HOUSING TECHNOLOGY™

Aareon

IT Integration in Housing 2024

Market Intelligence

December 2023

Contents

METHODOLOGY – DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

This report is based on a comprehensive online survey (Oct/Nov 2023) by Housing Technology's research team on the current activities and future plans for IT integration among the Housing Technology community.

The survey was completed by representatives from the following organisations: Accent Housing, Adra (Tai) Cyf, Albyn Housing, Anchor, Andium Homes, Barnet Group, Believe Housing, Bield Housing & Care, Broadland Housing, Caledonia Housing, Citizen Housing, City of Lincoln Council, Clanmil Housing, Coastline Housing, Community Gateway Housing, Community Housing, Eastlight Community Homes, Eildon Housing, ExtraCare Charitable Trust, First Choice Homes Oldham, Futures Housing Group, Golding Homes, Grampian Housing, GreenSquareAccord, Guinness Partnership, Harbour Light Housing, Hillcrest Homes, Home Group, Housing21, Hundred Houses Society, Incommunities, Karbon Homes, Kingdom Housing, London Borough of Havering, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Magenta Living, Merthyr Valleys Homes, MHS Homes, Notting Hill Genesis, Octavia Housing, Peabody, Platform Housing, Plymouth Community Homes, Poplar HARCA, Prima Housing, Radius Housing, RHP, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Saxon Weald, Selwood Housing, Soho Housing, South Lakes Housing, South Liverpool Homes, South Tyneside Homes, Southdown Housing, Sovereign Network Group, Sovini, Torus, Town & Country Housing, Transform Housing & Support, Trivallis, Tuntum Housing, Watmos Community Homes and Weaver Vale Housing.

Executive summary

The overall IT integration themes from the survey's respondents are an emphasis on data consolidation, consistency and accessibility across housing providers' myriad siloed applications, achieved via a mixture of enterprise data platforms, middleware and APIs.

- **Development resources for IT integration**
  The majority of housing providers rely on internal development resources for their IT integrations, augmented by some external resources.

- **Number of IT integrations**
  Despite the complexity of their IT estates, the majority of housing providers are running fewer than 20 integration projects.

- **Integration methodologies**
  Middleware and APIs are housing providers' main integration methodologies, with more open APIs wanted from housing-specific IT suppliers.

- **IT suppliers**
  Over half of respondents intend to use one main IT supplier alongside a few application-specific suppliers.

- **Disconnected applications & systems**
  A quarter of housing providers reported that most of their applications and systems couldn't share data.

- **Data quality**
  Lack of IT integration directly affects the data quality of 95 per cent of housing providers.

- **Tenant services & internal operations**
  Housing providers' IT investment focus is primarily on enterprise data platforms, followed by application consolidation, middleware and APIs.

- **Influences on IT decisions**
  Regulation and compliance have the greatest influence on housing providers' technology decisions.

Please note that all of Housing Technology's previous market intelligence reports and business/IT guides are available from **housing-technology.com/research**.

George Grant
CEO, Broadcaster, Publisher
& Founder, Housing Technology

Does your organisation have internal development resources for IT integration?

A relatively small number of IT suppliers provide the majority of the core business applications used by housing providers, alongside generic, industry-standard 'horizontal' infrastructure systems and services, yet each housing provider's IT estate is a complex blend, ranging from legacy systems to cutting-edge technologies.

The majority of housing providers rely predominantly on internal development resources for their IT integrations,

augmented by some external resources. This is perhaps a reflection of each housing provider having its own unique composition of systems and applications, and therefore best suited to integration by those aware of its local nuances.

However, given the complexity of most housing providers' systems (and their legacy applications), very few housing providers are reliant on only internal (nine per cent) or only external resources (10 per cent).

**Internal & external dev. resources for IT integration**
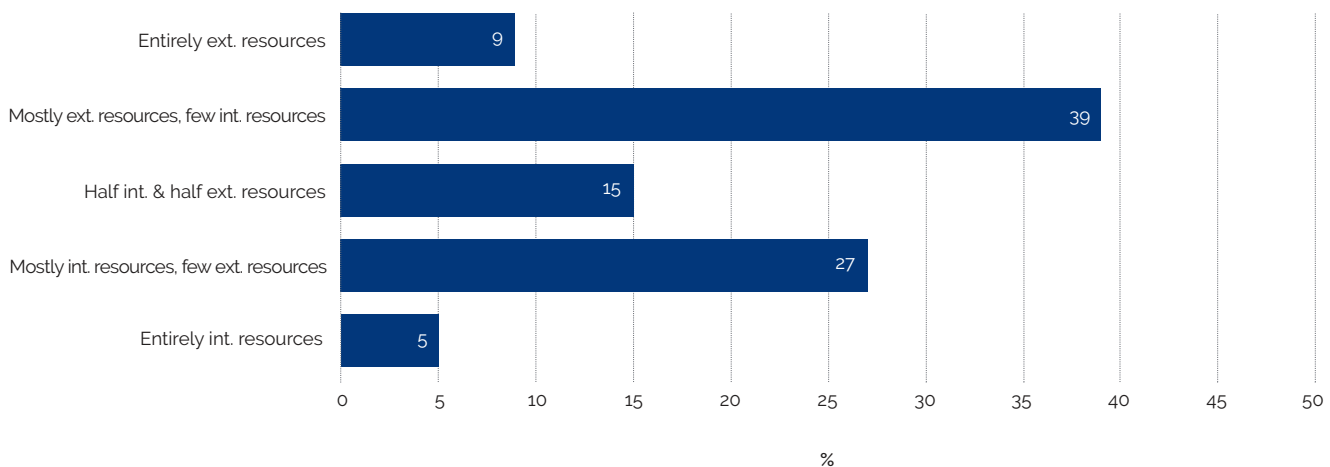
How many IT integrations are you running across your technology infrastructure?

