

Welsh Economic Statistics User Group: Minutes of meeting

Thursday 14 March 2024, 14:00 – 16:00

Attendees			
James	Carey	JC	Welsh Government (Employability and Skills)
Ciaran	Downey	CD	Welsh Government
Debbie	Hudd	DH	Welsh Government (Transport)
Guto	Ifan	GI	Welsh Governance Centre
Martin	Jennings	MJ	Senedd
Luned	Jones	LJ	Welsh Government (KAS)
Melanie	Jones	MeJ	Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University
Steve	King	SK	City and County of Swansea
Sue	Leake	SL	Welsh Government (KAS)
Darryn	Lewis	DL	Welsh Government
Katy	Marrin	KM	Welsh Government
Cerys	Ponting	CP	Welsh Government (KAS)
Julian	Revell	JR	Welsh Government (Treasury)
Sam	Sullivan	SS	Data Cymru
Megan	Williams	MW	Welsh Government
Sian-Elin	Wyatt	SEW	ONS
Speakers			
Steph	Howarth	SH	Welsh Government (KAS)
Joe	Jenkins	JJ	ONS
Alan	Felstead	AF	Cardiff University
Linta	Mathew	LM	Welsh Government (Business and Regions)
Mel	Brown	MB	Welsh Government (KAS)
David	Swarts	DS	Transport for Wales
Sam	Willson	SW	Transport for Wales
Alex	Fitzpatrick	AFi	Welsh Government (KAS)
Minute Takers			
Emma	Horncastle	EH	Welsh Government (KAS)
Apologies			
Rhys	Ap Gwilym	Bangor University	
Max	Munday	Cardiff Business School, Cardiff University	
Tom	Nicholls	Welsh Government (Treasury)	
Neil	Paull	Welsh Government (Treasury)	
Sian	Price	Development Bank Wales	
Jack	Price	Wales Centre for Public Policy	
Becky	Tinsley	ONS	

Summary of Action Points from the last meeting	
WG fill out one consultation as a whole and the deadline for this is 26 October 2023 so please respond asap.	Deadline has passed, no further action required
The discussion process is well underway for the newest WG IOT, please contact inputoutputtables@gov.wales if you have any questions or suggestions.	No further action required
Contact Labour.market.transformationn@ons.gov.uk if you have any questions or want more updates or details on the labour market survey.	No further action required

1	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies – Steph Howarth, Welsh Government	Actions
	<p>SH welcomed everyone.</p> <p>This meeting's theme was transport, travel to work and remote working.</p> <p>Simultaneous translation was not provided as the ten percent quota was not met.</p>	
2	Census 2021 Travel to Work data – Joe Jenkins, ONS	
	<p>JJ provided an overview of the Census 2021 Travel to Work data covering guidance on using the data, quality issues and future developments.</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Census 2021 took place during the third lockdown in England, which affected people's working behaviours and travel patterns. - The travel to work data should be used with caution as it may not reflect usual or post-pandemic behaviours and may have quality issues relating to furlough and home working. - ONS is developing new methods to estimate annual origin-destination matrices using a variety of data sources and in the future will be looking to use anonymised mobile phone data to improve these models. 	

