staff</b>	<i>Details of other professional conservation staff involved in conservation or archaeology service</i>

### **3. Building conservation services**

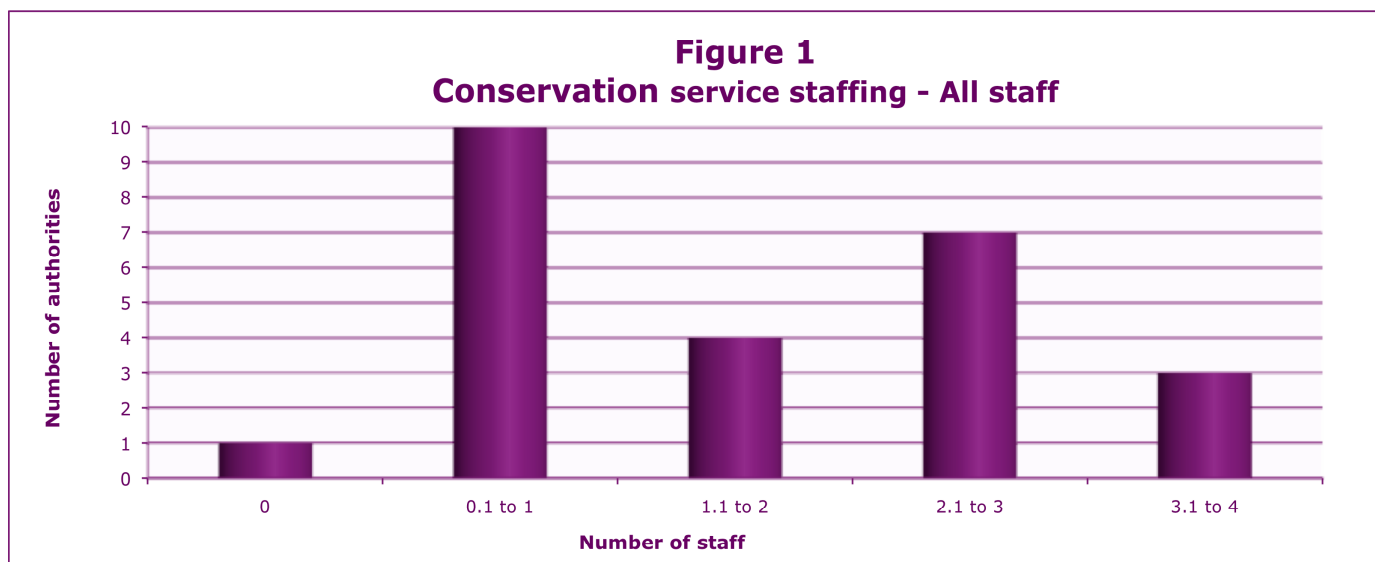
#### **3.1 Conservation staffing levels**

