



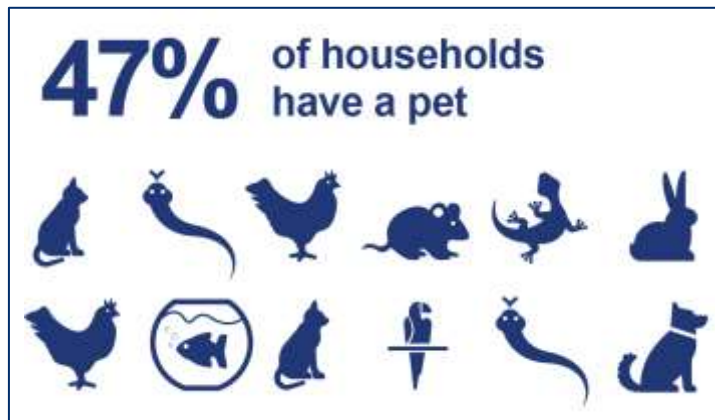
National Survey for Wales 2014-15 Pet welfare

19 January 2017
SB 1/2017

Questions on pet welfare were included in the National Survey to provide further evidence to support policy development. Respondents were asked about which pets they owned, whether their pet was insured, and if they had a dog, whether it had been microchipped.

Key findings

- 47% of households owned a pet. Of these households, 62% owned dogs, and 39% owned cats. 14% owned fish and 6% owned birds.
- Pet dogs were most commonly purchased from a private seller (36%); the most common place for households to get a pet cat was from friends and neighbours (38%).
- Overall 78% of dogs acquired in the past five years were microchipped (81% in non-materially deprived households and 67% in materially deprived households).
- Household material deprivation was found to be the key factor determining whether a dog had been microchipped or insured.
- 46% of dogs and 21% of cats were insured. 50% of horses were insured.



The National Survey for Wales covers a wide variety of topics affecting people and their local area. The headline results from the 2014-15 survey, based on over 14,000 face-to-face interviews, were first published in June 2015. An expanded version of the National Survey began in 2016 covering similar topics as well as a selection of topics from four other surveys that it has replaced. The first results from the new survey will be published in June 2017.

About this bulletin

This bulletin provides more detailed analysis of the results for the questions on **pet welfare** which were included in the National Survey for Wales in 2014-15.

The full questionnaire is available on the [National Survey web pages](#).

Additional tables can be accessed via [StatsWales](#).

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Introduction

The [Animal Welfare Act 2006](#) came into force in 2007. It relates to the welfare of farmed and non-farmed animals, introducing a duty of care on owners and keepers of pets, farm and captive wild animals. Since the implementation of this Act, the Welsh Government has developed policies designed to further promote animal welfare and responsible ownership. The information arising from this survey has helped to provide timely information to the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework Group (established in July 2015), which provides advice to ministers and officials on protected animals.

The Welsh Government has [codes of practice](#) for the welfare of cats, dogs, horses and rabbits. Legislation was introduced on [dog breeding](#) in 2015 and in April 2016, the Welsh Government, together with the rest of the United Kingdom, introduced a policy of [compulsory microchipping for dogs](#). This imposes a duty on every keeper of a dog (over 8 weeks old) to have their dog microchipped and to have that information recorded on a database.

The National Survey questions on pet welfare were introduced to provide information on pet ownership, pet insurance, and the prevalence of dog microchipping. This bulletin sets out the results from the survey.

The full [questionnaire](#) with questions on pet welfare, as well as on the other National Survey topics, can be found on the [National Survey for Wales web pages](#). Additional tables can be accessed via [StatsWales](#). More information about the survey methodology, and definitions of terms used in the bulletin, can be found in the [Key Quality Information](#) section at the end of this bulletin.

