



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Shielded households (composition and characteristics during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic): July 2020

An analysis using linked data to estimate the number of shielded households in July 2020 by household type.

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1. Main results

- Around 130,000 persons were on the shielded list in Wales by July 2020.
- Over 121,000 households in Wales contained a shielded person. Around 64,000 (or 53%) of those shielding were living alone, of which just under half (47%) were aged 70 and over.
- Most shielded households contained no more than 2 adults without children.
- Over 92,000 people were living with those asked to shield so that an estimated 223,000 people were in shielded households.
- More women than men were asked to shield, along with more boys than girls.
- Nevertheless there were more children living with someone asked to shield than shielding themselves.

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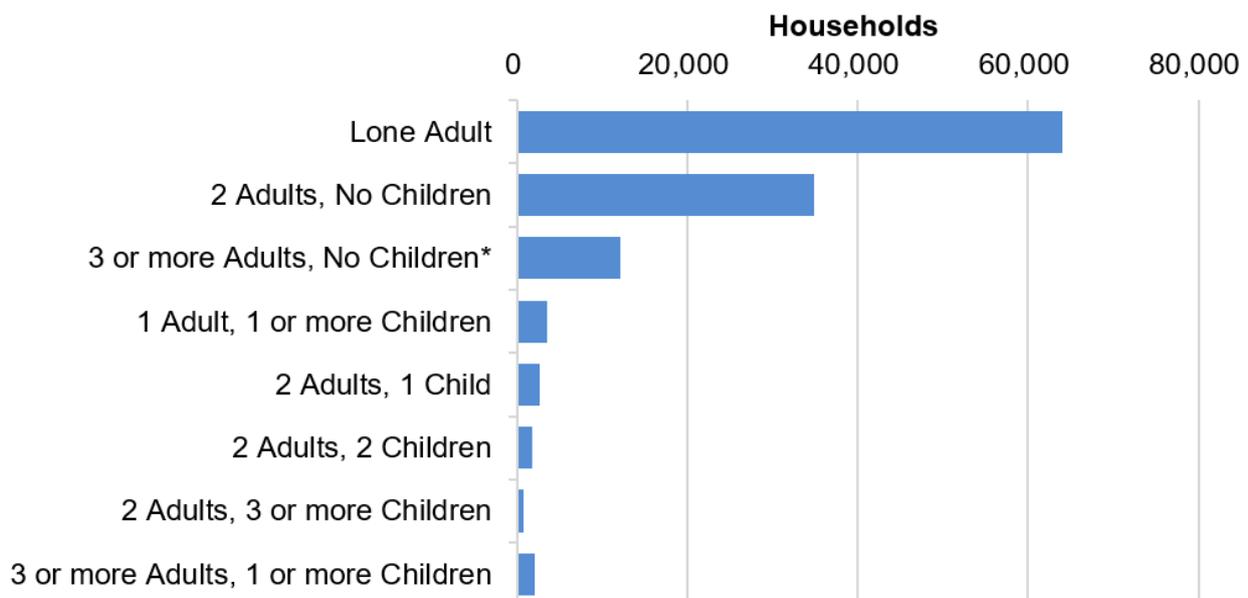
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2. Shielded households

An estimated 121,800 households contained a person on the shielded list at the end of July 2020. This represents around 9% of households in Wales (based on [household estimates for mid-2019](#)). Just over half of shielded households (64,000 or 53%) contained 1 adult living alone (or 'lone adult' households as shown in Chart 1) whilst 35,000 (or 29%) contained 2 adults with no children resident. As a result a large majority (81%) of shielded households contained no more than 2 adults without resident children (by comparison this figure was 63% for households across Wales as a whole in 2019). Around 3% of shielded households (around 3,500) consisted of 1 adult with 1 or more children (compared with 7% across Wales in 2019).

Chart 1: Shielded households in Wales by household type, July 2020



Source: Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank

* May include households with adults living alone or in a couple not identified elsewhere due to sharing the same Residential Identifier i.e. blocks of flats etc.