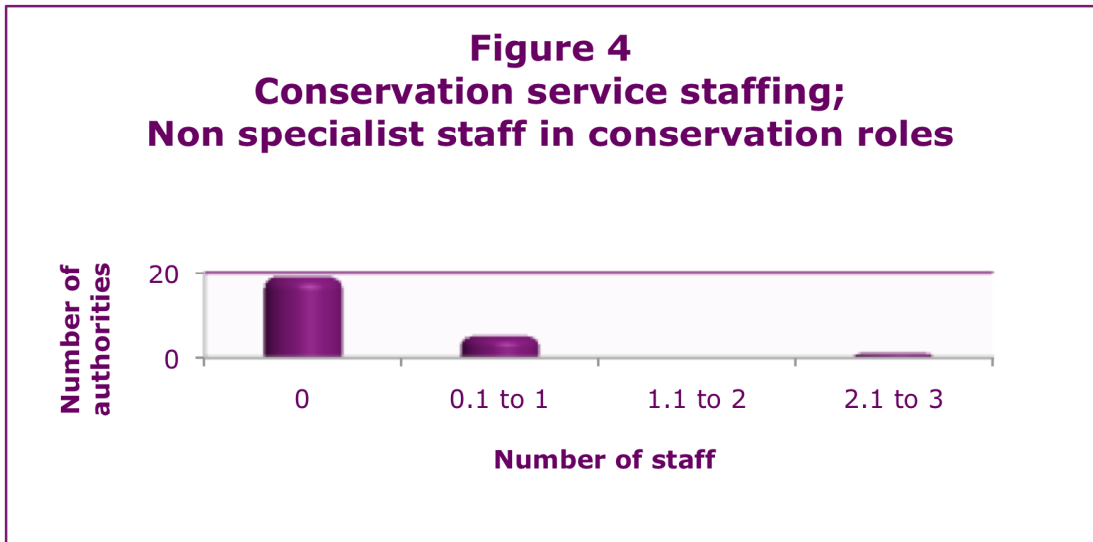
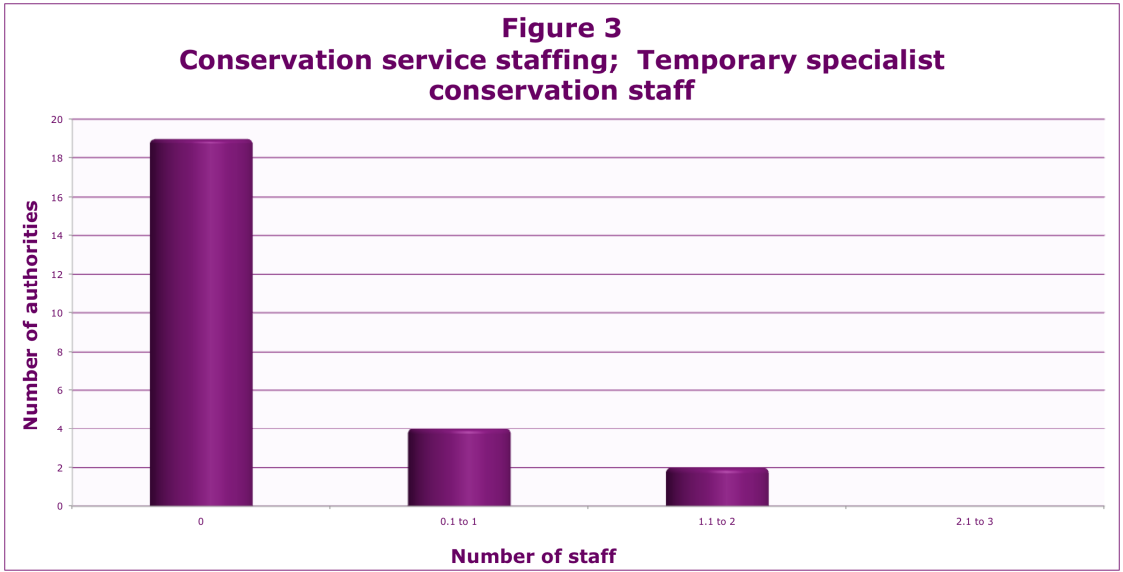
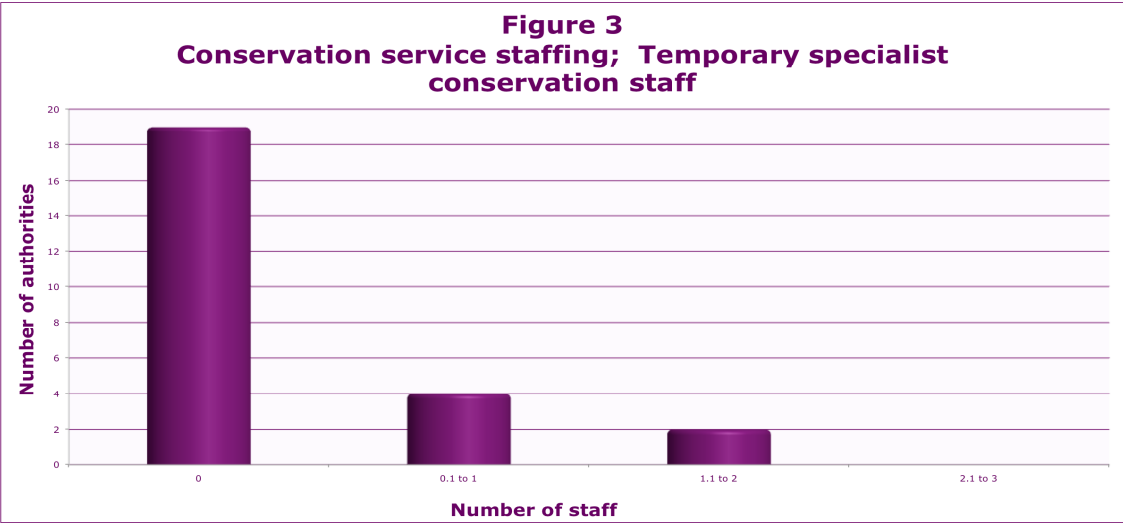
Despite their considerable geographical area the general level of conservation staffing in Welsh local authorities is relatively low. There is currently a full time equivalent of 48 staff working in the 25 Local Authority conservation services across Wales. Seventy percent, or 33.5 posts, of these are skilled trained conservation specialists in permanent posts (those with specific conservation training, extensive experience or IHBC full membership). Of the remaining staff, 15% or 7.2 posts are temporary specialist staff. Another 15% or 7.3 posts are non-specialist conservation staff such as planners without either specific conservation training, extensive experience or IHBC full membership but who are working on conservation specialist advice rather than in generalist posts. There are an average of 1.34 permanent specialist conservation staff, within each Authority along with 0.29 temporary staff and 0.29 non-specialist staff.

**The largest number of authorities, sixteen or 64%, have just one full or part time permanent specialist staff member. Eight authorities, or 32%, have more than one permanent specialist staff member. None have more than three permanent staff. One Local Authority, 4%, has no specialist in house conservation adviser.**

Six authorities, 24%, currently employ temporary specialist conservation staff. The majority of the 7.2 temporary posts are project specific, usually for area based conservation lead regeneration schemes and time limited temporary posts.

