

Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee

Minutes of meeting held on 12 October 2023

Via Zoom

Attendees

Annie	Campbell	AC	Welsh Government
Lee	Clarke	LC	Cardiff County Council
Rachel	Clegg	RC	Carmarthenshire County Council
Janine	Edwards	JE	North Wales Regional Partnership Board
Lloyd	Fisher	LF	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Stephanie	Harries	SH	Welsh Government
Mari	Hopkins	MH	Ceredigion Council
Eleri	James	EJ	Welsh Language Commissioner
Paul	Jones	PJ	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Luned	Jones	LJ	Welsh Government
Helen	Jones	HJ	Senedd Research
Steve	King	SK	City and County of Swansea
Steve	King	Ski	Sport Wales
Geraint	Morgan	GM	Powys County Council
Lesley	Rees	LR	Carmarthenshire County Council
Elaine	Smith	ES	Wrexham County Borough Council
Sam	Sullivan	SS	Data Cymru
Glyn	Wells	GW	Welsh Government
Alwyn	Williams	AW	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Andy	Wilson	AnW	Torfaen County Borough Council
Sian-Elin	Wyatt	SW	Office for National Statistics
Nia	Wyn Vaughan	NWV	Cyngor Gwynedd

Speakers

Orlaith	Fraser	OF	Office for National Statistics
James	Harris	JH	Office for National Statistics
Stephanie	Howarth	SH (Chair)	Welsh Government
Nia	Jones	NJ	Welsh Government
Sue	Leak	SL	Welsh Government
John	Morris	JM	Welsh Government
Martin	Parry	MP	Welsh Government

Minute takers

Ciaran	Lewis	CL	Welsh Government
Michelle	Turner	MT	Welsh Government

Apologies

Gwyneth	Ayers	Carmarthenshire County Council
Phillip	Barlow	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Sioned	Cardew-Richardson	Estyn
Chris	Clarke	Torfaen County Borough Council
Shaun	Davies	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Brett	Davis	South Wales Police
Vicki	Doyle	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Karen	Hawkes	Denbighshire County Council
Leanne	John	Swansea Council
Nathan	Lester	Public Health Wales
Steven	Marshall	Welsh Government
Eifion	Rees	Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Helena	Snuggs	Sport Wales
Caitlin	Theodorou	Ceredigion County Council
Neil	Townsend	Office for National Statistics
Iwan	Wyn Jones	Gwynedd Council

1	Welcome, Introduction and Apologies – Stephanie Howarth, Welsh Government	Actions
	<p>SH welcomed everyone. She introduced Sian-Elin Wyatt as the new devolved liaison officer for Wales in the ONS Local team.</p> <p>The quota for simultaneous translation has been met and was provided.</p>	
2	Note of last meeting, update on action points, Statistics Wales quarterly update, demography update and Data Cymru update – Stephanie Howarth, Welsh Government	
	<p>Note of last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No comments were raised on the notes of last meeting. <p>Update on action points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The progress made on the actions from last meeting was discussed. - three out of five fully completed. <p>Statistics Wales quarterly update: SH drew attention to a number of sections of the update regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The annual Wellbeing of Wales report, and the ethnicity sub-report 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent Labour Market findings, noting that a blog was published in September about interpreting labour market statistics for Wales - School statistics, noting the recent publication of data on secondary school absenteeism which could be compared with pre-pandemic levels - The first National Survey results from 2022-23 were published in July. <p>Statistics Wales demography update: Mid-year estimates for 2020 have been delayed by ONS until late November.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ONS released plans for National Population Projections. - The impact of the delay to population estimates and the timetable for projections was discussed, including the impact on local wellbeing assessments and the local government settlement. Advice should be given on how to use and interpret the 2018-based projections. <p>Data Cymru update: SS presented an update from Data Cymru:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vale of Glamorgan. Satisfaction survey – partnered to make a survey across councils in Wales. - Training guides – four guides are now publicly available on the website. - Local area profile dashboard is now available. There are plans to keep developing this so please give feedback. - New training courses include: Data 101, and Understanding and Using Performance Data. 	
3	Consultation on population statistics – Stephanie Howarth, Sue Leake and Martin Parry, Welsh Government	
	<p>MP provided information regarding the ONS consultation on future of population and migration statistics, noting the following key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation closes in two weeks – 26 October 2023. - Aimed at all users, voluntary sector, academia etc. - Aim to put admin data at core of population statistics. - Responses will be used to inform the UK Statistics Authority’s recommendation on future approaches. Ministers in both the Welsh and UK Government will respond to the recommendation. - To help users understand and complete the consultation, the ONS will be running two further webinars in October. - MP provided a summary of the key features of the Welsh Government’s planned response to the consultation. <p>Discussion Members were invited to give their views on the proposals, on the Welsh Government’s planned response and on their own organisational responses to the consultation.</p> <p>Points raised included;</p>	<p>Members to feedback where relevant on the Welsh Government’s planned consultation response and, if happy to, share their organisation’s response.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of small area data: The new methods may result in the loss of finely detailed data from the Census, making it difficult to model data at small geographic levels and identify very small populations. - Detailed characteristics and the multivariate nature of the Census: concerned that the ability to capture data about the same people at the same time across the entire country may be compromised. This is used for impact assessments. - Reliance on administrative data: There's a concern that the new approaches prioritise using existing data rather than collecting the specific information needed. ONS will not have the same degree of influence over data quality and standards compared to directly collected data. - The importance and complexity of data protection. 	
4	Transformed labour force survey – James Harris, Office for National Statistics	
	<p>JH and OF presented the slides for the transformation of the UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) and Annual Population Survey (APS) through 2023; slides available online.</p> <p>The presentation included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussed topics covered by the survey. - Outlined objectives of transformation. - Discussed redevelopment of questionnaire. - Discussed implementation of adaptive survey design - Progress through 2023 was provided with regards to response returns, developing performance, and the transformation timeline. - Expected changes for the remainder of 2023 were provided. - The following topics also discussed: progressing analysis, evaluation, review, and what users of the data can expect to receive, during and post transformation. - Ongoing engagement in the coming months was outlined. - Any questions or comments, including specific data needs, can be sent via email: Labour.Market.Transformation@ons.gov.uk <p>Discussion</p> <p>SS asked for recap on drivers for the transformation, to which OF said that main driver is to make it more sustainable, by going online, to ensure it is easier to fill out, and attracts a larger sample size. This should deliver higher quality, more flexible and responsive data.</p> <p>SH asked for advice for colleagues who use the LFS in the meantime, given falling response rates and increased volatility in the data. OF said the LFS will still be released until the transformation has been completed, and quality notes will be provided with the data, with the aim that the transformation should address the issues with quality.</p>	