[Shielded households in Wales by household type, July 2020 \(MS Excel\)](#)

These estimates are based on those who were living at a residential address at the same time as someone on the shielded list. However the property identifier

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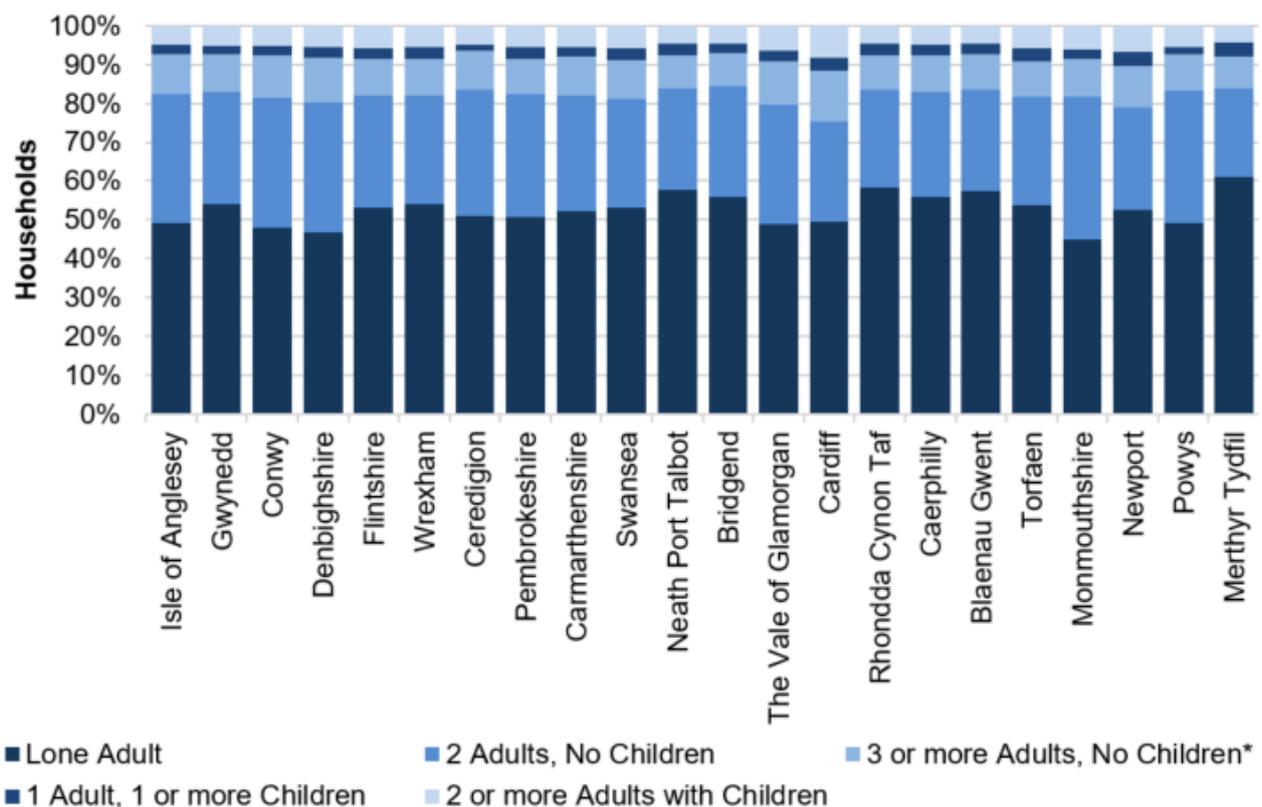
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used to establish this can belong to more than one dwelling (e.g. blocks of flats) so that the number of residents living with a shielded person may be over-estimated in some cases. In addition it has not been possible to exclude residential care homes from the list of residences (which may be expected to appear as larger households containing more than 3 adults). As a result actual numbers of large households may be lower, whilst numbers of smaller households may be higher than the estimated figures presented in Chart 1.

Chart 2 shows that for most local authorities more than 80% of shielded households contained no more than 2 adults without resident children. Also for many authorities over half of shielded households were lone adult households. On average around 9% of shielded households contained children.

Chart 2: Shielded households by type and local authority, July 2020



Source: Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank

* May include households with adults living alone or in a couple not identified elsewhere due to sharing the same Residential Identifier i.e. blocks of flats etc.

