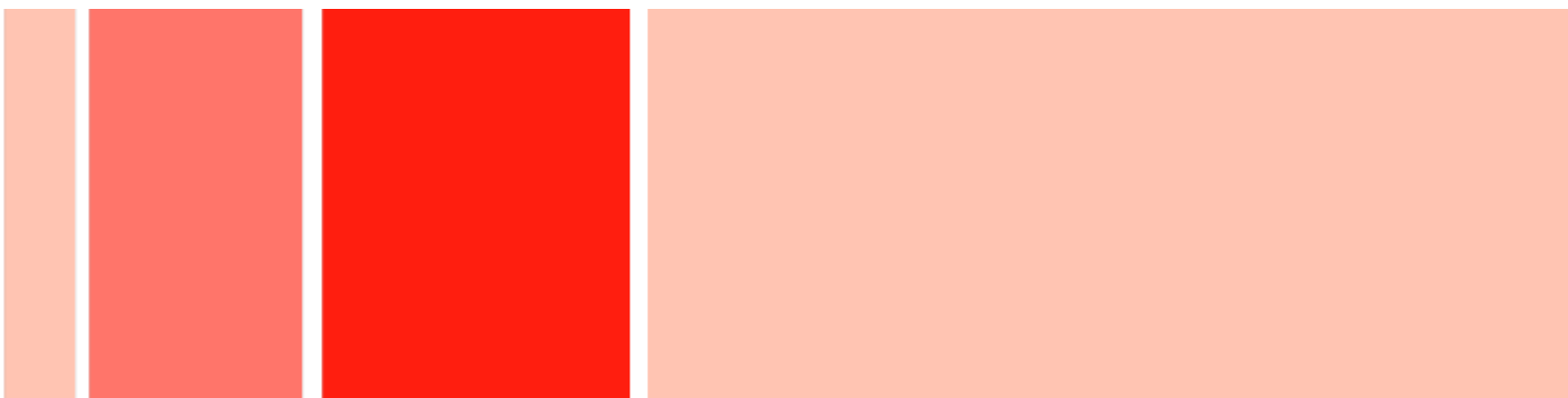


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Review of equality data in the National Survey for Wales



Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

Review of equality data in the National Survey for Wales

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Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Glossary

APS: Annual Population Survey

ArWAP: Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

Disability: Disability is defined by the Equality Act (2010) which is informed by the medical model of disability and defines people as disabled by their impairment. Welsh Government has adopted the social model of disability which views people with impairments as disabled by physical, attitudinal, and organisational barriers created by society.

Ethnic minority people: This is the shortened term for 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people' and both are the preferred terms following discussions with the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan Steering Group in the development of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

Evidence Units: The Equality, Race, and Disability Evidence Units

Gender: Gender is a term used to refer to someone's sense of themselves which can include female, male or non-binary. Someone's gender does not always align with the sex they were assigned at birth. This term can also be used in the context of gender expression or gender identity.

GSS: Government Statistical Service

IDTF: Inclusive Data Taskforce

Impairment: Impairment is an injury, illness, mental or physical health condition, neurodivergence, use of British Sign Language, a characteristic or feature someone experiences. It may or may not be lifelong and they may or may not arise from illness or injury. They may affect a person's appearance and/or the way they function or communicate, and/or they may cause a range of difficulties including pain and fatigue.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is the combined effect of multiple forms of oppression that result from belonging to multiple stigmatised groups, and how they interplay and are interconnected. For example, disabled women may face different forms of discrimination and disadvantage compared to disabled men.

LGBTQ+: LGBTQ+ refers to lesbian, gay, bisexual/bi, transgender/trans people, queer or questioning. The + (plus) in the acronym is used as a shorthand to include and acknowledge other diverse terms people identify with and use to describe their identities and orientations, including intersex, asexual and aromantic people.

National Survey: National Survey for Wales

Othering: Othering is a 'set of dynamics, processes, and structures that create marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full human differences based on group identities' and therefore results in marginalisation and prejudice on the basis of someone's identity.

ONS: Office for National Statistics

Sex: This refers to the binary variable categorised as female and male. In the United Kingdom, an individual's legal sex is recorded at birth based on examination of physical characteristics by a medical professional. Some people's gender does not always align with the sex they were assigned at birth nor their biological characteristics.