Despite the complexity and variety of their IT estates, around three-quarters (74 per cent) of housing providers are currently (November 2023) running fewer than 20 IT integration projects each.

It is highly likely that the variation in numbers of IT integrations reflects the spread of housing providers' size; smaller housing providers will have fewer integration projects while the very largest housing providers will be running 50+ projects.

Number of live IT integrations
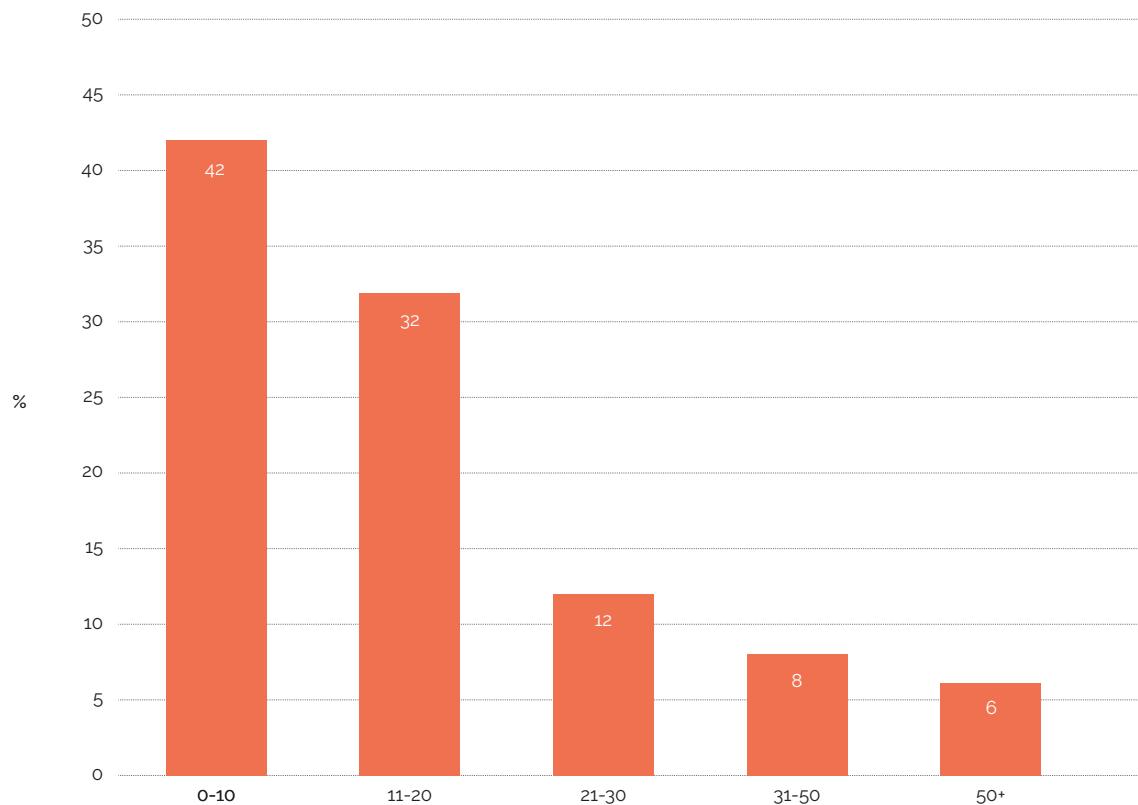
How agile is your IT infrastructure when changes are needed?

The outlook is positive for the agility of most housing providers' IT infrastructures. Almost two-thirds (62 per cent) reported that changes can be made very/fairly quickly.

One-third of respondents said that changes to their IT systems took too long, with a further five per cent reporting that changes were too difficult to do.