Shielded households by type and local authority, July 2020 (MS Excel)

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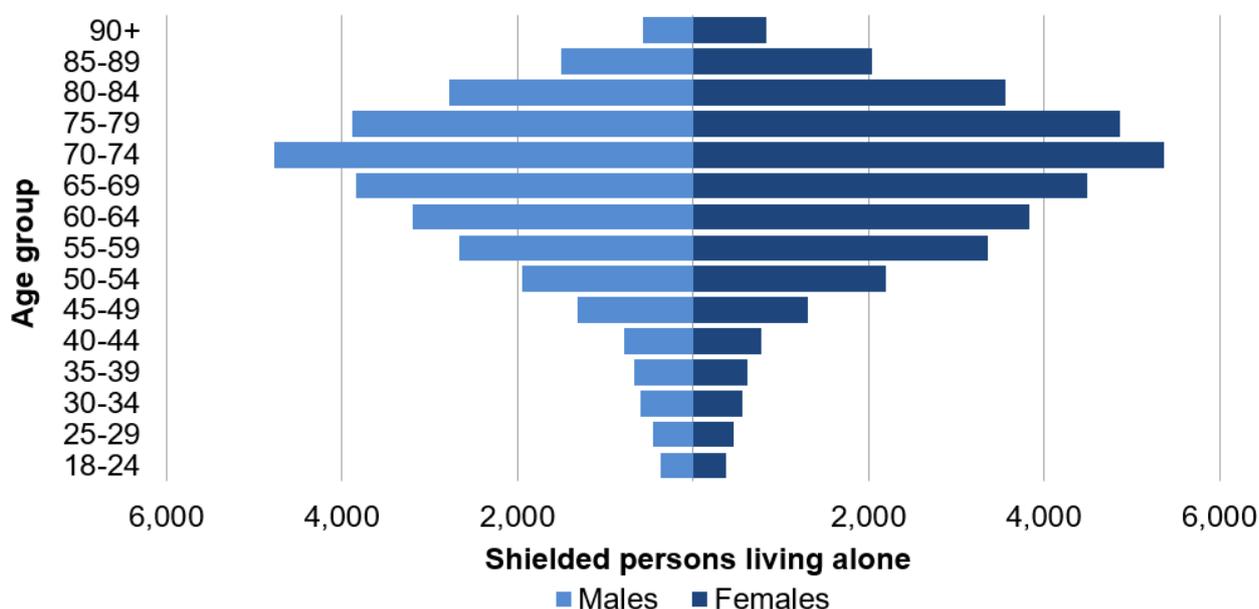
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3. Shielded and living alone by age and gender

Just under half of those shielded and living alone (47%) were aged 70 and over whilst the vast majority were aged 50 or over (87%). The 70 to 74 age band included over 10,000 shielded people living alone, with more females than males asked to do so. This was also true for ages 75 and over. For those aged up to 44 more males than females were asked to shield were living alone, but with less than 4,000 doing so for each age band.

Chart 3: Age profile of shielded persons living alone, July 2020



Source: Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank

[Age profile of shielded persons living alone, July 2020 \(MS Excel\)](#)

