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Llywodraeth Cymru
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Welsh Government
Consultation Document

Statistical outputs on population and household estimates and projections

Date of issue: 29 February 2016
Action required: Responses by 23 May 2016

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Overview

This consultation seeks feedback on some of our statistical outputs relating to population and household statistics.

In general we are seeking feedback openly about the experience of users in using these statistical outputs and how we can improve in future.

We are also proposing a timetable for the next round of population and household projections and seeking views on this and future timing.

How to respond

You can respond to the consultation by using the separate response form (in Excel format), available on the consultation webpage, accessible here:

www.gov.wales/consultations/statistics/statistical-outputs-population-household-estimates-projections/?status=open&lang=en

The response form can be emailed to stats.popcensus@wales.gsi.gov.uk or posted to the address below.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Information on statistical outputs produced by Welsh Government relating to population and household estimates and projections can be accessed at:

www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research/?topic=Population+and+migration

Contact details

For further information:

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Data protection

How the views and information you give us will be used

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Foreword

Population statistics are amongst the most important of all official statistics, providing as they do a basis for resource allocation and future planning at a local and national level and helping us understand our changing society.

Within Wales our sub-national population and household projections are similarly integral to the planning process. They provide an insight into the likely trends in population and household composition in areas within Wales over the next 20-30 years.

In the autumn we published updated National Park population projections for Wales and will in March be publishing household projections for the National Park areas. This represents the end of the last cycle of projections which began with the publication of 2011-based local authority projections using 2011 Census data as a basis.

As we embark on the next cycle of population and household projections later this year it is an appropriate time to seek feedback from users of population statistics on our outputs, methodology and timetable.

Glyn Jones
Chief Statistician

What are we seeking feedback on?

We are seeking feedback on our statistical outputs relating to population and household statistics, which are described below. In general we are seeking feedback openly about the experience of users in using these statistical outputs and how we can improve in future.

We are also proposing a timetable for the next round of population and household projections and seeking views on this and future timing.

Background

Across the United Kingdom a range of **population and household statistics** are produced that inform future planning of, for example, housing need, public service provision and retail investment. They are also used for resource allocation such as the local government settlement.

For Wales, responsibility for producing **population** statistics is split between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Welsh Government. The ONS is responsible for undertaking the Census of Population in England and Wales, producing the annual mid-year estimates of the population and producing national population projections (for the UK as a whole).

Welsh Government currently uses the information published by the ONS to produce a statistical bulletin on [mid-year estimates of the population](#). We also use the ONS data as a basis for calculating sub-national population projections for Wales. We produce these for [local authority](#) and [national park](#) areas.

We also produce statistics around **households** in Wales to provide users with data on changes in household formation to inform, for example, decisions around house building. We produce:

- [Annual household mid-year estimates for Wales](#)
- [Local authority household projections for Wales](#)
- [National Park household projections for Wales](#)

All these statistics are published under the responsibility of the Welsh Government Chief Statistician in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

We publish these statistics through statistical releases or bulletins which provide a mixture of commentary, charts, tables and quality information. We also produce [StatsWales](#) tables which allow users to interact and manipulate the data to produce the tables they need. We use [social media](#) and infographics to help promote the use of the statistics.

These statistics are used by a range of people and organisations for various reasons. These include local authorities, local service boards, local health boards, fire and rescue authorities, voluntary organisations, commissioners, the media, academia, and the private sector.

Some examples of how these statistics are used include:

- In the local government settlement formula
- In local development plans to inform assessment of housing and other need
- Decisions on planning school places, or locating health services
- Supporting local labour market planning through use in labour market intelligence
- By voluntary organisations to bid for grants
- By retail organisations to decide on future location of stores
- In considering the impact of large scale infrastructure developments
- In understanding the prevalence and future projections of health conditions

Furthermore the emerging policy context around planning and the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) mean that these statistics will have more use than ever before:

- There is demand for local projections to support assessments of local well-being required under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, which requires public bodies to consider the needs of future generations in everything they do. The Future Trends report that will be published by Welsh Ministers and the 5 yearly report by the Future Generations Commissioner are likely to consider the pressure of demographic change.
- The [Planning \(Wales\) Act](#) has provided provisions for strategic planning to address wider than local issues and refreshed population projections are seen as a fundamental basis for those plans and potentially provide the building blocks for wider strategic areas.
- There is also a requirement to produce updated projections for existing local authorities to feed in to the calculations of the Revenue Support Grant.

Consultation questions

We are asking you to complete a response on our consultation questions through the accompanying response form (Excel spreadsheet).

In general we are seeking open feedback on the statistical outputs described above on the following issues:

- Presentation of the statistics – does it meet your need and how can we improve?
- Methods used to produce the statistics – do you agree with the current methods?
- Finding data on websites – do you know what you can find, and where?

But we are also seeking specific feedback on the following areas:

Timetable

We propose to begin work on new projections for the 22 local authorities and three national park authorities during the first half of 2016. The aim will be to begin to publish results from the autumn of this year, with on-going outputs until early 2017. We are aiming to publish local authority population projections in September 2016.

- Do you agree with this timetable?
- What are your future needs for projections?
- How frequently should they be produced?

The UK Statistics Authority have proposed that we should work with the Office for National Statistics and other UK administrations to align the base year for sub-national and national projections where possible – this is our working proposal unless there is a clear user need for a different base year in Wales, as we elected to do following the 2011 Census where we prioritised the need for updated projections in Wales ahead of waiting for 2012-based national projections

- Do you agree with this approach?

In answering this section you should note that the ONS have recently [consulted](#) on reducing the frequency of national population projections from every two to three years. This will impact on the availability of data to support sub-national projections on a more frequent basis.

Publication of mid-year estimates bulletin

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) annually publishes [population estimates](#) for Wales and local authorities in Wales. Historically we have provided a [bulletin](#) presenting the data and summary commentary. In line with our previous [consultation](#), where we sought to prioritise on outputs that added value by removing duplication with other statistical producers, we intend in future to only update the [StatsWales tables](#) when ONS publish new data and ensure users are made aware that ONS have published the latest data. This would not result in a delay to the Welsh data being available on the Welsh Government website.

- Does this proposal cause you any difficulties?