The use of consultants for conservation work was limited almost entirely to project work (as opposed to on-going support for service provision). A substantial number of authorities (56%), including those with specialist conservation provision, use consultants on a project basis. Consultants are engaged especially for specialist work such as structural reports and complex technical advice . They are seldom (in one case only) used to backfill conservation officer capacity. 40% claimed to never use consultants as part of their service delivery. Only one authority was able to estimate the full time equivalent use of consultants who were engaged over the longer term as the equivalent of a staff member - rather than on specific projects - and this equated to 0.2 of a post.





### **3.2 Service function and workload**

The primary service provided by conservation professionals within local authorities in Wales is to the development management process, by commenting and advising on planning applications and related matters. They have a pivotal role providing specialist input to guide and develop proposals. This positive, constructive input leads a potentially damaging proposal into an approved scheme, which benefits the historic environment but will often ultimately often be appreciated by owners and developers. 76% of conservation services act as a consultee on applications rather than handling the applications directly. The limited staffing available could make direct handling impossible added to current workload. Consultee status allows input into the process but allows time for other proactive work. Conservation officers often have planning qualifications or experience. However in some cases services are expected, as part of their specialist role, to handle all general aspects of the application to final decision. This includes registration, consultation and decision-making including balancing aspects of the application which are not conservation based as well as specialist conservation aspects.

None of the conservation services surveyed claimed to have a service that is mainly education or research based and none felt that all their work was project development or management.

For 32% of services the majority of their work involves input into the statutory process . The remaining 68% have a workload which is combination of proactive and reactive work and includes research and investigation, project work and development management. This work includes statutory planning and conservation work but also involves developing conservation led regeneration schemes, capital projects, and major improvement schemes and a variety of activities. The range of activities was defined in the 2009 Making the Connections project group report<sup>1</sup> as:

#### **To preserve and enhance the built environment by;**

Authorising or rejecting new development, either directly or by advising  
Development Control officers on planning applications for development affecting  
listed buildings, conservation areas, townscape, design etc

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<sup>1</sup> Making the Connections project group report 2009 North Wales Planning Officers Group (NWPOG)

Designating Conservation Areas, undertaking appraisals and devising and implementing management plans to preserve and enhance them

Taking action to reduce the number of Listed Buildings at risk Drafting policy and guidance on conservation and design in Local Development Plans (LDP) and supplementary planning guidance (SPG).

Defending decisions on planning applications on appeal

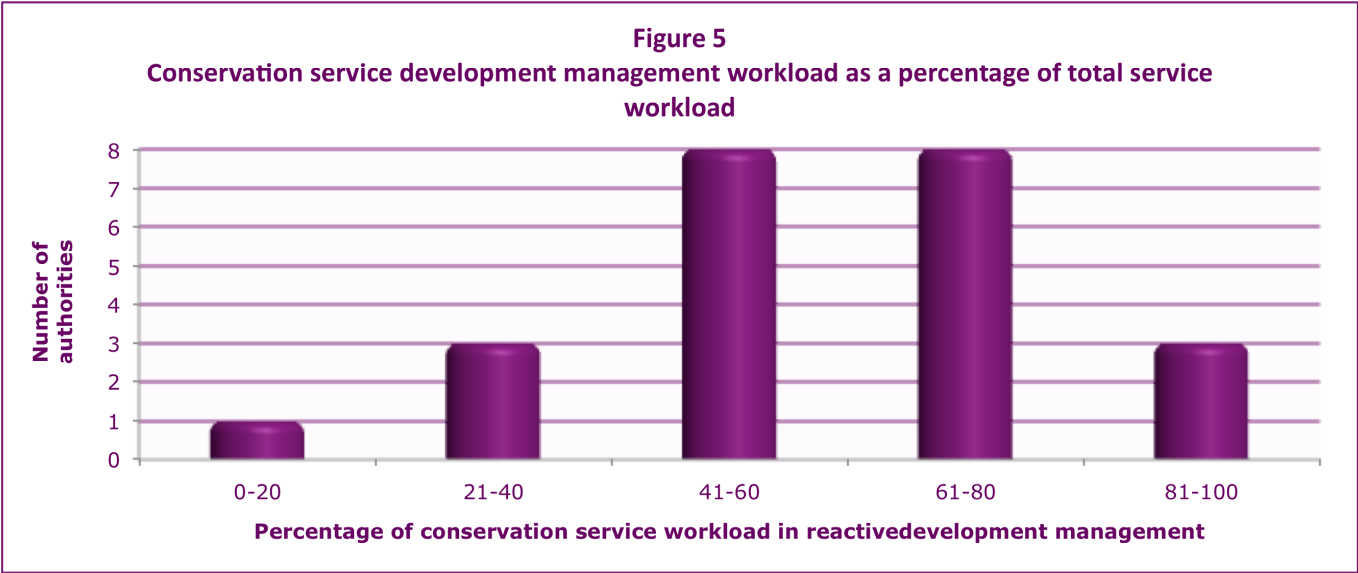
Advising the general public

Advising other parts of the Council

**To promote economic regeneration and preserve and enhance the built environment;**

by obtaining and administering grant aid (TIG and THI)

As can be seen in Figure 5 the majority of all conservation services (82%) spend more than 40% of their time on interaction with the statutory process.