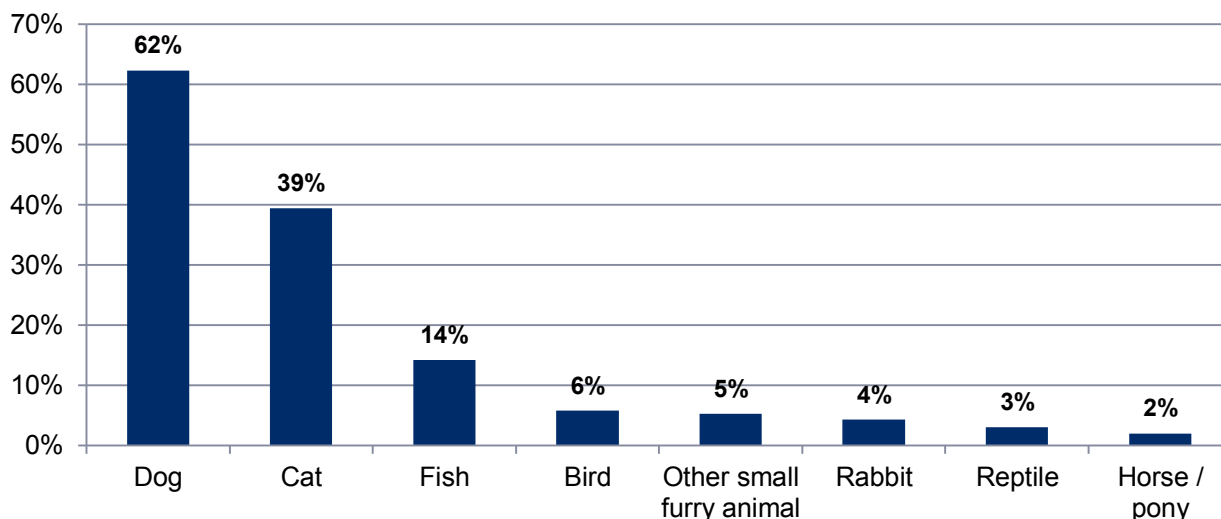
Pet welfare

The 2014-15 National Survey for Wales included questions that specifically considered pets owned by the respondent's household. People were asked whether they owned a pet, and what types of pet they owned. Those who had a pet were asked further questions on where they got the pet from, and whether the pet was insured. Owners of pet dogs were asked whether the dog was microchipped.

Pet ownership

47% of households owned a pet. This is an increase from when the same question was asked in the 2009-10 National Survey for Wales pilot, where 44% of households were found to own pets. National Survey respondents who had a pet in their household were then asked which pets they owned. The results, displayed in Chart 1, show that dogs and cats were the most commonly owned pets, owned by 62% and 39% of pet-owners respectively.

Chart 1: Proportion of pet-owning households, by type of pet



- (a) Percentages do not add to 100% as respondents were able to select more than one answer.
 (b) 'Primate' and 'other' have been removed from the chart due to small numbers.

If a pet was acquired in the past 5 years, people were asked where they got the pet from. Chart 2 shows that the most common place to acquire a cat was from friends, family, or neighbours (38%), whereas the most common place to acquire a dog was from a private seller (36%). There was a difference in the number of stray cats and dogs taken in as pets: 16% of cats had previously been stray animals, compared with less than 1% of dogs.

