



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

Review of Welsh Government equality data sources and outputs

Review of equalities data to improve understanding of existing sources and outputs.

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Introduction

This article summarises findings from a review of equalities data undertaken to improve understanding of existing sources and outputs. The review focussed on data sources and statistical outputs that:

- are held by or produced by the Welsh Government
- include information on protected characteristics as listed in the [Equality Act 2010 \(UK government\)](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights) (<https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights>)

Main findings

The main purpose of publishing this review is to improve the accessibility and availability of information on equalities data and evidence in Wales. The spreadsheet published alongside this article provides information on key equality data sources and statistical outputs collected and held by Welsh Government. In this section we have summarised some common themes emerging from the review.

The most collected and published equality characteristics were age, sex and gender, ethnicity and disability. Religion, marital status and sexual orientation were less common. Pregnancy and maternity and gender identity/gender reassignment were not collected often and rarely included in outputs.

The use of the terms sex and gender were not always clearly differentiated. There are cases where the question wording and guidance aligns with the definition of sex but is labelled as gender and the reverse. There are also likely cases where guidance is not followed, and sex information is provided for questions asking about gender and the reverse. [The Office for Statistics Regulation has published guidance on sex and gender identity for use in](#)

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official statistics (<https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/news/osr-publishes-new-guidance-collecting-and-reporting-data-about-sex-and-gender-identity-in-official-statistics/>). The word used in the data collection is what has been used for this review.

Most data collected on disabled people and impairments used language aligned with the medical model of disability. The medical model of disability defines people as disabled by their impairment. However, the Welsh Government is committed to using the **social model of disability (Disability Wales)** (<https://www.disabilitywales.org/social-model/>). This sets out a different way to consider disability – rather than defining people as disabled by their impairment, people with impairments are disabled by physical, attitudinal, and organisational barriers created by society. There were also limited statistical outputs which provided information on peoples type of impairment. The topic area with the most comprehensive detailed impairment information in statistical outputs was Education.

Protected characteristic information is often published in less granular detail (or not at all) than it is collected in. This is generally due to small sample sizes in survey data or issues with data confidentiality for small numbers of people in administrative data. For similar reasons, published outputs often report protected characteristics individually rather than report multiple protected characteristics at the same time.

Background

The Welsh Government's Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units (Evidence Units) were established in 2022 to improve evidence for individuals with protected and associated characteristics. This includes improving the availability, quality, granularity and accessibility of evidence. Improving evidence will enable decision makers to develop better policies and measure policy

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impacts.

There is a longstanding appreciation and awareness of gaps in the equalities evidence base. However, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its subsequent impacts further highlighted the need for strengthened evidence to address inequality in Wales. **Some high priority gaps are already being addressed by the Evidence Units and more information on these projects can be found on our website** (<https://www.gov.wales/equality-race-and-disability-evidence-units>).

This review aims to systematically identify where there are gaps across the evidence base and help identify potential further improvements in the collection, reporting and use of protected characteristic data. It will also help inform and shape the Evidence Units' future programme of work.

How we collected the information

The review involved Welsh Government analysts providing information on the relevant data sources and statistical outputs in their topic area. To prepare for publication the information was assessed and edited to:

- make it consistent across teams / topic areas
- update information to Autumn 2024
- ensure the information covered was within scope

The review did not include data or outputs where they had been discontinued for a long period of time or there was limited information on equality characteristics.

Data sources were included if they were owned by the Welsh Government or used extensively for analysis and statistical outputs by the Welsh Government. The quality and coverage of the protected characteristic information collected

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varies between data sources. Where available, links to more detailed documentation and quality information on data sources have been included in the spreadsheet. **For information on data sources held by other government departments please see the Office for National Statistics Equalities Data Audit** (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/datasets/inequalitiesdataaudit>).

Statistical outputs were included if they were produced by the Welsh Government. Where multiple different output formats are produced (for example: **StatsWales** (<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue>) tables, Excel files, written reports) the review summarises the information available across all output formats.

Each data source and statistical output was discussed and reviewed with the relevant topic expert as part of the quality assurance process. This process means we are confident in the accuracy of the review. However, incorrect or incomplete information may be included due to:

- accidental edits during the completion of other rows and formatting for publication
- changes to data sources and statistical outputs after Autumn 2024
- highly complex data sources and statistical outputs which are difficult to summarise accurately
- some in scope data sources and statistical outputs being omitted in error

We will correct any errors that are identified in accordance with the **Welsh Government's statement on statistics and research revisions, errors and postponements** (<https://www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research-statement-revisions-errors-and-postponements>).

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Next steps

The Welsh Government will use this review of data sources and outputs to help inform and shape the Evidence Units' future prioritisation and planning work. The Evidence Units will continue to engage closely with stakeholders to better understand user needs and work towards improving the availability and granularity of equalities data in Wales.

We welcome any feedback on this review or suggestions on how equalities data could be improved in Wales to support your needs. Please send questions, feedback or suggestions to this email address:

equalityevidenceunit@gov.wales

(<https://www.gov.walesmailto:equalityevidenceunit@gov.wales>)

Notes on the use of statistical articles

Statistical articles generally relate to one-off analyses for which there are no updates planned, at least in the short-term, and serve to make such analyses available to a wider audience than might otherwise be the case. They are mainly used to publish analyses that are exploratory in some way, for example:

- introducing a new experimental series of data
- a partial analysis of an issue which provides a useful starting point for further research but that nevertheless is a useful analysis in its own right
- drawing attention to research undertaken by other organisations, either commissioned by the Welsh Government or otherwise, where it is useful to highlight the conclusions, or to build further upon the research
- an analysis where the results may not be of as high quality as those in our routine statistical releases and bulletins, but where meaningful conclusions can still be drawn from the results

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Where quality is an issue, this may arise in one or more of the following ways:

- being unable to accurately specify the timeframe used (as can be the case when using an administrative source)
- the quality of the data source or data used
- other specified reasons

However, the level of quality will be such that it does not significantly impact upon the conclusions. For example, the exact timeframe may not be central to the conclusions that can be drawn, or it is the order of magnitude of the results, rather than the exact results, that are of interest to the audience.

The analysis presented does not constitute an official statistic, but may be based on official statistics outputs, and we have applied the principles of the Code of Practice for Statistics as far as possible during development. An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in the analysis will be included in the article, for example comparisons with other sources, along with guidance on how the analysis might be used, and a description of the methodology applied.

Articles are subject to the release practices as defined by the [release practices protocol](https://www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research-release-practices-protocol) (<https://www.gov.wales/statistics-and-research-release-practices-protocol>), and so, for example, are published on a pre-announced date in the same way as other statistical outputs.

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