Within local authority structures conservation services mainly sit, as they have done traditionally, in Planning departments, with 15 of the 25 services having Planning within their departmental title. Not unsurprisingly in large unitary authorities some departments

have a wider remit than simply planning and this is reflected in the single use of titles such as Planning & Cultural Heritage Directorate; Planning and Transportation Policy; Regeneration and Planning; and Planning, Regeneration and Public Protection.

An umbrella designation of Regulatory Services is used in two authorities whilst others not specifically in Planning are based in Communities; Regeneration; Education and Leisure; and Chief Executives. Those services in the Chief Executives Department could be more strategic policy orientated and those in Education and Leisure more directed at public awareness but there could be many other reasons for this positioning.

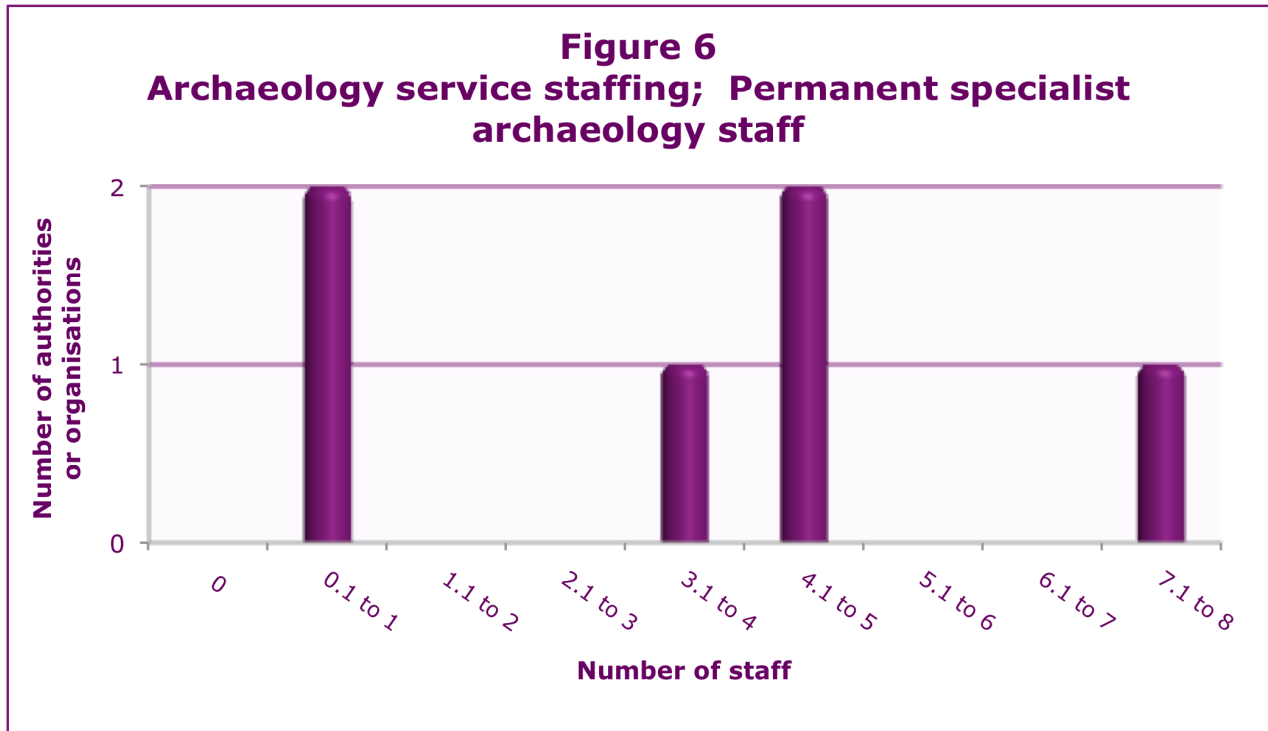
Of the twenty-five conservation services examined six were provided in teams which only refer to conservation and three were located in a service, team, section or part of team which had mention of design in its title such as 'conservation and design' or reversed. A further two had conservation coupled with something else such as Conservation and Planning or Conservation and Regeneration.

Some services were integrated services into the primary planning teams being split between four in planning policy and two in development control. The link between proactive conservation and regeneration is highlighted by three teams being part of regeneration teams and one being part of a Special Projects Team. Wider historic environment generic titles included built environment and landscape (1) and heritage (1) and cultural heritage (1).