Introduction and background

Policy context

One of the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is 'A More Equal Wales: A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances' (Welsh Government, 2024). Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Welsh Government must review its National Equality Objectives every four years (UK Government, 2010). These were updated in March 2024 and provide the foundation for our work to eliminate inequality, promote equality, and foster good relations between people. The current Programme for Government in Wales has made a commitment to 'maximise fairness for all and eliminate inequality at every level of society' (Welsh Government, 2022). To determine whether the Welsh Government is succeeding in these commitments, evidence is needed on a range of measures that can then be broken down by protected characteristics and associated characteristics.

The Equality Act (2010) sets out nine protected characteristics which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation (UK Government, 2010). The Equality Evidence Unit, Race Disparity Evidence Unit and Disability Disparity Evidence Units Strategy notes the importance of a range of 'associated characteristics' that may also relate to disadvantages people experience across Wales such as socio-economic background and status (Welsh Government, 2022). Through gathering evidence by protected and associated characteristics and undertaking analysis to greater granularity, the Welsh Government will gain a clearer picture of whether policies are having the desired impact across a range of equality groups.

The need for equality evidence in Wales was highlighted in three key reports since 2019:

- The "Deeds not Words" Gender Review Report (Welsh Government, 2019) which recommended the establishment of an Equality Evidence Unit,
- the First Minister's Black, Asian and minority ethnic socio-economic subgroup report (Welsh Government, 2020) which recommended the establishment of a Race Disparity Evidence Unit,

- the Locked Out – liberating disabled people’s lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19 (Welsh Government, 2021) which called for the establishment of a Disability Disparity Evidence Unit.

Each report made specific recommendations to improve the evidence base across equality groups as well as to establish distinct Evidence Units to support policymakers on the collection, analysis, reporting and use of equality evidence.

In January 2022, the Welsh Government established three distinct Evidence Units: Equality Evidence Unit, Race Disparity Evidence Unit and Disability Disparity Evidence Unit (Evidence Units), each with their own evidence programme and lead. The Evidence Units work together with an overarching Evidence Strategy to ensure synergy, effectiveness, efficiency, and cohesion.

The mission and work of the Evidence Units coincides with the various action plans that the Welsh Government have developed including the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (Welsh Government, 2022) and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales (Welsh Government, 2023). In order to evaluate the progress and impact of these plans towards A More Equal Wales, better granular data is needed. The data and evidence gaps in Wales and need for better, disaggregated and consistent data was highlighted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in the “Is Wales Fairer?” report (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2023). In the report they state that these issues around data quality mean it is difficult to examine intersectionality in depth across protected and associated characteristics.

The mission of the Evidence Units is to improve the availability, quality, granularity, and accessibility of evidence about individuals with protected and associated characteristics to fully understand the level and types of inequalities across Wales. The Evidence Units identified the need to review the suitability of the current equalities data available in the National Survey for Wales (National Survey) as it is one of the main Wales-only surveys.

National Survey for Wales

The National Survey (Welsh Government, 2023) is the primary social survey commissioned by the Welsh Government across people aged 16 and over in Wales. It aims to capture information needed to support policy decisions so that the results can make a positive difference to life in Wales. The survey covers a wide range of topics including education, exercise, health, social care, internet use, community

cohesion, well-being, employment, and finances. The topics change regularly to keep up with evolving policy needs for information.

The survey is designed and overseen by a small team in Welsh Government. It began in 2012 and from 2016 was combined with the Wales Outdoor Recreation Survey, Arts in Wales Survey, Active Adults Survey, and the Welsh Health Survey. Survey fieldwork was carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) between 2016 and 2023. A new contract was awarded to Verian from 2023 onwards, and to allow enough time for the survey to be set up with the new contractor, no fieldwork was carried out during 2023-24. The next year of survey results, covering April 2024 to March 2025, is expected to be released in July 2025.

Up until March 2020, the survey was carried out face-to-face (CAPI), which included a computer aided self-interview (CASI) section, with the overall interview lasting 45 minutes on average and sampling around 12,000 people each year. In March 2020, due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, face-to-face interviewing was suspended, and the survey was re-designed to be carried out by telephone from May 2020 onwards. In 2021 to 22 the survey continued to be carried out over the phone, albeit at a slightly shorter length (35 minutes) than the previous face-to-face survey. As this resulted in several limitations such as a reduction in content and issues around the ability to ask sensitive questions designed for self-completion, an online trial was carried out from July 2021 to March 2022 with a random subsample of 2,000 telephone respondents.