Agility of IT infrastructures
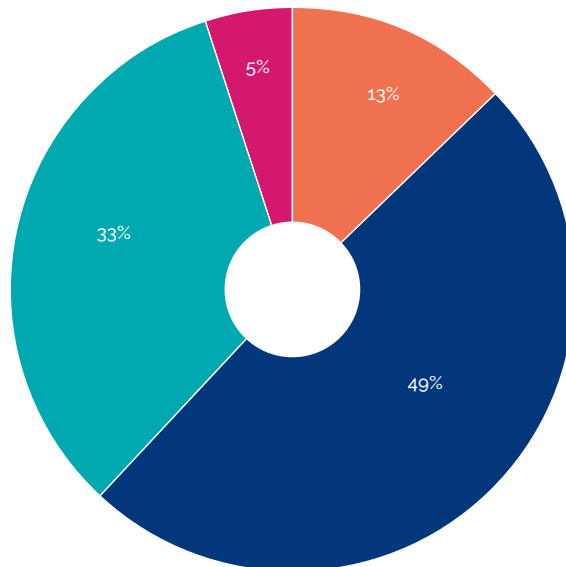
- ● Changes can be made very quickly
- ● Changes can be made fairly quickly
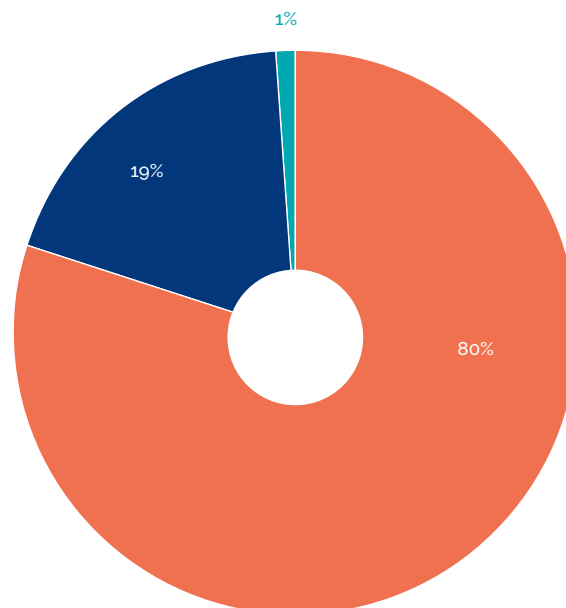- ● Changes take too long
- ● Changes are too difficult to do

When procuring new technologies, how important are their integration capabilities?

The integration capabilities of housing providers' new technologies are rated as very important/important by almost every respondent; only one per cent are neutral.

Integration & procurement

Legend:
- Very important
- Important
- Neutral

How do you currently integrate your software?

Middleware (35 per cent) and APIs (32 per cent) stand out as housing providers' main integration methodologies. Many respondents also anecdotally reported their desire for more of the housing-specific IT suppliers to publish their own open APIs.

Flat-file transfers and processing account for 15 per cent of integration methodologies, in part due to the lack of APIs and to the complexity and diversity of housing providers' systems. Manual processing and any related interventions/corrections are only used in six per cent of instances.

Integration methodologies
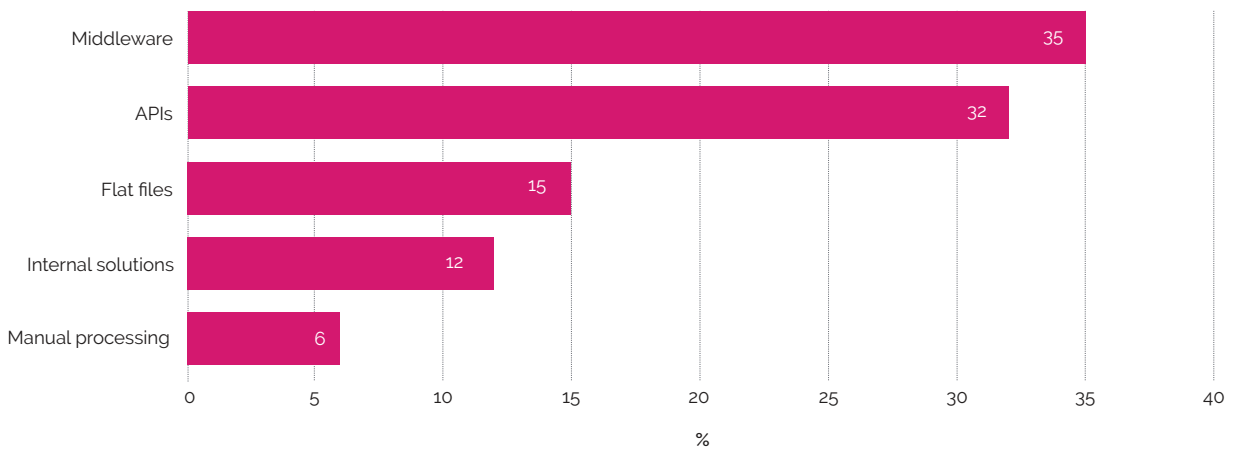
Does your future IT integration strategy favour a single, central supplier delivering all of your business applications or multiple suppliers delivering specific applications?