#### **4. Archaeological services**

Only two local Authorities have an internal archaeology service. This does not mean they are without appropriate archaeological advice. Archaeological input for development management is obtained through the curatorial or heritage management services in the four advising Archaeological Trusts. The Archaeological Trusts, were established in the mid 1970s and provide archaeological and heritage services in their geographic areas. They provide archaeological management advice, maintain Historic Environment Records, develop educational services and carry out field surveys, excavation and heritage interpretation. The Trusts are independent limited companies with charitable status receiving financial support from both national and local government.

The staffing levels shown in the charts below reflect those two Authorities which employ their own archaeologists and the heritage management staff within the Archaeological Trusts.



There are 26.65 (full time equivalent) development management related archaeologists in Wales. This averages out at around one full time member of staff per authority which is also the number of permanent staff employed by each of the authorities with in house staff.

Temporary archaeology staff are currently employed by 50% of archaeology services and are engaged on specific projects or historic environment records.

The use of consultants for archaeology work was limited entirely to project work. 50% of services use consultants on a project basis and 50% did not use them at all.

As can be seen all of the archaeology services spend 60% or less of their time on interaction with the statutory process. None of the archaeology services surveyed claimed had a service that is mainly education or research based nor entirely project development or management. Only one service carries out the majority of their work on input into the statutory process The remaining services have a workload which is combination of proactive and reactive work and includes research, investigation and interpretation, project work and development management, Historic Environment Records and education.

All archaeology services are consultees on development management applications and none handle applications directly. This is understandable given that the majority of services are within the Archaeological Trusts and not part of the Local Planning Authority. Unlike conservation officers, who may often have planning qualifications or experience the archaeology officers within the local authorities do not have such experience and are not expected to handle any other aspects of the application.

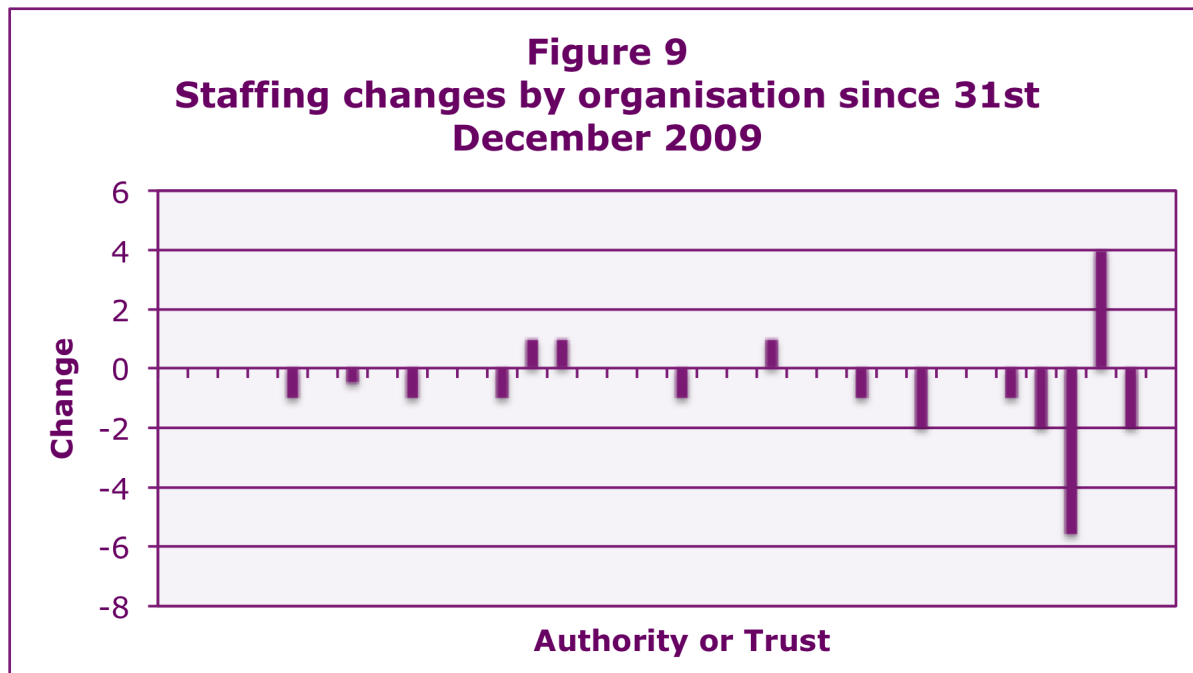


## **5. Changes in conservation and archaeology staffing**

There has been a good deal of change in staffing levels over the past two years from 31<sup>st</sup> December 2009. The statistics are only an estimate as they rely on a recollection of change over time. However the period in question is short enough to suggest reasonable accuracy. The overall change when losses and gains are added is a loss of 11.1 posts over all historic environment services from an assumed total in 2009 of 85.75 to the current total of 74.75. This is a 12% decrease in overall staffing levels.

In conservation the levels dropped by 4.5 posts a 8.6% drop. In archaeology posts 6.6 posts were lost, a decline of 20%.

