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Welsh Government

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

# National Survey for Wales 2024 to 2025: privacy notice

Explains how we use personal data collected by the National Survey for Wales.

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The National Survey for Wales is carried out for the Welsh Government and its partners (Sport Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Arts Council Wales) by Verian and Beaufort Research. The survey gathers information on people's views and lives in order to help develop policies and decide how services are delivered. Each year, the survey involves telephone or in-home interviews with about 10,000 people aged 16+ across Wales. There is also a short online section at the end of the interview for anyone who uses the internet.

The Welsh Government is the data controller for the research and receives the information collected by Verian and Beaufort Research. Sport Wales, Natural Resources Wales or Arts Council Wales will receive anonymised datasets containing survey responses and will only receive your contact details where you have agreed to take part in further research that they or Welsh Government may undertake. The information is used for research and statistical purposes only, to produce statistical bulletins and research reports. The bulletins and reports are about the population of Wales in general, not about individual people. The survey collects personal data as well as data which is not considered personal data under UK GDPR.

Survey publications can be found on the [National Survey web pages](#).

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary. However, your views and experiences are important. Welsh Government, local councils, and NHS Wales use the results of the research to take action on issues that affect you and people in your area.

The contact for this research at Verian is Stuart Grant.

E-mail address: [Stuart.Grant@veriangroup.com](mailto:Stuart.Grant@veriangroup.com)

Telephone number: 020 7076 1600

The contact for this research at Beaufort Research is Chris Timmins.

E-mail address: [chris@beaufortresearch.co.uk](mailto:chris@beaufortresearch.co.uk)

Telephone number: 029 2037 8565

## What personal data do we hold and where do we get this information?

Personal data is defined under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) as ‘any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified by reference to an identifier’.

Participant addresses are randomly selected from the Royal Mail’s publicly available list of all addresses in Wales, and households are sent a letter inviting you to participate. As part of the letter, you are requested to provide a telephone number and first name or initial, and optionally your full name and email if you are content to provide them at this stage.

If you choose to provide your name, telephone number or email address via the online registration portal or to complete the online section of the survey, this will be done via an online survey provider called Forsta Plus. Forsta Plus will capture data you provide by filling in forms on the site. Forsta Plus may collect information about your computer, including device type, screen resolution, operating system and browser type and version, for system administration, if available. This is used to generate statistical data about users' browsing actions. If you contact Verian, they may keep a record of that correspondence for up to 6 weeks after responding.

Verian will attempt to obtain phone numbers associated with these randomly selected addresses from commercially available sources called Sagacity and Data8, who provide a facility to match telephone numbers against the addresses in the sample. Addresses will also be matched with databases of phone

numbers such as the online phonebook.

Where a phone number is provided by a household then Verian and Beaufort Research will use that to contact you to undertake the survey, otherwise Verian and Beaufort Research will use a phone number they have matched. If no phone number is available, Verian and Beaufort Research will send an interviewer to the address to arrange an interview (either face to face or by phone).

Your participation in the research is voluntary and if you do not wish to take part or be sent reminders then please reply to the invitation letter and your details will be removed.

If you take part in the survey, then Verian and Beaufort Research will be collecting the following additional personal information:

- Name
- Full postal address (which is added to the dataset once contact is made)
- Email address
- Date of birth
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Health and illness, including height and weight, and whether pregnant

Interviews may be observed or recorded solely for training and monitoring purposes by research team members from Verian, from Beaufort Research, and/or from Welsh Government. Verian and Beaufort Research may make brief follow-up phone calls to a small proportion of respondents to verify that the interview was conducted correctly. Respondents may choose to opt out of receiving a quality check phone call.

As part of the interview respondents are asked if they would be willing to take

part in further research by the Welsh Government, Sport Wales, Natural Resources Wales or Arts Council Wales. If you agree to take part in recontact research then your details will be retained for three years. Your details will be held by the Welsh Government and only passed on to either Sport Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Arts Council Wales where they are undertaking any further research.

As part of the interview respondents are asked whether they would like to receive a copy of the survey results. If you wish to receive survey results these will be provided once the survey year is concluded and the results are published. Your details will be deleted within a month of the publication of the results.

Survey respondents are offered a voucher as a thank-you for taking part in the survey. If you choose for the voucher to be sent to you by email, then this will be sent out by Verian. If you would like a postal voucher, then Verian and Beaufort Research will record your details and pass your name and postal address securely to Greens Digital, who send out the vouchers. Greens Digital will only use your details to send you the voucher and will not share your details with anyone else. They will securely delete your details within one month of issuing the voucher. Greens Digital will hold your information securely.

If you raise a query or complaint through Verian or Beaufort Research and provide personal data requesting a response, the researcher will forward the request only to the relevant official and subsequently delete it within one year of being resolved. Any queries or complaints will not form part of the research data at any point. If you raise a complaint directly with Welsh Government, any personal information you provide in relation to the complaint will be handled as described in the [Welsh Government privacy notice](#).

Your answers to the survey are linked anonymously to other data sources as part of the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank for non-commercial research purposes (unless you ask for this linkage to not take place).

The SAIL Databank is a collection of anonymised data about the population of Wales, which is internationally recognised for the robust secure storage and use of anonymised person-based data for research to improve health, well-being and services. Respondents are able to opt out of having their answers linked. For more information on how to do that or on the process of data linking, please visit [National Survey for Wales – Data linking](#).

Anonymised survey data is also made available via the UK Data Service for research projects carried out by accredited researchers such as academics and NHS researchers. The anonymised survey data is held securely and is only ever used for non-commercial research purposes. We do not share or use your information for commercial or marketing purposes.