Chart 2: Source of pet dogs and cats

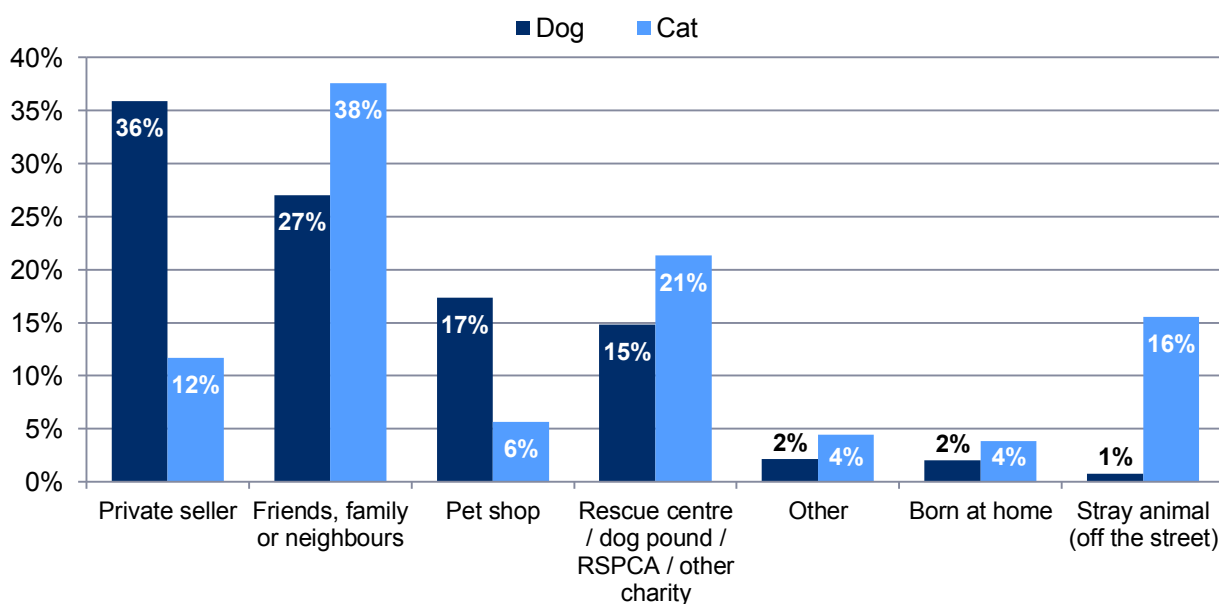
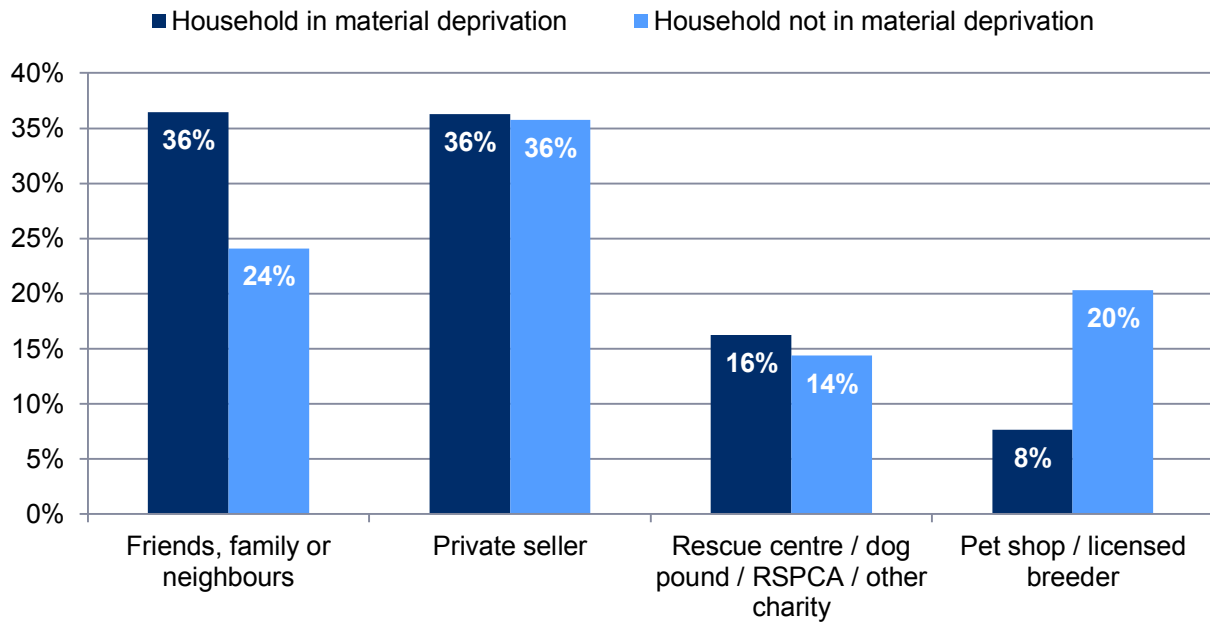


Chart 3 shows that households in material deprivation were more likely to get their pet dog from friends, family or neighbours compared with households that are not materially deprived (36% compared with 24%). A higher proportion of non-deprived households acquired their dog from a pet shop or licensed breeder (20% compared with 8% of materially deprived households).