A little over one-third (38 per cent) of housing providers expect to continue with their existing mixed IT estates, using multiple IT suppliers for specific applications.

However, over half (54 per cent) either are using or intend to use one main IT supplier alongside a just few application-specific suppliers, with this trend expected to reduce housing providers' IT integration challenges, especially if the IT suppliers' APIs become more widely available.

Only eight per cent of housing providers are using or expect to use a single IT supplier for all of their business applications. Only a few IT suppliers offer a single, integrated platform covering all of a typical housing provider's needs, and even then there are substantial migration, implementation and integration difficulties associated with this approach.

Multiple IT suppliers vs. a single, centralised IT supplier
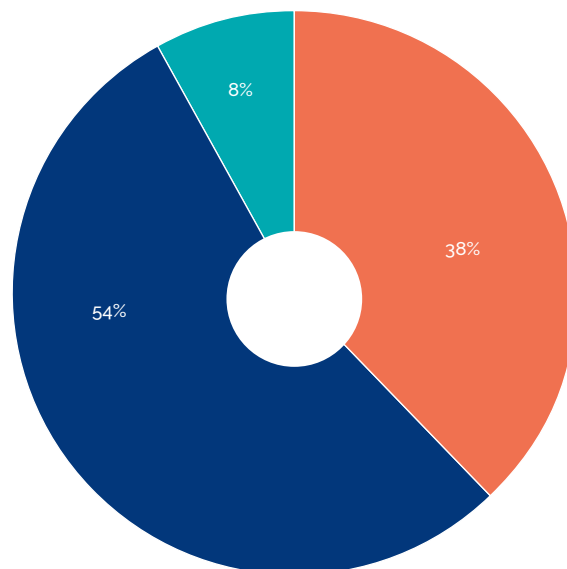
- Multiple suppliers delivering specific applications
- One supplier & a few application-specific suppliers
- A single supplier for all of our business applications

Do you have many applications and systems that don't talk to each other?

Almost a quarter (23 per cent) of housing providers reported that most of their applications and systems were unable to share data, followed by 45 per cent who said that some of their applications had the same problem.

A quarter (26 per cent) of respondents said that they only had a few disconnected applications, alongside a final fortunate contingent (six per cent) reporting that all of their applications could talk to each other and share data.

Disconnected applications & systems
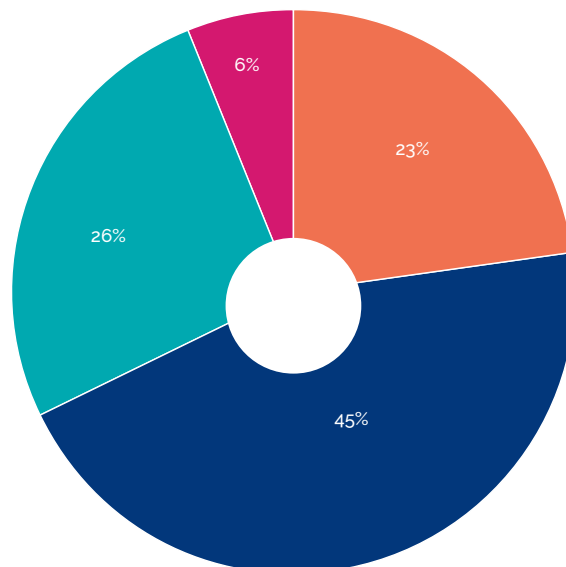

- Most of them
- Some of them
- Only a few
- No

In the context of applications that don't talk to each other (c.f. previous section), what impact does that have on your data quality?

A lack of IT integration directly affects the data quality of 95 per cent of housing providers, representing a significant problem given the importance of data management to housing providers' operations.

Only five cent of housing providers reported that their lack (or otherwise) of IT integration affected their data quality.

IT integration & data quality

- ● Considerable impact
- ● Some impact
- ● Little impact
- ● No impact
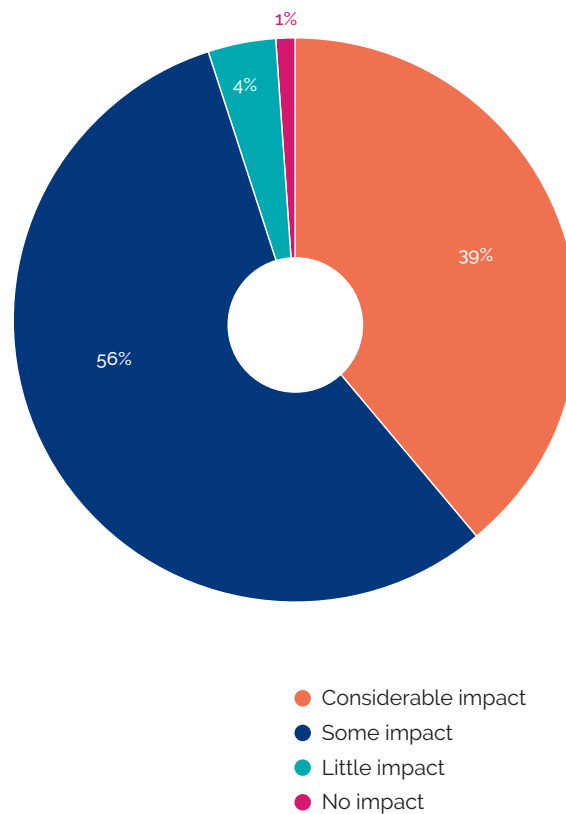
How will you buy integration software in future?