Anonymised survey data is also shared with Public Health Wales for non-commercial research projects. Public Health Wales holds the data securely and does not share or use your information for other purposes.

## What is the lawful basis for using your information?

The lawful basis for processing National Survey information is our public task; that is, our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government. Some of the information we collect on the survey is called 'special category data' (information about ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and health) and the lawful basis for processing this information is that it is for statistical or research purposes.

Participation is completely voluntary. However, research studies such as this are important because they enable us to make decisions based on sound evidence.

The information collected in the survey is, for example, used to help understand

things like:

- how satisfied people are with their local area, and about issues in their local area;
- how we can help people who are not using the internet to get access and to feel confident using it; and
- whether people find it easy to make appointments at the GP surgery, and if not then what particular barriers we need to tackle.

## How secure is your personal data?

Personal information provided to Verian and Beaufort Research is always stored on a secure server. The data can only be accessed by a limited number of researchers working on this project. Verian and Beaufort Research will only use this data for research purposes. Verian is accredited as meeting ISO27001 and conducts external penetration testing and Beaufort Research is accredited as meeting Cyber Essentials Plus standards.

When conducting surveys and for you to register your interest in taking part, Verian and Beaufort Research use a survey software programme called Forsta Plus to collect data including survey responses and contact information. We have ensured that Forsta Plus is UK GDPR compliant and meets our expectations in terms of the security of any data collected via the software.

Verian subcontract some data processing and preparation to a separate company, BMR. Your personal data, with name and contact information removed, may be processed by BMR. BMR will work within Verian's secure virtual environment, so that no data will be transferred to BMR.

Verian, Beaufort Research, BMR, and Greens Digital have procedures to deal with any suspected data security breaches. If a suspected breach occurs that

affects your information, Verian or Beaufort Research will report this to the Welsh Government who will notify you and any applicable regulator where we are legally required to do so.

Any personal data provided to Welsh Government is held on secure servers, and for this project a folder has been created that has access restricted only to the National Survey research team. Your contact details and any other directly identifiable data you provide will be stored in this restricted folder, separately from the survey datasets. The information collected will only be used for research purposes and to draw conclusions about the general population, not at the level of individual people.

The survey results are reported on in an anonymised form. Reports will not contain any information that makes individuals identifiable. Reports are published at [www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales](http://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales).

Anonymised survey data is made available to researchers via the UK Data Service. Officially-recognised researchers, such as academics and NHS researchers, and other public sector bodies in Wales may also request access to data not available through the UK Data Service. These requests are scrutinised by the Welsh Government's Chief Social Research Officer and – if approved – are governed by Data Access Agreements issued by the Welsh Government. These formal agreements set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

Where the Welsh Government or its survey partners, Sport Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Arts Council Wales undertake follow up research in support of the purposes outlined above, this work may be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company), who would receive contact details for anyone selected for the research who has agreed to be contacted about further research. Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's and its partners' standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the

processing and safekeeping of personal data.

## How long do we keep your personal data?

Verian and Beaufort Research will hold personal data during the contract period, and will delete any personal data, including your contact details, according to the following schedule:

- any recordings of interviews used as part of training will be deleted within 90 days of the interview taking place, and will be used solely for quality assurance purposes by the research team.
- personal data stored in the Forsta Plus systems is deleted within one month of data delivery to the Welsh Government.
- personal information relating to a complaint to Verian or Beaufort Research is deleted within one year of the complaint being resolved.
- any remaining data are deleted within six months of the dataset sign-off.

The main survey fieldwork period runs from April each year to the following March. Sign-off of the dataset takes place within six months of the end of the fieldwork period with data delivery to the Welsh Government by June.

Where you choose to receive a postal voucher, the voucher supply company Greens Digital will hold your contact details post-interview to send this to you and will delete your contact details within one month of voucher dispatch.

Verian will provide Welsh Government with the full dataset including the data listed above, as well as contact information for those respondents who have agreed to be re-contacted and/or wish to receive survey results. The survey results are kept separate from the list of contacts for recontact research or requiring a copy of the results (and these are two separate lists even if you agreed to both). The Welsh Government will delete identifiable information in the

following manner:

- for the survey results the Welsh Government will delete your name and date of birth within three years of dataset sign-off. The resulting pseudo-anonymised dataset containing some of the information listed above, but no identifying information will be retained within the survey results after this date.
- where you agreed to be recontacted the Welsh Government will delete your name, telephone number, postal address, email address and date of birth from the separated recontact list within three years of dataset sign-off.
- where you asked for a copy of the survey results the Welsh Government will delete your contact information from the separated list of those wish to receive the results within a month of the publication of the results

Personal information relating to a complaint to Welsh Government will be handled as described in the [Welsh Government privacy notice](#).

Digital Health and Care Wales also have access to some of the personal data, including name, postal address, sex and date of birth, for a period of three months, solely to allow data linking with the Secure Anonymised Information Linkage (SAIL) databank at Swansea University.

## Individual rights

Under UK GDPR, in relation to the personal information you provide as part of this survey you have the following rights:

- To access a copy of your own data;
- For us to rectify inaccuracies in that data;
- To object to or restrict processing (in certain circumstances);
- For your data to be 'erased' (in certain circumstances); and

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- To lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is the independent regulator for data protection.

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113

Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)

## Further information

If you have any further questions about how the data provided as part of this study will be used by the Welsh Government or wish to exercise your rights using the UK General Data Protection Regulation, please contact:

The National Survey team

E-mail address: [surveys@gov.wales](mailto:surveys@gov.wales)

Telephone number: 0300 025 2021

The Welsh Government's Data Protection Officer can be contacted at:

Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

Email: [DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales).

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