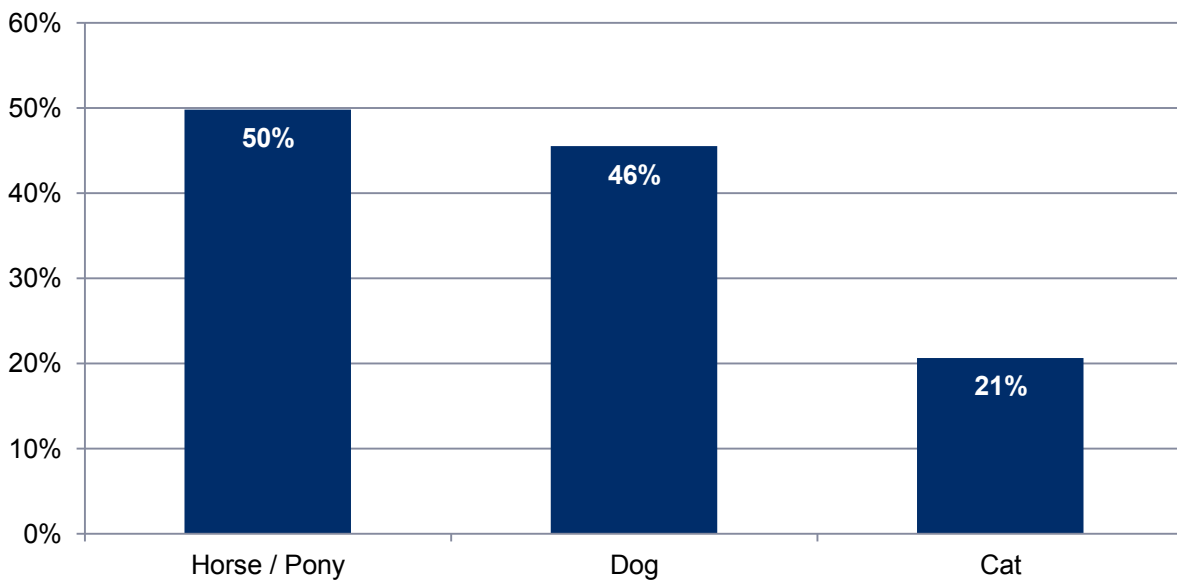
Chart 3: Source of pet dogs, by household material deprivation



Pet insurance

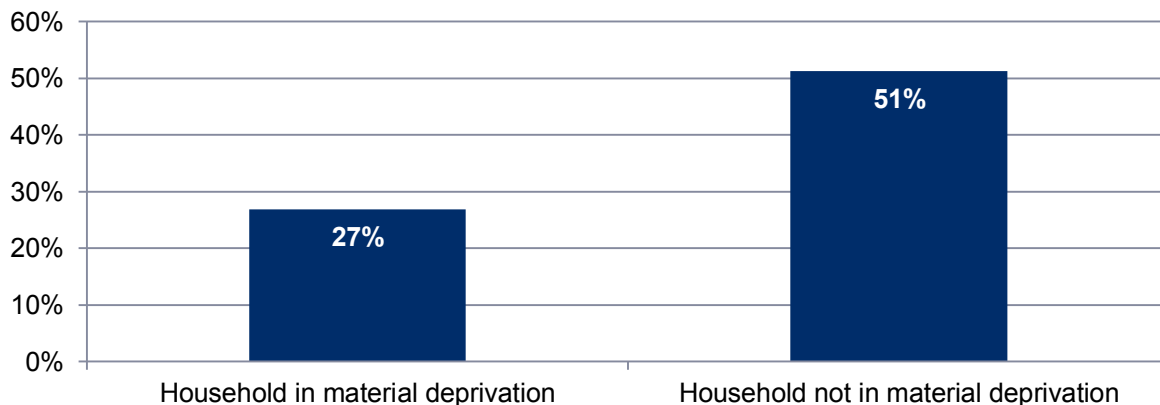
As shown in Chart 4, horses and dogs were the most likely pets to be insured. Roughly half of these types of pet were insured, compared with only 21% of cats.

Chart 4: Proportion of pet cats, dogs, and horses that are insured



The percentage of pet dogs that were insured differed significantly between households that were in material deprivation, and those that were not. Chart 5 shows that for non-materially deprived households, over half of the pet dogs were insured, compared with 27% of pet dogs in materially deprived households.