Respondents in the online trial were asked to complete the standard telephone questionnaire, followed by an extra online questionnaire which covered more sensitive topics better suited to self-completion. The online trial ran successfully, and the online questionnaire was rolled out to all respondents for 2022-23. The 2024-25 survey still consisted of a telephone interview with an online follow-up section, along with visits to nonresponding addresses. However, for addresses that are visited, the option was added for an in-home face to face interview.

The range of topics covered within each survey year varies in order to meet a wide variety of policy needs. There are Core questions which are fixed and repeated each year and mainly cover demographics and household composition questions.

Questions used to measure progress against Future Generation indicators are asked regularly, with most being included every other survey year. All other topics are included on an ad-hoc basis and are included in a variety of formats: some are only

asked for one year, part of a year, of a small subsample, over two years, or alternate years. These patterns of inclusion are a result of cost, policy need, and to keep the interview length manageable and not too burdensome for respondents. Large-scale social surveys typically find it easier to achieve response from some groups than others (e.g. heterosexual compared to LGBTQ+), and those same issues are reflected in the National Survey achieved sample.

The National Survey captures information needed for 16 of the Well-being of Future Generations National Indicators. These National Indicators are used to measure how well Wales is meeting its commitments set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (Welsh Government, 2022). This includes measuring progress towards the 7 well-being goals set out in the Act:

- a prosperous Wales
- a resilient Wales
- a healthier Wales
- a more equal Wales
- a Wales of more cohesive communities
- a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- a globally responsible Wales.

Not all questions that are used for reporting against National Indicators are asked of the whole sample, with some asked of a sub-sample. The survey years in which each National Indicator has been asked are listed in annex D.

All the Equality Action Plans require equality considerations to be incorporated into all aspects of Welsh Government policy making and delivery. Analysis of the National Indicators by a wider range of protected characteristics and to a greater granularity is therefore important if Wales is to understand if it is achieving its goal of A More Equal Wales. In turn, this is needed to assess if Wales is achieving its visions of the Advancing Gender Equality Action Plan (Welsh Government, 2020), Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan and the forthcoming Disability Rights Action Plan (Hutt, J., 2023).

Sample sizes in surveys are not always sufficiently large to report on by protected characteristics, and often minority groups have to be collapsed into high-level groups to be able to report results (see for example, section 3.31 on Ethnicity). This reflects

the population makeup of Wales. Aggregating minority groups could potentially hide differences that exist between people within distinct groups and therefore does not provide a detailed picture on inequalities for these groups.

As the National Survey is one of the main sources for collecting data on the National Indicators, there is a need to present breakdowns by equality groups to highlight inequalities that exist. The need for granular equality data within the National Survey is especially important for policy areas who do not (or are not able to) fund separate research and evidence, therefore relying upon the National Survey for evidence.

Inclusive Data Taskforce

In October 2020, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) National Statistician formed the Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF) with the goal of ensuring evidence across the UK is reflective and inclusive of everyone. A recommendation report 'Leaving no one behind. How can we be more inclusive in our data?' (UK Statistics Authority, 2021) was published in July 2021 with 8 key recommendations (UK Statistics Authority, 2021):

- create an environment of trust and trustworthiness,
- take a collaborative whole system approach to improve the UK data infrastructure,
- ensure groups are robustly captured,
- ensure that sufficient data are available for robust and reliable disaggregation and intersectional analysis,
- ensure that concepts are appropriate and clear,
- broaden the range of methods and create new approaches to understand everyone's experiences,
- review harmonised standards regularly adapting to evolving social norms and needs,
- ensure UK data and evidence are equally accessible to all.

If fully implemented, ONS state these recommendations will 'help to bring about the needed step-change in the inclusivity of UK data and evidence'. Following this, an implementation plan (UK Statistics Authority, 2022) was developed in January 2022 with initiatives planned across the UK statistical system including the Government Statistical Service (GSS) harmonisation workplan (Government Statistical Service, 2022). Many of the GSS harmonised standards developed from the workplan will be

discussed in this report in relation to questions on protected and associated characteristics in the National Survey. These questions have been amended throughout the years in the National Survey to align with harmonised standards (where appropriate to meeting user needs in Wales).