In general losses and gains were a single post except in archaeology where some gains and losses went as high as +4 or -5.6.



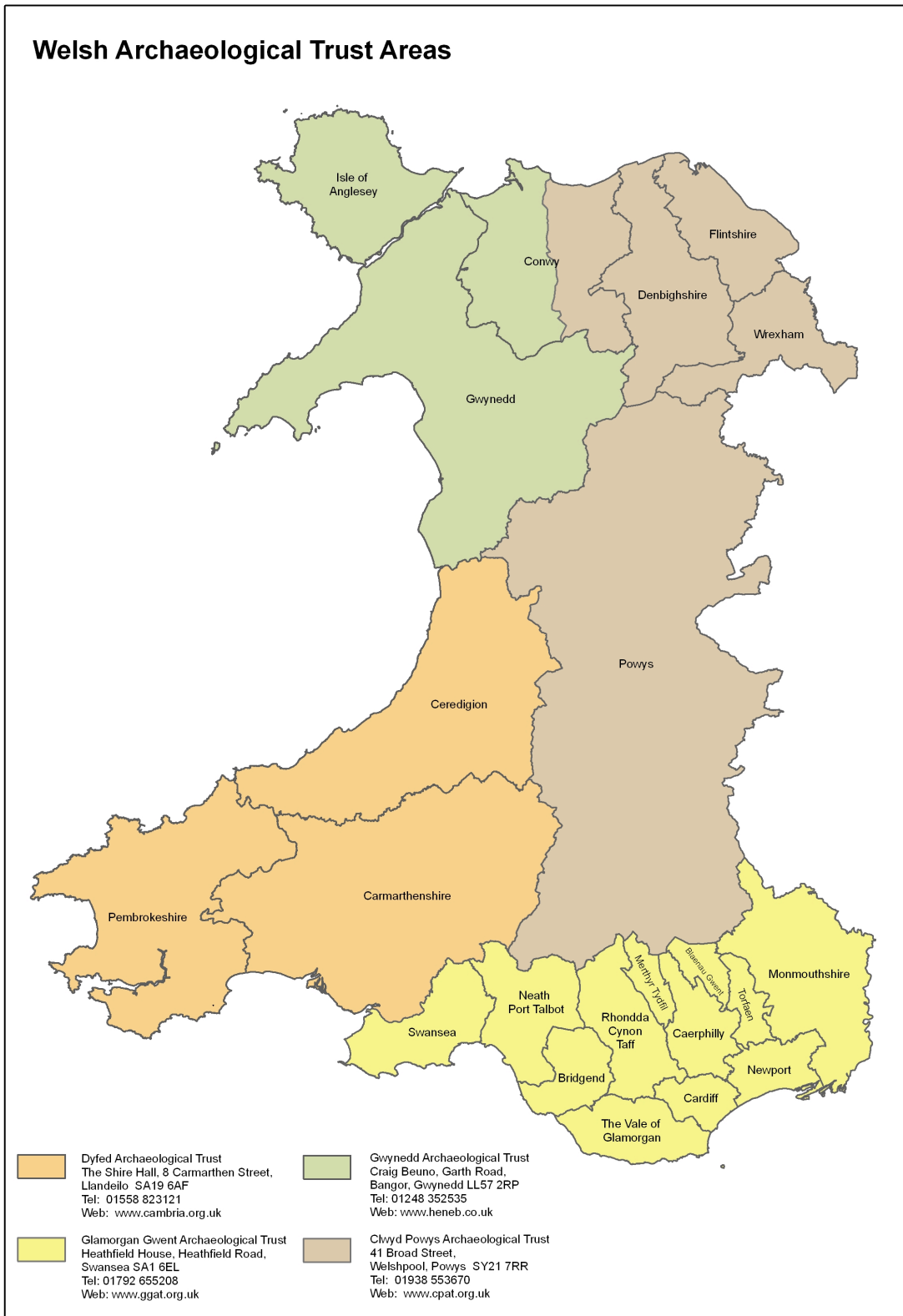
## **6. Cross-Authority or Joint-Authority working**

Survey work in England has shown an increase in the joint working between local authorities on conservation with some acting on a consultancy basis for their neighbours or others fully amalgamated into joint services with others, not always geographically close. There is a limited amount of such activity in Wales at present. Until the end of 2011 one authority was providing cover for two others but this arrangement stopped as long term it was not tenable and there was no strategy to support it. Two Authorities had an agreed local collaboration approach creating a single department for conservation and housing but this has recently been postponed for the foreseeable future. Only one authority is currently providing the conservation service for another on a less formal basis with a view to taking it on permanently.

The picture with archaeology is, one with greater joint working, primarily because of the organisational set up. The four Archaeological Trusts were established in order to provide advice on a cross authority basis and do so for large numbers of authorities on a

regional basis. Some advise as many as thirteen individual authorities. Each provides archaeological advice and information across a range of services to a number of local planning authorities through service level agreements or memoranda of understanding. The map at Figure 10 shows the Authorities which each trust advises with Conwy shared by Gwynedd and Clwyd Powys Trusts.