housing-technology.com

Half of housing providers expect to run their own in-house procurement of integration software.

Of the remainder, 45 per cent will buy new integration software via external procurement frameworks, such as

the Crown Commercial Service, and five per cent expect to fully outsource their procurement to an external business/procurement consultancy.

Future procurement of integration software

5%

45%

50%
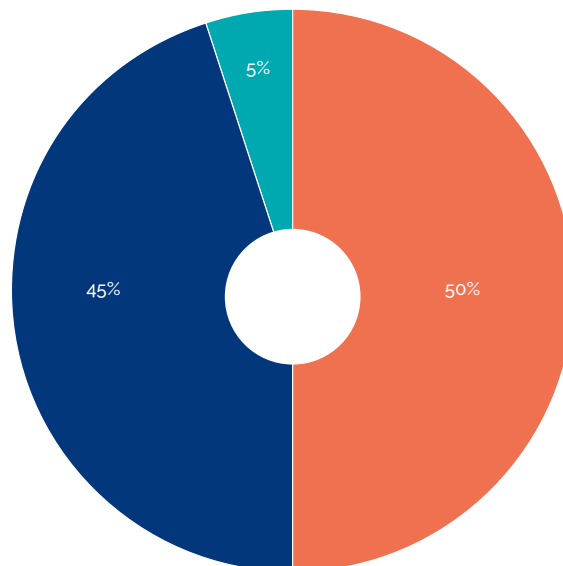
- Our own in-house procurement
- Buy through ext. procurement frameworks
- Outsource the procurement to a consultant

What are your key investments in integration and software to deliver better services for tenants?

The overall theme is an emphasis on information consolidation, consistency and accessibility across housing providers' myriad siloed applications.

In terms of integration-specific technology investments for tenant services, housing providers' focus is primarily on enterprise data platforms (21 per cent), followed by application consolidation (16 per cent), middleware (13 per cent), APIs (11 per cent) and pure data management (10 per cent).

Housing providers' more general technology investments for tenant services span tenant portals (14 per cent), housing management systems (12 per cent) and mobile (three per cent).

IT investments for tenant services

%
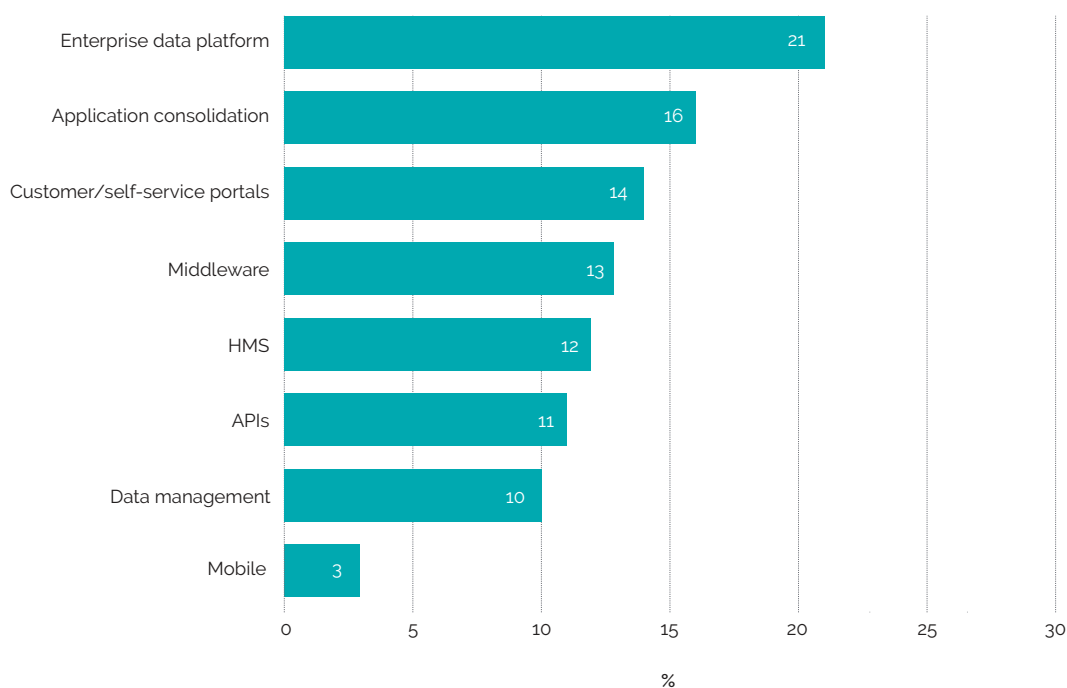
What are your key investments in integration and software to achieve better internal operations?

