



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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POLICY AND STRATEGY

# Statistics and Research: user engagement strategy

Describes our approach for consulting with and informing users.

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# Contents

**Introduction** (#section-52418)

**User feedback** (#section-52420)

**User groups** (#section-52422)

**Newsletters and social media** (#section-52424)

**Consultations** (#section-52426)

**Seminars and events** (#section-52428)

**Training** (#section-52430)

**Customer service** (#section-110213)

# Introduction

Meeting the needs of all users of statistics is a key part of the **Code of Practice for Statistics** (<https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/>). Principle V1 of the code states 'Users of statistics and data should be at the centre of statistical production; their needs should be understood, their views sought and acted on, and their use of statistics supported'. This strategy describes the approach of Statistical Services in the Welsh Government for consulting with and informing users. The Welsh Government also aims to progress its user engagement activities in keeping with the **Government Analysis Function user engagement strategy for statistics** (<https://analysisfunction.civilservice.gov.uk/policy-store/user-engagement-strategy-for-statistics-ensuring-official-statistics-meet-societys-need/>).

The Welsh Government publishes a wide range of statistics about many topic areas, from the economy to public services such as local government, health and education as well as wider information about the population and the environment. Understanding the needs of the full range of users of such a breadth of statistics, taking account of all levels of expertise, is a fundamental part of our statistical production. We inform users of our plans and activity to ensure that we are being transparent in our approach and to maximise the impact of our work in order that it better supports decision-making and public debate.

We recognise and appreciate the contribution that users can bring to discussions of priorities and areas for improvement, from decisions about what data to collect to what formats they are disseminated in. We consult with users to seek their feedback and ideas. This ensures that our statistical work is based on a wide range of user priorities and remains relevant to the public debate.

## **Statistical plans**

We publish information about our regular series of scheduled statistical outputs on our website, pre-announcing the dates on which outputs will be published. Through the Chief Statistician's blog and regular Statistics Wales Quarterly updates we inform users of key statistical priorities and improvement plans. The plans take account of user needs expressed through regular communication with users of statistics both within the Welsh Government and externally, through a range of mechanisms.

We invite comments on our plans and priorities and consider feedback received from all users, internal and external, on our work throughout the year to ensure that our statistical work takes into account emerging priorities.

## **User feedback**

We recognise that users can provide useful contributions to discussions about priorities and improvements that can be made to our statistics.

Users are invited to feed back on the presentation, usability and content provided in Welsh Government statistical outputs and online platforms such as StatsWales, or interactive statistical websites.

We aim to make it easy for you to express your views by providing opportunities to feed back on all outputs.

A contact email for each statistical output and web page is provided in a clear location.

We also use blogs and Twitter to enable people to be aware of our published

statistics and statistical developments. This also allows individuals to comment on our work. For example, we decided to review the future of the regional economic profiles. We set our plans for this in a [blog by the Chief Statistician](https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/2021/11/25/chief-statisticians-update-update-on-economy-and-labour-market-statistics/) (https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/2021/11/25/chief-statisticians-update-update-on-economy-and-labour-market-statistics/) in November 2021 where we sought user feedback on our proposals.

We aim to tell you what decisions we have taken about changes to our priorities or outputs as a result of your feedback.

We will continually seek to improve the ways in which we enable you to provide feedback.

## User groups

We consult with users across a variety of organisations through a range of regular user groups. These user groups enable us to develop a better relationship with a range of users of our statistics and they act as a forum for informing and consulting users on our plans and activities.

## Examples of key user groups

The [Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee \(WSLC\)](https://gov.wales/welsh-statistical-liaison-committee) (https://gov.wales/welsh-statistical-liaison-committee) is a key consultative forum involving organisations across the public sector in Wales. The Committee is used to discuss and consult on statistical developments over the year. Papers for WSLC are published to ensure that the wider user base is able to access the latest news and presentations.