Figure 10



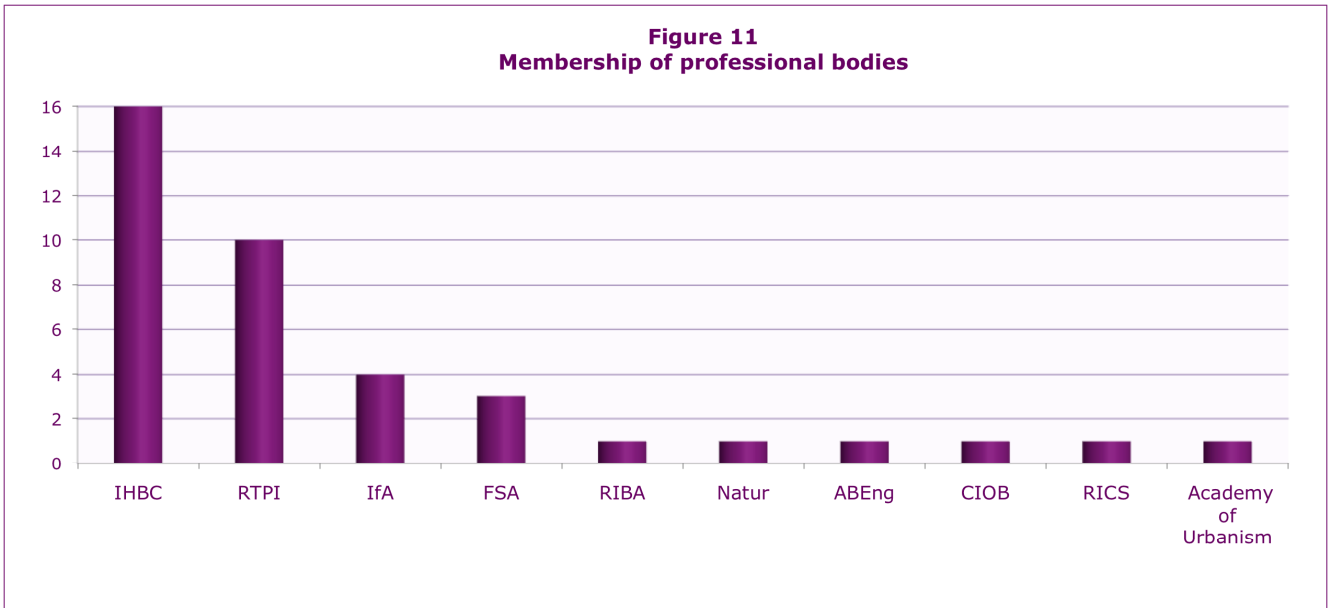
Whilst maintaining cross boundary relations and communications through regular meetings and discussion are important to consistency and support in conservation services, the local element of delivering these services is crucial. Conservation services have a more direct engagement with owners and developers throughout the application process and indeed outside the process. It is a more geographically direct relationship with individual property owners based on more local boundaries. Proactive locally based action and geographically targeted local schemes in partnership with other bodies and organisations are generally operated by local authorities. Conservation services have a direct day-to-day relationship with property owners in their area. This picture of local services integrated into the planning process seems to be contrary to that proposed through the Simpson review which advocated the pooling of resources such as those to manage the historic environment. There is not a one size fits all for historic environment management. The regional approach, which works well for archaeology provision, could not work so successfully for building conservation where the work demands more visits and constant involvement throughout the process.

## **7. Professional Membership**

The senior contact for each organisation was asked which professional institutes or organisations they were members of. This reflects their range of skills in conservation, archaeology, planning, architecture, engineering or surveying. The complete responses for both service areas are shown in the chart below. Fifteen of the main conservation contacts, 60%, were members of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) and ten, 40%, were members of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