Aims and objectives

This project has aimed to:

- assess to what extent the National Survey is representative of, and could be used to measure, survey results for equality groups in Wales; and
- make recommendations on how to improve the quality and granularity of equality data collected in future iterations of this survey.

The main objectives of the research were to:

- consider the usefulness of the National Survey in its current form for reporting on equality groups in Wales,
- conduct analysis to determine the extent to which pooling the National Survey for Wales data over several years is beneficial when analysing data from an equalities perspective.

Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- chapter two summarises the methodology;
- chapter three discusses how the National Survey captures equality characteristics with a section covering each protected characteristic: age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (national identity and ethnicity), religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation. There is also a section covering socio-economic status. Data for each characteristic is explored in order to compare the coverage of protected and associated characteristics in the National Survey to the Census;
- chapter four summarises the findings on whether pooled analysis undertaken on four National Indicators that are captured within the National Survey can be useful for understanding survey results for equality groups;
- chapter five provides the conclusions and recommendations following the review of equality data in the National Survey for Wales.

Method

Survey questions review

A review of the survey questions was carried out to assess the extent to which the National Survey can be used to measure results for equality groups in Wales. This included reviewing what is included in the survey as a whole and whether it captures the experiences of those from specific equality groups in enough detail for useful breakdowns.

The questions in the National Survey which measure protected characteristics were reviewed to assess if they effectively capture the groups within which people identify and to inform how they might be developed to better understand experiences of those from equality groups in Wales.

A review of the achieved sample size obtained for protected characteristic questions was undertaken, to better understand the precision of analysis by equalities groups. Comparisons were made with Census 2021 data for Wales to estimate how representative the survey is and consider the usefulness in its current form for equality groups in Wales.

Pooled data analysis

The second part of the analysis consisted of pooling four years of National Survey data (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020) to establish the extent to which pooling data is beneficial when analysing survey results from an equality perspective. The data was pooled to increase the sample size, improve precision of estimates and to determine the extent to which pooling adds value to analysis from an equality perspective.

Pooling four years of survey data increased the underlying sample size for analysis from approximately 12,000 respondents to 46,000. It is not possible to combine more than four years of data because of the changes to survey mode during and after the pandemic. Therefore, this is the maximum number of survey years that can currently be pooled.

A selection of National Indicators was analysed by each characteristic to explore whether acceptably precise figures could be produced for the groups of interest. The data were broken down along two different dimensions. Firstly, by the number of years of pooled data and secondly, by precision of equality data for each subgroup.

Analysis was carried out on the following four National Indicators measured by the National Survey:

- 1) The percentage of adults who have two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours (no. 03),
- 2) The percentage of adults living in households in material deprivation (no.19),
- 3) The percentage of adults who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh (no. 36),
- 4) The percentage of adults participating in sporting activities three or more times a week (no. 38).

These National Indicators were chosen for analysis because the questions which are used to derive them were asked in all four survey years (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020), giving the largest possible pooled sample base. There are other National Indicators measured by the National Survey, but because data is not collected every year these were not included in the scope of the analysis. Although data for the National Indicators analysed here is usually reported on annually, there are gaps in evidence for the 2020 to 2021 survey year due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on survey design. For example, in 2020 to 2021 information on material deprivation and healthy lifestyle behaviours was not collected, and for Welsh language and participation in sporting activities the results are based on a more limited sample size than for other years.

Analysis is carried out, where possible, by equality characteristics including those that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The characteristics analysed include age, ethnicity, marital and civil partnership status, household type, pregnancy, religion, sex, sexual orientation and whether a person is disabled or not. Proportions are estimated using probability sample weights included within the National Survey dataset. The sample weights account for oversampling of certain groups in the population and for stratified sampling by the 22 local authority areas in Wales.

Estimates are presented alongside sample sizes and 95% confidence intervals are reported to illustrate the level of imprecision in the central estimates. Confidence intervals give a range within which the 'true' value for the population is likely to fall. There is a 1 in 20 (5%) chance that the 95% confidence interval does not contain the true value. The wider the confidence interval, the less precise an estimate is. In the analysis below, confidence intervals are shown as error bars on the charts.