The **Third Sector Statistics User Panel for Wales** (<https://gov.wales/third-sector-statistics-user-panel>), set up jointly with the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, draws together representatives of the third sector to inform and consult with the sector regarding statistical issues. Minutes from the Third Sector Panel are published to enable others to be aware of how we are working with the sector and to contribute.

We are working with colleagues within the **Royal Statistical Society** (<https://rss.org.uk/>) (RSS) to maximise the use of, and involvement in, the local group of the RSS.

Our statisticians are also part of groups more focused on particular themes, such as the **Welsh Health Analysts Network** (<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/welshhealthanalystsnetworkwhan>), the **Housing Information Group** (<https://gov.wales/housing-information-group>) and the **Welsh Economic Statistics User Group** (<https://gov.wales/welsh-economic-statistics-user-group>).

The Welsh Government has invested in the Secure Anonymised Data Linkage (SAIL) databank at Swansea University, and it is part of the Welsh Government and higher education partnership known as Administrative Data Research (ADR) Wales. **SAIL has established a series of user forum events** (<https://docs.hiru.swan.ac.uk/display/SUF/SAIL+User+Forums>) and an online community for analysts working in the trusted research environment. This provides an opportunity for analysts to give and receive feedback.

We establish user and technical groups for particular projects for example, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) steering, advisory and domain groups. These help us develop our work plans with a greater understanding of user needs and inform the development and progress of many of our projects.

## Newsletters and social media

Our presence on **Twitter** (<https://twitter.com/statisticswales>) is a key method of informing users of our products and new developments. We aim to make better use of Twitter to seek views and stimulate debate on any proposals for change.

The Chief Statistician will use their **occasional updates/blogs** (<https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/category/chief-statistician/>) to inform users of recent developments or to seek views on particular issues.

Our fortnightly **Statistics and Research newsletter** (<https://gov.wales/subscribe/statistics-and-research>) is used to inform subscribed users of our latest outputs and news via email.

We have a **Statistics Wales quarterly update** (<https://gov.wales/statistics-wales-quarterly-update>) published on our website and circulated to all our key liaison group members. It informs users of Welsh statistics about our latest developments, consultations and plans.

## Consultations

We use more formal and focussed consultations occasionally on particular topics to ensure that we are seeking user views in a systematic, evidence-based manner. For example, during 2021 we consulted on changes to the national well-being indicators. This consultation was accompanied by blog posts, roundtables, webinars and a discussion with a panel of young people to ensure a diverse range of feedback.

All open and closed consultations, including those that relate to statistics, are **published on our website** (<https://gov.wales/consultations>).

We publicly respond to all consultations.

## Seminars and events

We organise seminars and events to both inform and consult users. Well-focused seminars can maximise the impact of our statistics and stimulate their use. Events to support public consultations can ensure a wider span of users are able to contribute their views. These can sometimes be undertaken jointly with the UK Statistics Authority, Office for National Statistics or other parts of the Government Statistical Service

We deliver online seminars to maximise the input of users across Wales, such as the regular **WIMD information sessions** (<https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-wimd-online-information-sessions-starting-autumn-2021>) which offer opportunity for questions and discussion.

We also represent Welsh Government at a range of external seminars, events or meetings, often being asked to speak about our range of services. For example we regularly take part in the Gofod 3 Third Sector event and the National Intelligence Event for the public sector, but also subject specialists will take part in conferences and events relevant to their subjects where they will be meeting with those interested in data in a particular area.

## Training

We hold training events to ensure our staff have the opportunity to continuously improve the way in which we work with and understand the interests of our users, and encourage staff to partake in external training courses, such as those held by the Office for National Statistics.

## Customer service

We aim to provide a high level of service to all our customers, meeting the standards of service set out in our [statement on customer service and complaints](https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research-statement-customer-service-and-complaints) (https://gov.wales/statistics-and-research-statement-customer-service-and-complaints).

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