	MP asked about the implications for APS users outside of labour force stats., as the Welsh language quarterly releases draw from APS. OF affirmed that the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TFLS) will replace both the APS and the LFS.	
5	Current and future plans on WIMD – Nia Jones, Welsh Government	
	<p>NJ provided an update on current and future plans on WIMD. Slides available online.</p> <p>The following links were provided to relevant resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WIMD 2019 list of outputs - An update on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (Digital and Data blog) - Data Science projects: identifying and describing clusters of deprivation (Digital and Data blog) <p>Discussion</p> <p>JE noted that the primary care cluster geographies had been revised and asked for clarification as to whether the work that used these was completed prior to the revision. NJ confirmed that it was. SH suggested an action to review the WIMD outputs that would be affected by this revision of the primary care cluster geographies.</p>	Review work that is affected by the revision of primary care cluster geographies.
6	Statistical geographies update – John Morris, Welsh Government	
	<p>JM provided an update regarding statistical geographies and creating names for the new set of lower super output areas (LSOAs).</p> <p>JM began by discussing plans to update the international territorial levels (ITL) in 2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The time for the review of ITLs is approaching so there are plans to make them more useful for users. - A recap was provided of the current ITL geographies and the population thresholds required. - A proposal for new ITL2 areas was outlined which would align more closely with Wales' economic regions. As Mid-Wales does not reach the population threshold for an ITL2, it is proposed to merge it with South West Wales. - For ITL3 updates, options were presented regarding how to consider Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend. The options could be to either split them on a local authority level or along health board boundaries. <p>Discussion</p> <p>GM asked how Powys would change as its population is below the 150k threshold for ITL3. JM answered that if it already exists as an ITL area then it can be left as it is.</p>	JM to issue the spreadsheet with LSOA names methodology to local authorities and other relevant members. Members to provide feedback.

	<p>JE asked what the geographies are to be used for. JM responded that the benefits and changes might be more visible with specific statistics. ITL regions are regularly used in economic statistics, for example.</p> <p>SK commented on issues affecting Swansea, where Swansea aligns with NPT for health, but on economic development they also join with Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. JE added that Public Service Board areas could also be considered as alternative geographies.</p> <p>JM then moved on to presenting the amendments to the naming methodology for LSOAs, which had been updated since the previous meeting following difficulties in applying the method that was proposed at the last WSLC meeting where this was discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DataMapWales was used to demonstrate how the naming methodology works by utilising existing electoral wards (EW). - Where LSOA boundaries are within EW boundaries, they will take the latter's name, but where an LSOA is split between EWs, then they will take both names. Where a LSOA has numerous EWs inside its boundaries, then their names are appended together. This can lead to large LSOA names, which may not be useful to data users. In these circumstances in particular, we would benefit from local insight on the best name. - JM will provide the spreadsheets that they've used in order to garner feedback on the naming conventions. - JM also stated that when the names are decided, it will be put to the translation service within Welsh Government, and we would engage with the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office prior to formal adoption. <p>Discussion</p> <p>JE stated if there are more than three wards, then the name ends up being too long. JM affirmed that he's asking for input on the naming methodology for long LSOA names. SH said that local input will be required for the more complex areas or where there has been a lot of change.</p> <p>NV asked if Welsh and English names are needed for LSOAs with only the Welsh name. JM suggested that the process should be same as that for EW naming, whereby the English name is the same as the Welsh name.</p> <p>GM asked whether local authorities could consult with external stakeholders, SH responded that local authorities were welcome to do this if they chose to.</p> <p>The primary care clusters work was also discussed as the development of the LSOA to clusters is led by JM's team.</p>	
7	AOB	

	<p>SW: ONS Local is holding various webinars which may be of interest to members. The ONS Local Eventbrite page allows access to all previous recordings.</p> <p>AC made members aware that work is underway on a method for calculating excess deaths and mortality.</p>	
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	Actions	Member(s)
1	Members to feedback where relevant on the Welsh Government's planned consultation response and, if happy to, share their organisation's response.	All
2	A review of WIMD outputs that cover primary care clusters to be undertaken in light of the revisions to primary care cluster geographies.	Craig Thomas / Nia Jones
3	JM to issue the spreadsheet with LSOA names methodology to local authorities and other relevant members. Members to provide feedback.	John Morris