Chart 5: Proportion of pet dogs insured, by material deprivation

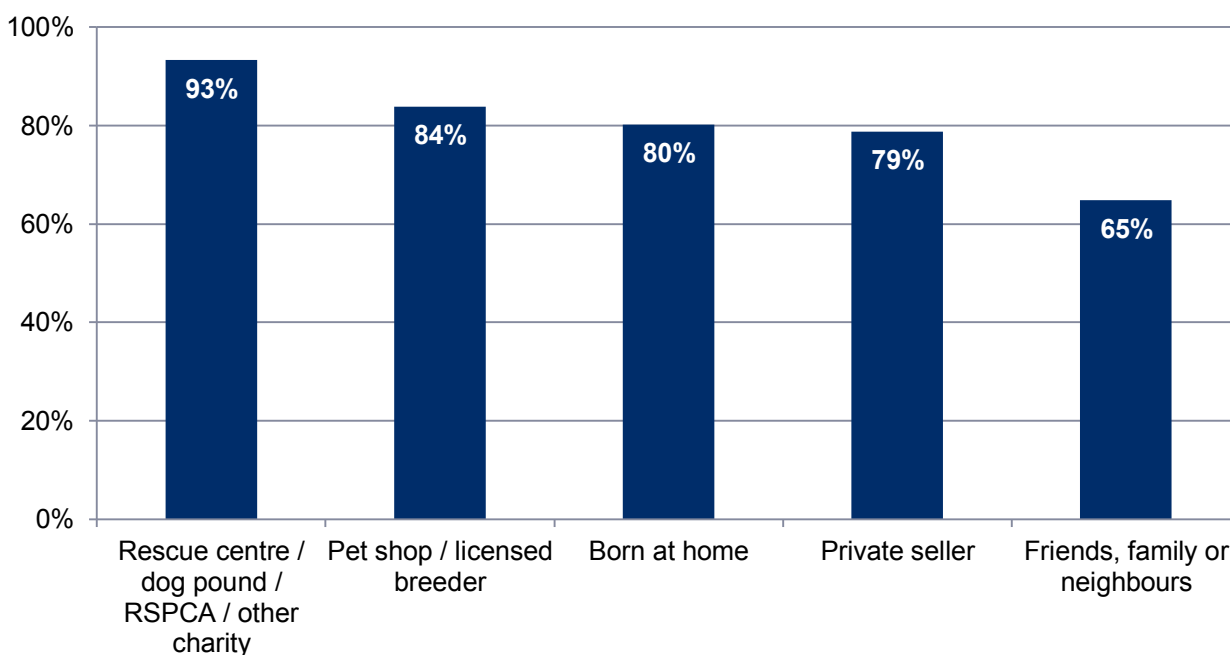


Dog microchipping

The survey findings cover dog ownership from 2010 to 2015. Compulsory microchipping was introduced in April 2016 outside the timeline of this survey. The survey results therefore provide useful baseline information against which to measure the effects of making microchipping compulsory.

The National Survey results show that 78% of dogs acquired between 2010 and 2015 were microchipped. This varied depending on where the dog had been acquired from, as shown in Chart 6.

Chart 6: Dog microchipping, by source of acquiring a pet dog



A higher proportion of dogs acquired from pet shops, licensed breeders and rescue centres were microchipped, as they are usually microchipped before sale.

As with insurance, the percentage of dogs microchipped differed depending on whether a household was in material deprivation. 67% of dogs belonging to materially deprived households were microchipped, compared with 81% of dogs belonging to non-materially deprived households. This difference is possibly due to the fact that households in material deprivation were more likely to get their dogs from friends or family and less likely to get them from a pet shop or licensed breeder (where microchipping is carried out more routinely).

More in-depth analysis was carried out to explore the relationship between levels of take-up of insurance and microchipping for pet dogs and to discover whether other factors might be involved. The method used allowed us to look at the effect of one factor while keeping other factors constant (sometimes called “controlling for other factors”).¹

Factors including tenure, age group, gender, general health, satisfaction with life, where the dog was acquired and measures of deprivation were considered. After controlling for these other factors, household material deprivation was found to be the key factor in a dog not being microchipped or insured, rather than other factors such as the respondent’s health or age. Where the dog was acquired was also a significant indicator of whether the pet was microchipped or insured.

¹ This method is known as logistic regression. More information about the method can be found in [Key quality information](#)

Terms and definitions

Household

A household is defined as one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping – that is, sharing a living room or sitting room or at least one meal a day.

Material deprivation

Material deprivation is a measure which is designed to capture the consequences of long-term poverty on households, rather than short-term financial strain.

Respondents were asked questions on whether their household was able to afford a series of things like: keep the house warm enough, make regular savings, or have a holiday once a year.

The material deprivation score is calculated so that a person who can afford everything, has a score of 0 and a person who wants but doesn't have any of the items asked about has a score of 100. A higher score is given to households lacking those items that most households already have. Those with a score of 25 or more are classed as 'materially deprived'. The full list of questions asked can be found on page 80 of the [2014-15 questionnaire](#).

Key quality information

Background

The National Survey for Wales 2012-15 was carried out by TNS-BMRB and Beaufort Research on behalf of the Welsh Government. The results reported in this bulletin are based on interviews completed in 2014-15 (1 April 2014 – 12 April 2015 (fieldwork was extended slightly beyond the one year mark, in order to increase the achieved sample size).