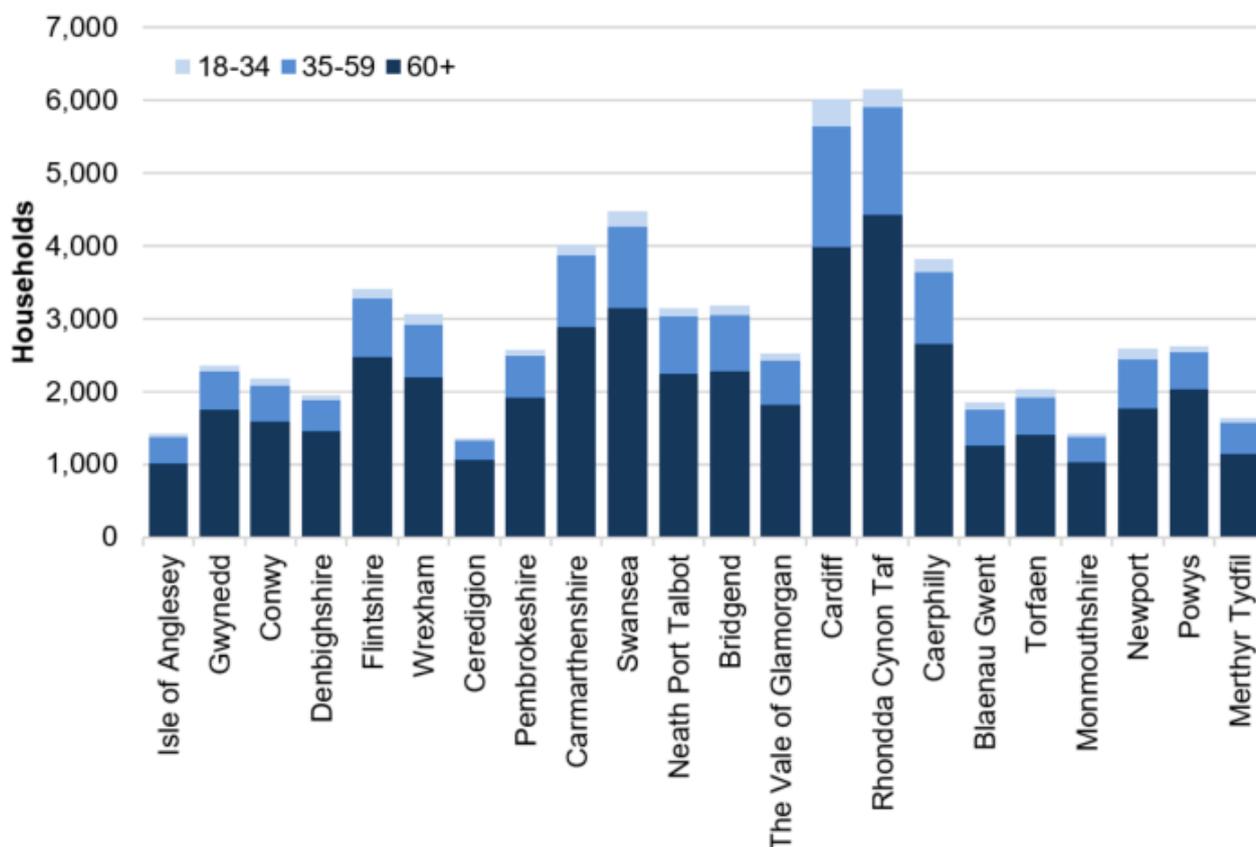
When broken down by age and local authority it is clear that most people shielding and living alone are over 60 years of age and the majority of these are in the 60 to 74 age group. This is the case across all local authorities in Wales as shown in Chart 4.

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Chart 4: Age profile of shielded persons living alone by local authority, July 2020



Source: Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank

[Age profile of shielded persons living alone by local authority, July 2020 \(MS Excel\)](#)

4. Persons shielded or living with those who are shielded

By July 2020 over 130,000 people in Wales had been asked to shield; of these less than 5,000 were children under 18 years of age. Over 92,000 people were identified as living with a shielded person so that over 223,000 people were estimated to be living in shielded households. Of those living with someone shielding, around 79,000 were adults and over 13,000 were children. The majority of children (74%) were living with someone asked to shield rather than being asked to shield themselves.

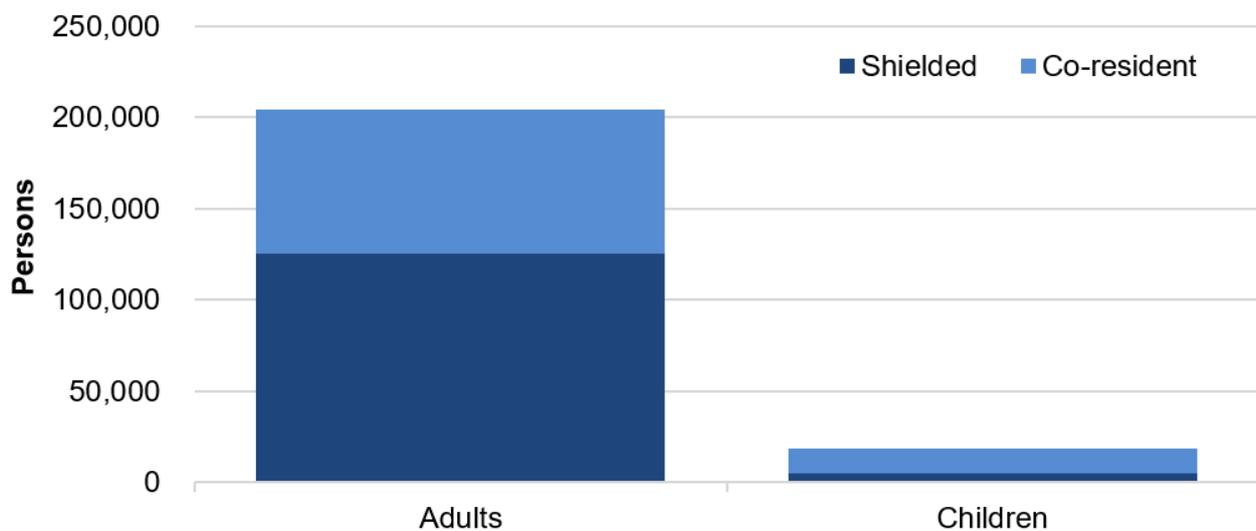
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The overall estimate of 18,000 children living in shielded households is lower than that presented in a previous release relating to **children in shielded households**. The figure in the previous release was based on different datasets, including children aged 3 to 19 in the PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census). This release counts children as those aged under 18 only. A fuller discussion of the difference in estimates of children in the two releases is given in **Section 6**, below.