Estimates with wider confidence intervals are less precise. As a rough guide to interpretation: when comparing two groups, if the confidence intervals (error margins) around the estimates overlap, then it can be assumed that there is no statistically significant difference between the estimates. If they do not overlap, then there is likely to be a statistically significant difference. Larger error margins reduce usability of the estimates because it becomes more difficult to identify whether there is a real difference between groups (one that is not just due to sampling error).

In addition, as data is broken down into more granular groups, sample sizes become smaller and sometimes need to be suppressed. Estimates in National Survey publications are usually suppressed where the sample size for a cell is under 30 because the confidence intervals around these results would be very large. For more information on confidence intervals and measurement error please refer to the National Survey: Quality report (Welsh Government, 2024).

The analysis shows how the level of uncertainty associated with estimates changes as the number of years of data being pooled together increases and as the data is disaggregated into a larger number of categories (becomes more granular). By conducting this analysis, it is possible to see how usable and useful the equality data is.

Households in material deprivation

Material Deprivation is a National Indicator reviewed within this report. The percentage of adults living in households in material deprivation is calculated from the National Survey data using a standard set of questions that are asked every year. Everyone in the sample is asked a selection of questions from either the non-pensioner or pensioner material deprivation modules. The questions are designed to identify those who cannot afford particular goods and activities that are typical in society at a given point in time. As well as publishing the responses to the individual questions, the National Survey also combines the responses into a derived binary variable where respondents are categorised as being either 'in material deprivation' or 'not in material deprivation'.

Adults with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours

The five healthy behaviours included are:

- not smoking
- not drinking above weekly guidelines (includes not drinking)

- eating five or more portions of fruit and vegetables the previous day
- being physically active for at least 150 minutes the previous week
- maintaining a healthy weight or body mass index

Questions on healthy lifestyle behaviours were asked of about half the survey sample on all survey years except 2016 to 2017 (when these questions were asked of the whole sample). This analysis explores the impact of pooling and follows on from additional pooled analysis of adult lifestyle behaviours by disability, ethnic group, marital status, religion and sexual orientation published in 2023 (Welsh Government, 2023).

Note that the National Indicator prior to 2021 to 2021 to 22 was reported as adults with fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours, but the measure presented here is consistent with the current indicator: adults with two or more healthy behaviours.

Adults using Welsh language in everyday life

This National Indicator is derived from National Survey questions which are asked annually of the whole sample. There are two elements to this indicator. Firstly, respondents are asked whether they can speak Welsh, and then about their ability to speak Welsh:

1. Fluent in Welsh
2. Can speak a fair amount of Welsh
3. Can only speak a little Welsh
4. Can just say a few words

Those who respond with one of the first three options are recorded as being able to speak more than a few words in Welsh.

Secondly, respondents are asked whether they speak Welsh 'daily', 'weekly', 'less often', or 'never'. If they speak Welsh 'daily', and they speak 'more than a few words of Welsh' (as given by the definition above), they are recorded as a person who speaks Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words.

Adults participating in sporting activities three or more times a week

This indicator measures the percentage of adults who report taking part in any outdoor or indoor sporting activity, and the frequency of their participation. The

questions that are used to measure this indicator are asked annually of the whole sample.

Limitations of this project

Review and Census comparison

The desk-based review did not consider existing academic literature or review grey literature to assess whether the harmonised standards capture what they intend to. The review also did not contain an independent assessment of the harmonised standards or compare the harmonised standards to what other administrations use to collect equality data.

Comparisons between unweighted 2021 to 2022 National Survey data and Census 2021 data for Wales on the proportion of adults by equality characteristic provides some insight into how representative the National Survey is of the Welsh population when breaking down by high-level equality groups. Though the time periods for the 2021 to 2022 National Survey and the 2021 Census fieldwork coincided, care must be taken when making such inferences because the data is based on different time periods and is therefore not directly comparable. Within this report, the Census 2021 data is treated as accurate, however despite the larger sample size, limitations will still exist within this method. It must also be noted that sample weights are used in National Survey estimates to account for oversampling at a Local Authority level. Weights are used so that the weighted sample reflects the broad population characteristics in each Local Authority.