Each year approximately 25,000 addresses were chosen randomly from the Royal Mail's Small User Postcode Address File. Interviewers visited each address, randomly selected one adult (aged 16+) in the household, and carried out a 25-minute face-to-face interview with them, which asked for their opinions on a wide range of issues affecting them and their local area. A total of 14,285 interviews were achieved in 2014-15. Analysis included in this bulletin was based on 3,200 respondents who had a pet in their household.

Interpreting the results

Percentages quoted in this bulletin are based on only those respondents who provided an answer to the relevant question. Missing answers occur for several reasons, including refusal or an inability to answer a particular question and cases where the question is not applicable to the respondent.

Where a relationship has been found between two factors, this does not mean it is a causal relationship. More detailed analysis is required to identify whether one factor causes change in another.

Checks are in place to ensure the quoted figures are the most up-to-date figures available at the time of publication.

The results of the National Survey are weighted to compensate for unequal selection probabilities and differential non-response (i.e. to ensure that the age and sex distribution of the final dataset matches that of the Welsh population).

Quality of the data

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

Further information is available - [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Quality report

A summary [quality report](#) is available, containing more detailed information on the quality of the survey as well as a summary of the methods used to compile the results.

Sampling variability

Estimates from the National Survey are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Part of the uncertainty comes from the fact that any randomly-selected sample of the population will give slightly different results from the results that would be obtained if the whole population was surveyed. This is known as sampling error.² Confidence intervals can be used as a guide to the size of the sampling error. These intervals are calculated around a survey estimate and give a range within which the true value is likely to fall. In 95% of survey samples, the 95% confidence interval will contain the 'true' figure for the whole population (that is, the figure we would get if the survey covered the entire population). In general, the smaller the sample size the wider the confidence interval. Confidence intervals are included in the tables of survey results published on [StatsWales](#).

As with any survey, the National Survey is also subject to a range of other sources of error: for example, due to non-response; because respondents may not interpret the questions as intended or may not answer accurately; and because errors may be introduced as the survey data is processed. These kinds of error are known as non-sampling error, and are discussed further in the [quality report](#) for the survey.

Significant differences

Where the text of this release notes a difference between two National Survey results (in the same year), we have checked to ensure that the confidence intervals for the two results do not overlap. This suggests that the difference is statistically significant (but as noted above, is not as rigorous as carrying out a formal statistical test), i.e. that there is less than a 5% (1 in 20) chance of obtaining these results if there is no difference between the same two groups in the wider population.

Checking to see whether two confidence intervals overlap is less likely than a formal statistical test to lead to conclusions that there are real differences between groups. That is, it is more likely to lead to "false negatives": incorrect conclusions that there is no real difference when in fact there is a difference. It is also less likely to lead to "false positives": incorrect conclusions that there **is** a difference when there is in fact none. Carrying out many comparisons increases the chance of finding false positives. Therefore, when many comparisons are made the conservative nature of the test is an advantage because it reduces (but does not eliminate) this chance.

Where National Survey results are compared with results from other sources, we have not checked that confidence intervals do not overlap.

² Sampling error is discussed in more detail in the [Quality Report](#) for the National Survey.

Regression analysis

There are different types of regression analysis that are used for different purposes. The type used here is called binary logistic regression. This is the regression technique most commonly used for survey data.

We used logistic regression to isolate the specific effects of individual factors (such as material deprivation and tenure) on a particular outcome (whether pet dog is microchipped). It allows us to look at the effect of each factor separately while keeping constant a range of other factors.

Using the statistical model that was produced, we were then able to explore the link between each factor and whether dog was microchipped, by adjusting the values in the statistical model for each respondent. This is sometimes known as average marginal effect. The results provide an indication of which characteristics/situations have the strongest influence on the original question (e.g. whether dog is microchipped) when all other factors within the model are held constant. More details about how we did the analysis are available on request.

Technical report

More detailed information on the survey methodology is set out in the [technical report](#) for the survey.

Revisions

[More information on our revisions policy.](#)

Release policy

Information about the process for releasing new results is available from the [Welsh Government's statistics web pages](#).

Availability of datasets

The data behind the charts and tables in this release are published in spreadsheets on [StatsWales](#). An anonymised version of the annual datasets (from which some information is removed to ensure confidentiality is preserved), together with supporting documentation, has been deposited with the [UK Data Archive](#). For more information, please contact us (see below).

Further uses of the results

The results will be used extensively by Welsh Government policy teams, but they are also relevant to a wide range of other external organisations and individuals.

Next update

Not a regular output.

Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?tab=current&lang=en>

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to

surveys@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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