As with the previous section (see page 13), enterprise data platforms (e.g. Microsoft Azure) are the main investment (32 per cent) for housing providers in the context of their business operations.

Application consolidation and middleware comprise the next level of investments (both 18 per cent), followed by data management (14 per cent) and APIs (10 per cent). In-house solutions represent only eight per cent of housing providers' spending in this area.

IT investments for operations

Category	%
Enterprise data platform	32
Application consolidation	18
Middleware	18
Data management	14
APIs	10
Internal solutions	8

%
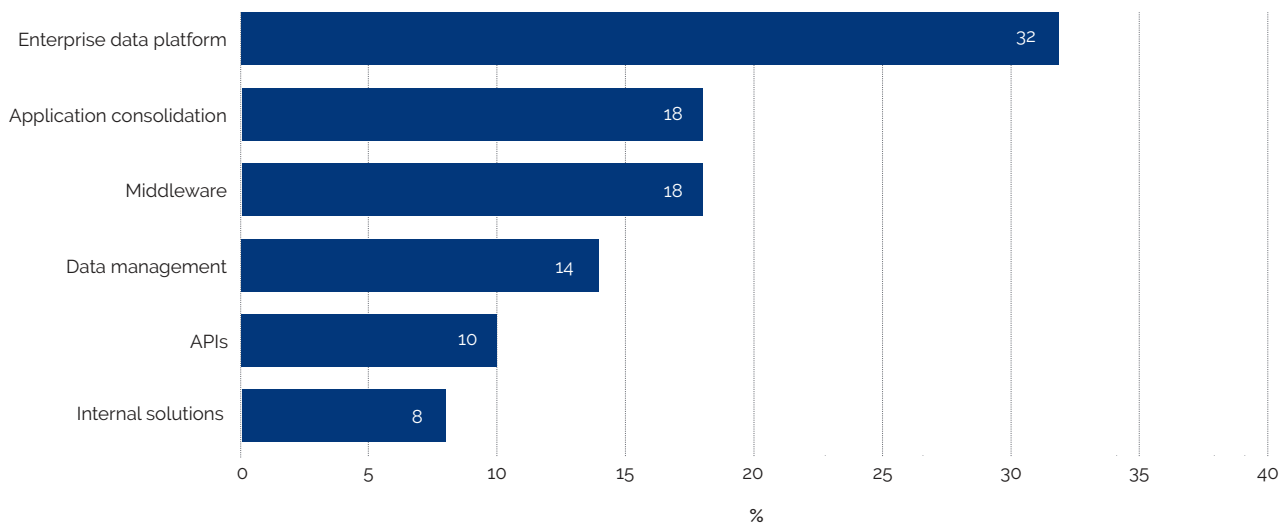
How does IT integration support your 'value for money' agenda?

Almost half (49 per cent) of housing providers reported that IT integration considerably helped their value-for-money (VFM) agendas. A further 42 per cent said that IT integration made modest contributions to their VFM activities.

Only nine per cent of respondents thought that IT integration made very little difference to achieving value for money.

IT integration & VFM agenda
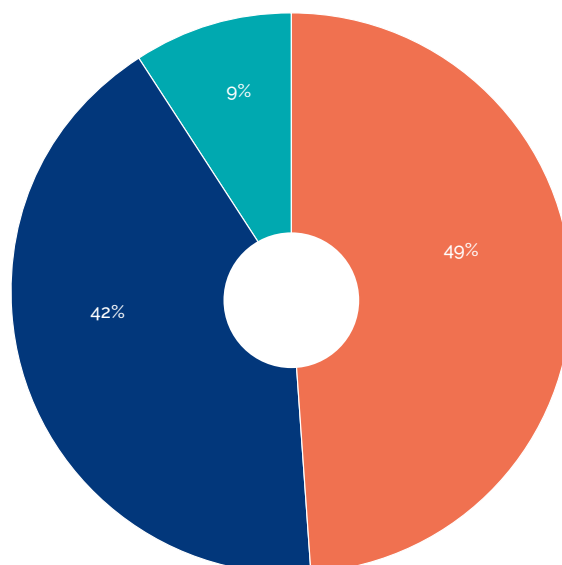
- ● Considerably
- ● Somewhat
- ● Very little

How does integration help with your governance and viability ratings?