Although self-report is often the most effective method of collecting protected characteristic data, there are still issues around self-report data such as participants misunderstanding questions or response bias that can lead to under or over reporting in certain categories and could be the case within the National Survey. The ability to capture any small population groups in a random-sample social survey is limited also, especially when smaller numbers of people are being asked.

Pooled analysis

The pooled analysis covered only the four National Indicators that are based on questions asked every year from 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020. This means the analysis does not identify or explore additional challenges regarding equality analysis that may exist for other National Indicators or variables. For example, some variables

are based on questions that are not asked every year or are only asked of a small sub-section of the total sample.

The pooled analysis uses data from pre-pandemic survey years and does not necessarily reflect recent trends. It was not possible to combine data that spans across the Covid-19 pandemic due to changes in survey mode during and after the pandemic. The pooled data focuses on the capability of 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data in providing acceptably precise equality breakdowns and does not explore the sampling method or options for increasing or boosting the sample. Pooling data over time can assume that there has been no underlying change across the period, or that it is acceptable to mask that change so this should be explored further in future research.

It was not possible to explore impairment type within the scope of the analysis. This was because a variable for impairment type would have been complicated to derive with no established, quality-assured method to create aggregate categories from the write-in responses. It was also not possible to derive a variable on 'migrant status' because this relies on information on a respondent's country of birth which has not been collected in the National Survey since 2014-15. Both of these need further exploration in future research.

Survey review: How protected characteristic and associated characteristic information is collected and how it compares to Census 2021 data for Wales

This chapter details how the National Survey collects data on different equality groups in Wales. It lists the questions and response options included in the 2022-23 survey. The questions are compared with the harmonised standards, or any alternatives, and the chapter considers whether the questions effectively meet any additional requirements e.g., following legal definitions or Welsh Government commitments. Weighted proportions by equality characteristics are compared against the proportions by equality characteristics in Census 2021 data for Wales.

Much of the analysis included in this chapter requires grouping small sub-groups together to be able to analyse the data for each aggregated equality group. Although this approach increases the sample size to allow for more detailed analysis, it limits the ability to understand the differences and inequalities that exist within the aggregated group.

Protected characteristics

Age

The National Survey captures the age of individuals by asking:

‘What is [your/Name’s] date of birth?’

If this is refused, the survey then asks respondents:

‘What was [your/Name’s] age at [your/his/her] last birthday?’

If this is also refused, then interviewers are asked to give their best estimate.

Respondents are then aggregated into various age category groupings for reporting purposes. The most detailed age breakdown included in the dataset is seven age categories (16 to 24; 25 to 34; 35 to 44; 45 to 54; 55 to 64; 65 to 74; and 75 and over), although exact age is captured so that any age groupings can be derived. The pooled analysis of National Indicator data by protected characteristics detailed in Chapter 3 uses the seven-age grouping.

The most frequently used age grouping is the five age groups of 16 to 24, 25 to 44, 45 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 and over. Table 1 shows that the proportion of 2021 to 22 National Survey respondents in age groups 25 to 44, 45 to 64, and 75 and over were

broadly comparable with the age group populations seen in Census 2021 data for Wales. However, the proportion of respondents aged 16 to 24 was notably lower than in the 2021 Census and the proportion aged 65 to 74 was notably higher.

Table 1: Percentage of people aged 16 and over by age group, comparing unweighted National Survey 2021 to 22 data with Census for Wales 2021 data

Age group	National Survey 2021 to 22	Census 2021 (Wales)
16 to 24	4%	13%
25 to 44	23%	29%
45 to 64	34%	32%
65 to 74	22%	14%
75 and over	16%	12%

Description of Table 1

Table 1 shows that the proportion of adults aged 16 and over in age groups 25 to 44, 45 to 64 and 75 and over were broadly similar according to unweighted 2021 to 22 National Survey and Census 2021 data for Wales. In 2021 to 22, 4% of National Survey respondents were aged 16 to 24 compared with 13% in the 2021 Census. Whereas 22% of National Survey respondents were aged 65-74 compared to 14% in the 2021 Census.