Chart 5: Adults and children shielded or living with a shielded person(s), July 2020



Source: Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank

Adults and children shielded or living with a shielded person(s), July 2020 (MS Excel)

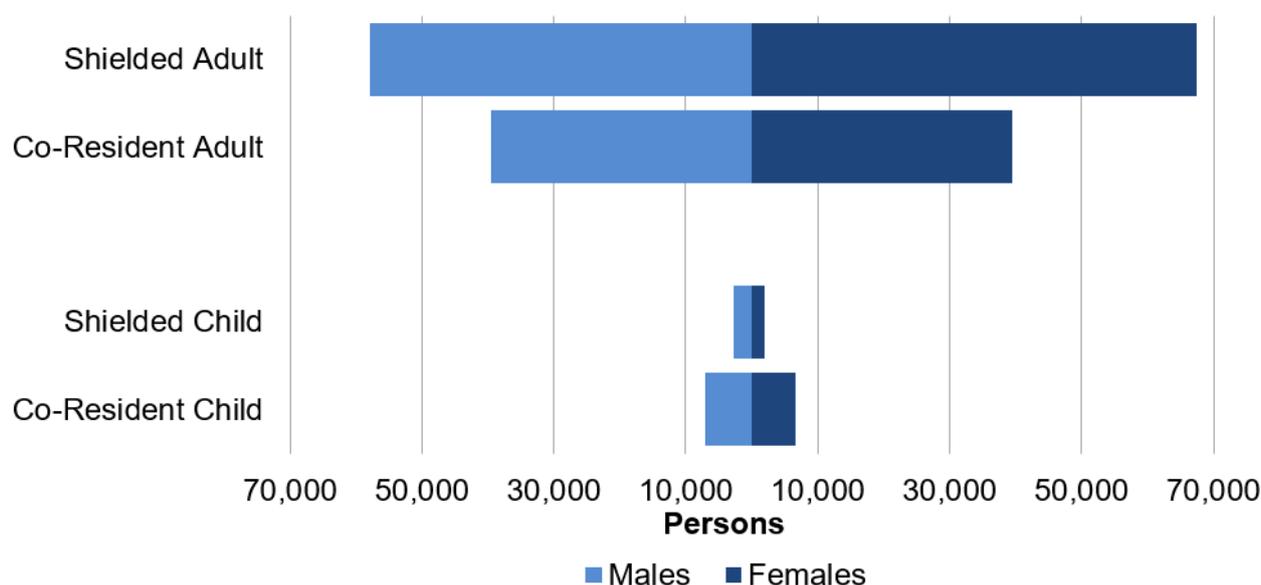
These figures are broken down by gender in Chart 6 along with whether someone was shielded or living with someone who was shielded. More women than men were asked to shield whilst roughly even numbers of women and men were living with a person asked to shield. More boys than girls were asked to shield and as shown above children were more likely to be living with someone asked to shield than shielding themselves.