Overall, housing providers' governance and viability ratings are directly helped (94 per cent) by their IT integration activities, principally around easing the necessary data flows around their organisations.

Only six per cent of respondents reported that IT integration had little or no influence on their governance and viability ratings.

IT integration & governance

- ● Considerably
- ● Somewhat
- ● Very little
- ● Not at all
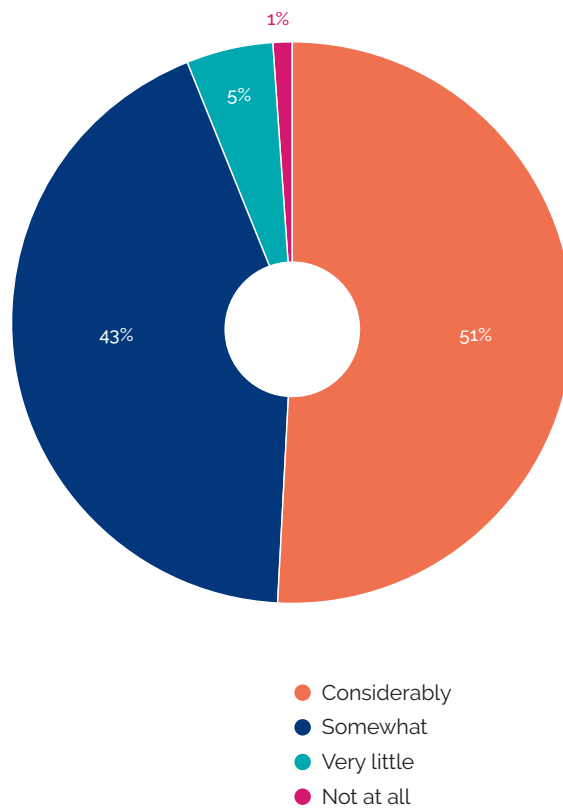
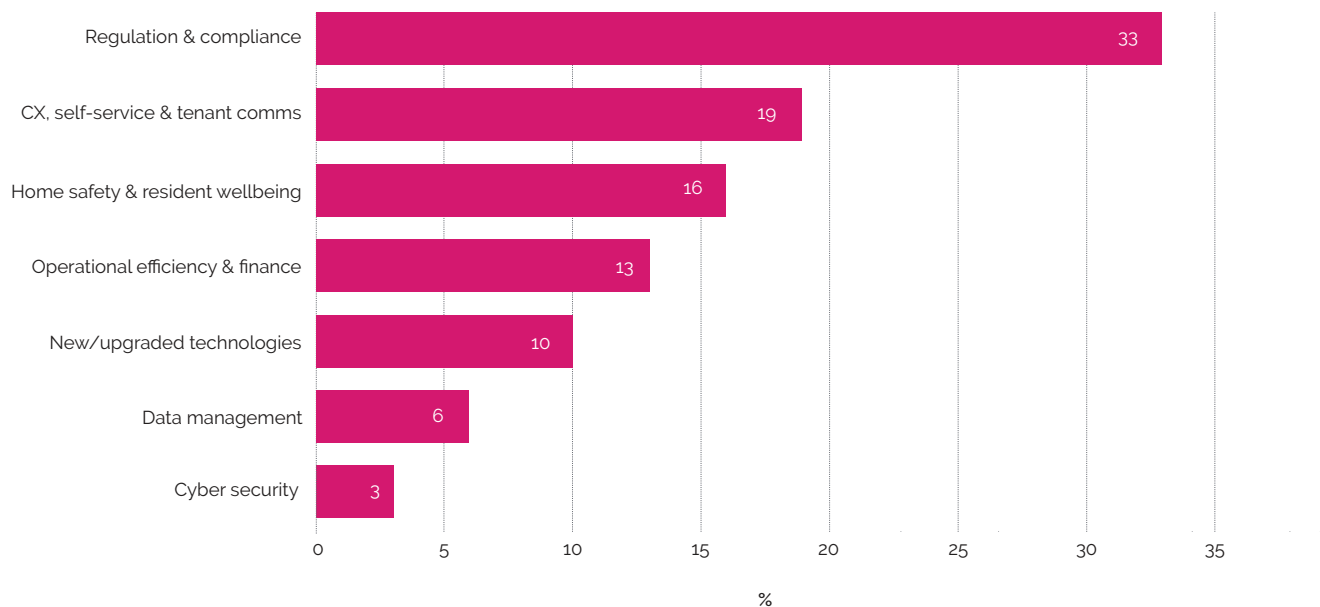# Which social housing initiatives have the most influence on your IT decision-making?

Regulation and compliance stand out as being the main housing initiatives influencing (33 per cent) housing providers' technology decisions, primarily around data management programmes and processes (such as acquisition, cleaning, integration and quality) needed to provide the solid foundations for downstream analytics and reporting to internal stakeholders, tenants and regulators.