3	Conceptualising and measuring the location of work – Alan Felstead, Cardiff University	
<p>AF gave a presentation discussing the conceptual and methodological issues of measuring the location of work.</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workplaces and homes have traditionally been separate, but with the pandemic there has been a rise in home, hybrid, and remote working. - The work-home overlap is the key distinction affecting the challenges of work-life balance, management, and inequality. - Nuances between different types of home working can be missed in surveys and result in imprecision about where paid work is actually carried out. <p>AF also provided links to additional articles and resources that discuss these issues in greater depth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A flash in the pan or a permanent change? The growth of homeworking during the pandemic and its effect on employee productivity in the UK - Outlining the contours of the 'Great Homeworking Experiment' and its implications for Wales - Remote Working: A Research Overview - 1st Edition - Alan Felstead <p>AF referenced the questions asked on the National Survey for Wales and would welcome the opportunity to discuss further.</p> <p>This talk is also available as a longer write up, please contact alanfelstead@cf.ac.uk if you would like a copy.</p>		<p>LJ to put AF in contact with the National Survey for Wales team.</p>
4	Hybrid working summary from literature review – Linta Mathew, Welsh Government	
<p>LM gave a presentation covering hybrid working and looked at global trends, UK headline statistics, and the benefits and barriers for different groups and sectors.</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A global study of over 27 countries found that remote working increased during the pandemic, but the value of remote working varied substantially across different groups. - In the UK and Wales, homeworking figures more than doubled over the pandemic, but homeworking wasn't taken up by all industries. - Benefits of homeworking included improved well-being, wider recruitment, and reduced commuting. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues of home working included productivity, management, and inequality. <p>Discussion</p> <p>SH asked if there was any future work planned to keep this review up to date, LM responded that they will be waiting for a period of time to see how the landscape changes before updating.</p>	
<p>5 Rail station usage data – Mel Brown, Welsh Government</p>	
<p>MB provided a presentation on the most recent rail station usage data.</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data is produced by the Office for Rail and Road and can be accessed through a Welsh Government statistical bulletin, an interactive dashboard or the Office for Rail and Road website. - Rail station usage data is based on ticket sales so doesn't capture all journey types, and there is no information on the purpose of travel or route taken. - Rail station usage was increasing over the long-term until the pandemic when it sharply declined. Rail station usage in Wales has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. <p>Discussion</p> <p>CD recalls previously seeing data on the purpose of travel for the UK and wondered if anything similar was available for Wales, MB responded that this is likely not available due to a gap caused by the years Wales was not covered by the Travel Survey.</p> <p>SH queried whether Wales had a lower share of trainlines and stations as an explanation for why Wales has a lower level of entries and exits relative to its population share. MB was unable to confirm but believes this is likely true.</p>	
<p>6 Development of new National Travel Survey for Wales – David Swarts and Sam Willson, Transport for Wales</p>	
<p>DS and SW gave a presentation providing an update on the current development progress of the new National Travel Survey for Wales.</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wales was last included in the Department for Transport's National Travel Survey back in 2012, so there's a 12-year data gap for Wales. - The new National Travel Survey for Wales (NTSW) aims to provide data that can be used to inform transport policy, feed into regional transport models, 	

<p>and provide data for a new Active Travel Monitoring Framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The NTSW will be a web-first survey, with the option of face-to-face and telephone participation and will sample up to two adults (16+) per household. - There will be two pilots for the survey, a web-only pilot followed by a dress rehearsal. - The full questionnaire will be shared when the web-only pilot starts. <p>Discussion</p> <p>AF asked what contingencies were available if response rates were not high enough. DS responded that they were currently in unknown territory but are hoping to gain intelligence from the initial web pilot and can then start to consider the options available to boost the response rate if required.</p> <p>JR confirmed how important the data will be in analysing public spending in Wales as quality data sources are hard to come by for this area.</p> <p>SH asked if very short journeys under 1 mile will be included in the new survey as they were excluded from previous travel surveys. SW confirmed that the minimum walking journey threshold will be 5 minutes in length, or approximately 300 metres so shorter journeys will be included.</p> <p>Additional queries or feedback on the development of the survey can be sent to travelsurvey@tfw.wales.</p>	
<p>7 Update on Labour Force Survey and TLFS – Alex Fitzpatrick, Welsh Government</p>	
<p>AFi provided an update on the current situation of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the longer-term plan.</p> <p>Key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Chief Statistician's blog was published in September covering the challenges currently being faced by the LFS. An update on improvements made was published in February. - ONS have implemented various interventions including re-weighting the data, re-starting face-to-face interviews, and boosting the sample size. - It is recommended to use LFS data alongside other data sources such as the Annual Population Survey, Workforce Jobs, Claimant Counts, and HMRC's real time information from the Pay As You Earn database. - The data for Wales has been re-weighted from July to September 2022, resulting in a step-change in the data and a discontinuity in the time series. - The Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) is planned to be the main measure for the UK and Wales labour market. 	<p>AFi to follow up with ONS on the status of the remote working questions in the TLFS.</p> <p>AFi to put AF in contact with ONS.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The TLFS is an online-first survey that asks more people about their employment status and covers a range of topics. - The ONS plans to publish indicative TLFS estimates in July, with it becoming the main source of information from September. <p>Discussion</p> <p>AF asked about the remote working questions from the LFS that haven't made it across to the TLFS and how much involvement Welsh Government has had in developing the questions. Afi confirmed that they are working closely with ONS on the development of the TLFS to ensure our needs are met, but the focus is currently on the headline indicators.</p> <p>MeJ questioned how the change in sample size would affect the local LFS in the APS. Afi confirmed that the quarterly data will improve for Wales and that the sample sizes at the lower geographies are currently looking good and in theory should only improve.</p>	
<p>8 Any other business / Close</p>	
<p>If anyone has any suggestions for the theme for the next meeting, please get in touch.</p> <p>We will be putting together a feedback survey to review how this group has been working and how we can ensure it continues to be relevant.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Welsh Economic Statistics User Group 26 September 2023 Summary of Action Points</p>		
1	LJ to put AF in contact with the National Survey for Wales team.	Luned Jones
2	AFi to follow up with ONS on the status of the remote working questions in the TLFS.	Alex Fitzpatrick
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