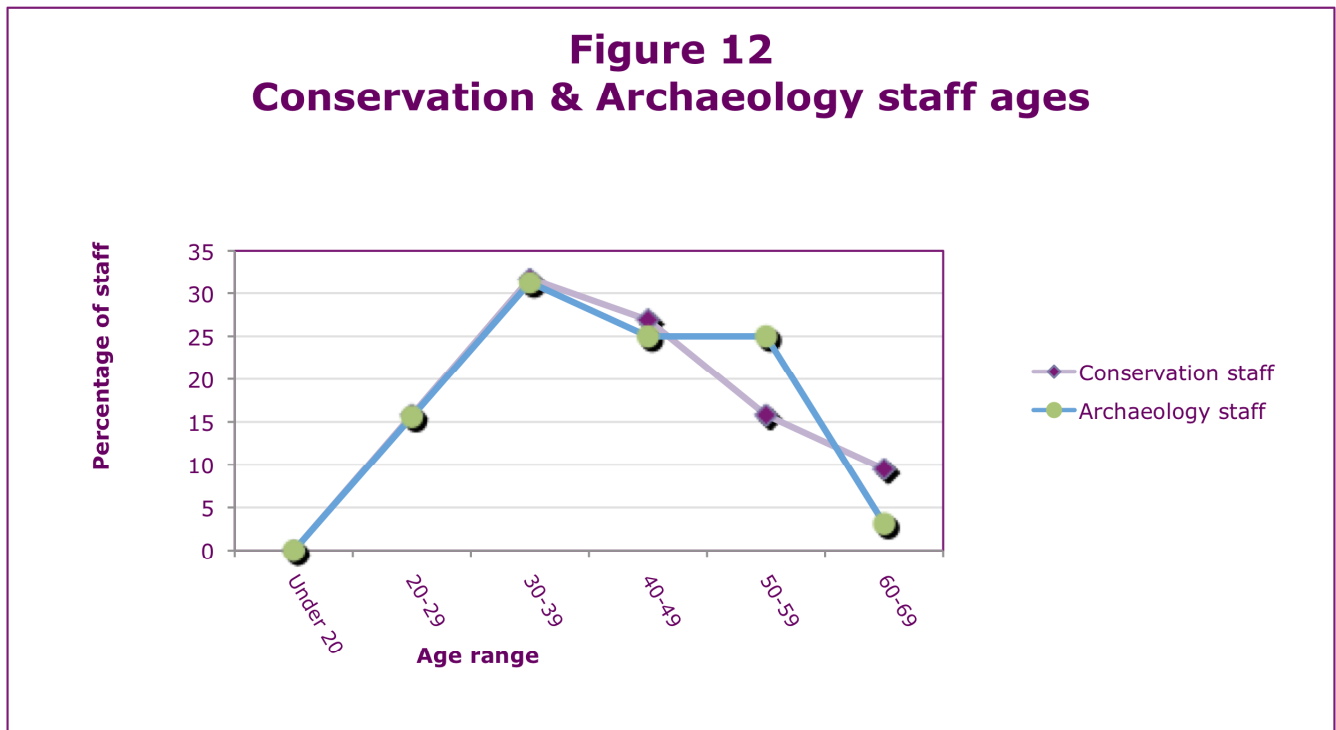
Some conservation contacts were members of more than one professional institute reflecting the multi disciplinary nature of conservation professionals. The most common combination of memberships was RTPI and IHBC. This demonstrates the extent and possibly the importance of a planning background.

Two of the six contacts for archaeological services, 33%, were members of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). One archaeologist was also an affiliate of IHBC, one of the Welsh Institute of Countryside and Conservation Management (NATUR) and one a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (FSA).



**8. Conservation and archaeology staff age**

A widespread concern, particularly in the building conservation sector across the whole of the UK, is that the age profile of building conservation staff in local authorities is rising. This may be caused by a combination of an ageing profession and a lack recruitment of younger staff.



The age ranges of all staff in conservation and archaeology were collected and are illustrated in Figure 12 as a percentage of the total in order to allow both areas of work to be shown comparatively. The pattern in both areas was broadly similar with numbers working to peaks in the thirties and forties. The high number of staff in their thirties and forties appears to show that Welsh historic environment staffing has balance of experience and youth sufficient for it to continue successfully into the future.

## **Conclusions**

The current survey work has provided a broad overview of conservation and related archaeology staffing in Wales. It has afforded a clear image of the number of staff, use of consultants and use of services from other authorities.

In the context of wider UK practice it is useful to be able to observe that, 1.92 people working in conservation (per local authority nationally 1.34 specialists, 0.92 non specialists and 0.92 temporary staff) , this corresponds to the last published levels of service provision in England in 2008 of 1.91<sup>2</sup>. In archaeology the development management related archaeologists in Trusts and local authorities when averaged out equates to around one full time member of staff per authority. This figure is once more broadly comparable to that in England for 2008 of 1.01.<sup>3</sup>

Though crude figures, these figures at least give an indication of national levels of service provision under planning systems that, though different in detail, are broadly comparable. That is not to say government should be complacent, as this appears to represent a minimum service level nationally, and one that must reduce its qualitative outcomes substantially if it reduces further.

This is not an analysis of many of the more complex issues in local authority service provision that impacts on how valued places in Wales are managed. Policy areas such as transport, planning, education, climate change and regeneration may have substantial impacts on conservation issues, especially when dealing with the non-designated historic environment Wales.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ihbc.org.uk/recent\\_papers/docs/Implementing%20HPR%20-%20Staff%20Resources%5B4%5D.pdf](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/recent_papers/docs/Implementing%20HPR%20-%20Staff%20Resources%5B4%5D.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ihbc.org.uk/recent\\_papers/docs/Implementing%20HPR%20-%20Staff%20Resources%5B4%5D.pdf](http://www.ihbc.org.uk/recent_papers/docs/Implementing%20HPR%20-%20Staff%20Resources%5B4%5D.pdf)