Source: National Survey for Wales, Census for Wales 2021

Notes:

1: 2021 to 22 National Survey sample size is 12,580

Disability

The approach used in the National Survey to collect data on disabled people is closely aligned with the Equality Act (2010) (UK Government, 2021) definition of ‘disability’. By this definition, people who self-assess their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This is informed by the medical model of disability (Scope, 2024) which defines people as disabled by their impairment. In 2002 the Welsh Government adopted the social model of disability (Welsh Government, 2022). This model sets out a different way to view disabled people – rather than defining people as disabled by their impairment, people with impairments are disabled by physical, attitudinal and

organisational barriers created by society (Disability Wales, 2024). The language used in this report, where possible, aligns with the social model of disability.

The National Survey asks respondents a series of questions that are informed by two recommended analytical function harmonised standards, the Long-lasting health conditions and illness harmonised standard (Government Analysis Function, 2020), and the Activity restriction harmonised standard (Government Analysis Function, 2020).

The activity restriction harmonised standard (Government Analysis Function, 2020) is not aligned with the social model of disability as it focuses on the condition being the reason a person is disabled. The long-lasting health condition and illness harmonised standard may be aligned with the social model, but only when it is paired with a question that captures the social, environment, or attitudinal barriers as well. Another limitation of the long-lasting health condition and illness harmonised standard is that it may not be capturing all impairments or conditions such as autism or dyslexia due to some people not considering their neurodiversity as a health condition or illness. This could lead to an underrepresentation of the neurodivergent population (Government Analysis Function, 2023).

Respondents are asked four questions:

1. This question asks you about any health conditions, illnesses or impairments you may have. Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?

Yes

No

Don't know – **spontaneous only**

2. What [other] health condition or illness do you have?

Record fully. Probe for detail.

If more than one mentioned, enter one here only. Record up to six conditions in field 1-6.

enter text

3. Does this condition reduce your ability to carry-out normal day-to-day activities? Please consider whether you are affected while receiving any treatment, taking medication, or using any devices, such as a hearing aid.

Running prompt

Yes, a lot,
Yes, a little, or
Not at all?
Don't know - **spontaneous only**

4. Do you wish to record any other physical or mental health condition or illness?

Yes
No

If a respondent answers yes to the fourth question, then the questions are repeated. The interviewer can record a maximum of six conditions. A variable is then derived to measure whether a person has a limiting long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that reduces their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

National Survey data for 2021 to 22 shows that 39% of respondents aged 16 and over had a long-standing health condition or illness which limited their day-to-day activities (considered disabled under the Equality Act (2010)). This proportion is higher than the latest 2021 Census for Wales data (Welsh Government, 2023) which reports that the proportion of disabled adults aged 16 and over in Wales was 25%.

The Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units have contracted research to explore how survey data can be collected to reflect the social model of disability and to develop questions on impairments and disabling barriers. Once the findings from this research project are made available, questions that align to the social model should be considered for inclusion in the National Survey. These should be alongside questions not aligned (or only partially aligned) to the social model.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

The National Survey captures information on marriage and civil partnership by asking:

Ask or code: Are you / Is [Name]...

If necessary: We ask this so we can produce results for different groups of people. Like all your answers, this information will only ever be used for research purposes, and you will never be identifiable from the results.

Individual prompt – code first that applies

Soft check – if codes 4-9 and respondent is under 18: “Please check that you have chosen the correct option given that the respondent is under 18 years of age.”

Never married and never registered in a civil partnership?

Married?

In a registered civil partnership?

Separated, but still legally married?

Divorced?

Widowed?

Separated but still legally in a civil partnership - **spontaneous only**

Formerly in a civil partnership which is now legally dissolved - **spontaneous only**

Surviving partner from a civil partnership - **spontaneous only**

As the question is an individual prompt, when asking this question, the interviewer will read out each response option in order until the respondent says yes. Therefore, in some cases, the interviewer may only have to read out the first response option. The respondent can answer spontaneously in three other ways, but the interviewer does not read these out.

The response categories in the National Survey largely correspond to the marital and civil partnership status analytical function harmonised standard (Government Analysis Function, 2020). The difference is that the Analytical Function harmonised standard was updated in July 2023 to include the word ‘legally’ in the civil partnership response options. They assert this makes it clearer for the respondent (i.e., it refers to legal marital status and not relationship status, such as co-habiting) with the aim of reducing incorrect responses. The National Survey team were active contributors to this update. However, as the update was made after fieldwork for the 2022-23 National Survey had already begun, this change was applied for the next available survey year (2024-25).