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Chart 6: Adults and children shielded or living with a shielded person(s) by gender, July 2020



Source: Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank

[Adults and children shielded or living with a shielded person\(s\) by gender, July 2020 \(MS Excel\)](#)

5. Dataset information

This analysis is based on anonymised data held in the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) system, which is part of the national e-health records research infrastructure for Wales. All data were anonymised before acquisition and use within the secure environment provided by the SAIL Databank.

The Shielded Patient List (SPL) is a list of clinically extremely vulnerable people. They are deemed most likely to become unwell if they catch coronavirus. Shielded people should have received a letter or been told by their GP that they are in this group. The Shielded Patient List is derived using a variety of data sources drawn from the Health Service. More information on the sources and methodology can be accessed on the [NHS Wales Informatics Service](#).

The 'C-19-COHORT20' dataset in SAIL provides a definitive set of anonymised

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records for everyone resident in Wales on 1 January 2020, created specifically for the purposes of analysis research into the COVID-19 virus and the wider impact of the pandemic. The SPL was linked with data from the C-19-COHORT20 table for the purpose of understanding the characteristics of households containing Shielded people.

6. Quality and methodology information

The Administrative Data Research Unit (ADRU) in Welsh Government undertakes research projects for the public good using established administrative datasets. During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, ADRU has undertaken a number of data linking projects. One of these projects involved linking the Shielded Patient List with Welsh Demographic Service (WDS) data to estimate numbers of people living with a shielded person. This analysis uses the SPL as of 26 July 2020 when there were 130,490 unique NHS numbers on the list. The SPL was linked with WDS data for those resident from 1 March 2020 up to 31 August 2020.

To estimate the number of adults and children living in households with shielded people, the shielded list was first linked with WDS data to find the anonymised residential anonymised linking field (RALF). The RALF was then used to identify other people living at the same residence at the start of 2020. From the combined data it was possible to determine whether people who shared the same address were shielded themselves or living with those who were asked to do so, based on when they moved in. For children birth dates were also used to determine residence. Records which shared the same RALF were assumed to belong to the same household and summarised to provide numbers of households. It was then possible to identify household types based on numbers of people and whether children were resident.

For most RALFs (but not all) a Lower Level Small Output Area (LSOA) code is recorded, which enables small area geographical analysis in SAIL. For this analysis where an LSOA was provided it was used to aggregate household numbers at a local authority level.

The data manipulation was done in SQL DB2, SPSS version 21 and MS Excel in

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the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) Databank. Below is our data linking process.

- Start with the SPL
- Link SPL with C-19-COHORT20 in a new table
- Identify people whether shielded or living with those shielded
- Create summary table for all people in a shielded household
- Create a summary of all households containing a shielded person
- Identify household type based on numbers of adults and children
- Extract figures and analysis for persons and households
- Extract figures by local authority

The household types used in this report are broadly based on numbers of people in each household and whether children are resident. The household types used differ from those used in household estimates for Wales due to differences in methodology between data linking approaches and household estimates and applying disclosure control for some less common household types.

The estimated number of 18,000 children living in shielded households is lower than that presented in a previous release (20,000). The previous release linked the Shielded Patient List to the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) using surname and postcode. For this release, the Shielded Patient List has been linked to residence data provided by the Welsh Demographic Service (WDS) using residential identifiers and GP registration dates. Differences in estimates of children between two releases are due to variations in matching processes, source data and how children are defined. Also, false matching of data can occur. Common surnames may be shared across different households within the same postcode, whilst residential identifiers can relate to more than one household living at the same address. Both of these can result in false matches, which will affect the estimates both at local and national levels. In addition, the numbers in this release relate to those in households and do not include those living in communal establishments (for example: children's homes, boarding schools).

This research has been carried out as part of the ADR Wales programme of work. The ADR Wales programme of work is aligned to the priority themes as

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identified in the Welsh Government's national strategy: Prosperity for All. ADR Wales brings together data science experts at Swansea University Medical School, staff from the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) at Cardiff University and specialist teams within the Welsh Government to develop new evidence which supports **Prosperity for All: the national strategy** by using the SAIL Databank at Swansea University, to link and analyse anonymised data. ADR Wales is part of the Economic and Social Research Council (part of UK Research and Innovation) funded ADR UK (grant ES/S007393/1).

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the **Well-being of Wales report**.

Further information on the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**.

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

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