Tenant-related activities are the next level of influences for housing providers, comprising tenant services (19 per cent) such as customer experience (CX), self-service portals and tenant communications, and home safety and residents' wellbeing (16 per cent). These are then closely-followed by a focus on operational efficiency and finance (13 per cent).

Influences on IT decisions

Category	%
Regulation & compliance	33
CX, self-service & tenant comms	19
Home safety & resident wellbeing	16
Operational efficiency & finance	13
New/upgraded technologies	10
Data management	6
Cyber security	3

%

Aareon ECOSYSTEM

- Aareon QL HMS
  - QL API
  - QL Hosted
  - QL PowerBI
- Contractor Portal
- Customer App & Portal
- Aareon Connect Integration Service
- Mobile Working App & Modules

The Aareon Ecosystem is a connected network of solutions which can be tailored to simplify and automate the complex business processes of social housing providers. The Ecosystem comprises our popular housing management and digital solutions suite:

- QL housing management system, including hosted, API and PowerBI reporting;
- Mobile working modules;
- Customer portal and app;
- Contractor portal;
- Aareon Connect integration service.

Aareon UK is a leading provider of housing management software and digital solutions to the social housing sector.

Established for over 30 years, Aareon is the key partner and driver of digital transformation in the sector. Aareon accelerates the digitalisation of business processes and offers strategic guidance to help social housing providers connect with their tenants, suppliers, employees and property management.

Aareon's focus is to simplify and automate manually-intensive processes, with solutions designed to help manage resources in the most efficient way. Aareon supports customers to help optimise their business processes; and empower tenants with self-service, giving back more time to focus on the areas that are most important.

Aareon's expert housing-sector knowledge and customer-led approach help to drive innovation. Aareon uses the latest technology to automate, optimise and integrate processes that enable customers to manage the end-to-end tenant life cycle.

Aareon UK manages over 3,600 customers in both private and social housing across its three brands. In the social housing sector, customers are using Aareon software to manage over 1.3 million units. Across Europe, Aareon manages 7,000 customers who oversee a total of 12 million units. This extensive knowledge and expertise in housing and property management is backed by an unparalleled investment programme.

Aareon

For further details, please visit:
aareon.co.uk or email: **uk.reception@aareon.com.**

Create a Digital Ecosystem for the Future

Aareon CONNECT

- **Partner Marketplace**
- **Pre-Built Connectors**
- **Seamless Integration**

Introducing Aareon Connect, the social housing integration platform that gives you the flexibility to choose which solutions suit your business.

With a growing network of best in class partners and all the API hardwork done for you, we open the door for our customers to create a digital ecosystem of the future.

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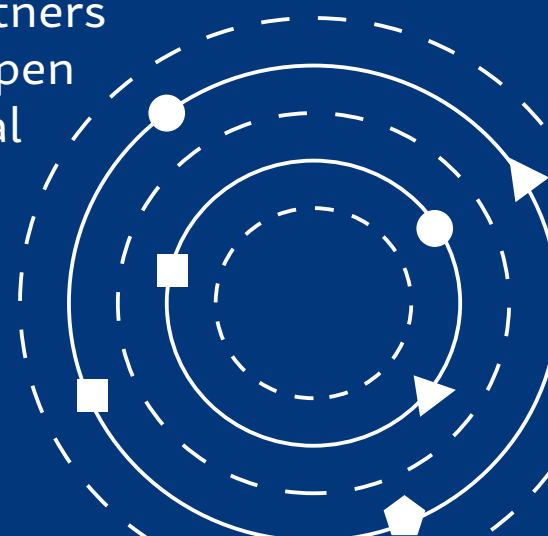
ABOUT HOUSING TECHNOLOGY
Housing Technology is the no.1 provider of IT, technology and telecoms news, comment, information and research specifically for the UK social housing sector.

IT STRATEGY
Established in 2006, the bi-monthly Housing Technology magazine and the annual market intelligence report are required reading for anyone responsible for IT strategy and delivery within UK housing associations. Subscriptions to Housing Technology are free and available online from www.housing-technology.com.

RECRUITMENT
Housing Technology's recruitment service is the only dedicated job board for technologists in our sector. Organisations can benefit from free job postings and promotion to our large network. If you're looking to fill a vacancy or find a new career opportunity in our sector, we can support you.

COMMUNITY NETWORKING
The annual Housing Technology conference and executive forum is now well-established as the leading technology event in the social housing sector. Housing Technology also runs a number of other smaller, topic-specific seminars and events throughout the year.

MARKET INTELLIGENCE
Housing Technology publishes a series of annual market intelligence reports, white papers and bespoke research on behalf of housing associations and IT suppliers.

ON DEMAND STREAMING
Housing Technology On Demand is our streaming platform featuring content specifically curated for the housing sector, including demos, discussions, case studies, interviews and event replays. We have also developed the On Demand app so you can keep up-to-date wherever you are.

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