The proportion of respondents who were married, separated, but still legally married; or divorced in the 2021 to 22 National Survey data were all broadly comparable to the equivalent groups in Census for Wales 2021. However, 37% of people aged 16 and over were never married nor in a registered a civil partnership according to Census 2021 compared to 27% of respondents in the 2021 to 22 National Survey. A higher

proportion of respondents aged 16 and over were widowed in the 2021 to 22 National Survey data (13%) compared to Census 2021 (7%). Note that sample sizes were too small to report on the three 'spontaneous only' groups in the National Survey, and that the proportions of people in these groups in Census 2021 were also very low (0% when rounded to the nearest whole number).

Table 2: Percentage of people aged 16 and over by legal marital and civil partnership status, comparing unweighted National Survey 2021 to 22 data with Census for Wales 2021 data

Legal civil partnership or marital status	National Survey 2021 to 22	Census 2021 (Wales)
Never married and never registered in a civil partnership	27%	37%
Married	45%	44%
In a civil partnership	0%	0%
Separated, but still legally married	3%	2%
Divorced	12%	10%
Widowed	13%	7%

Description of Table 2

Table 2 shows that in Wales, according to Census for Wales 2021 data, 37% of people aged 16 and over were never married nor in a registered a civil partnership compared with 27% of respondents in the 2021 to 22 National Survey. A higher proportion of respondents aged 16 and over were widowed in the 2021 to 22 National Survey data (13%) compared to Census 2021 (7%). The proportions of respondents who were married, separated, but still legally married; or divorced in the 2021 to 22 National Survey data were all broadly comparable to Census 2021.

Source: National Survey for Wales, Census for Wales 2021

Notes:

- 1: 2021 to 22 National Survey sample size is 12,580
- 2: Figures have been rounded to 0 decimal places.
3. In December 2019, the Civil Partnership Act (2004) was updated so that opposite-sex couples could also form civil partnerships. This has led to an increase in the

number of civil partnerships being formed in Wales in recent years. However, the number of civil partnerships formed annually in Wales remains relatively small compared to the number of marriages - in 2022, 277 civil partnerships were formed compared to 13,866 marriages (Office for National Statistics, n.d).

Pregnancy and maternity

As part of the set of questions relating to BMI data, female respondents are asked:

May I check, are you pregnant now?

If necessary: This is asked to decide whether to use the weight questions to calculate BMI, because pregnant women are excluded from those calculations. Are you currently pregnant?

Yes

No

Don't know

Prefer not to say

Whilst this question is in each survey, it is only asked of women aged 16 to 54 who are routed to the 'personal health' sub-sample (which is made up of around 6,000 respondents). This means that the single-year sample for this question is much smaller than obtained for other protected characteristics.

The National Indicator pooled analysis which combined data from years 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 showed that the total sample who were asked this question across all four years was around 6,500, and that there were around 200 women who were pregnant.

Maternity is not explicitly asked about in the National Survey, but related data could be analysed in the future as a proxy measure to understand survey results for households with young families. For example, data on households containing children under the age of 5 is collected and could be explored as an avenue for equality analysis. In addition, information could also be analysed from questions on the filtered childcare module. The childcare module limits respondents to those who are a parent or guardian of a child aged 0 to 14 in the household. If there is more than one child in the household who satisfies these criteria, then the survey script randomly selects a child for the respondents to base their answers on.

There is also currently no Analytical Function harmonised standard for pregnancy and maternity with no consistency across surveys. But there is harmonisation guidance (Government Analysis Function, 2020) which provides a list of sources where these data are collected or available.

Race

The National Survey does not collect data on race. Instead, data on ethnicity and national identity is captured. Under the protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act (2010) (UK Government, 2013), ethnicity is just one part of race: 'race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin'. In social surveys, religion, national identity, and language are often analysed alongside ethnicity to help reflect the multifaceted nature of race (Government Analysis Function, 2011).

Country of birth is sometimes captured in sample surveys and is information that would allow for a proxy measure on migrants to be derived. It is not currently possible to explore this as a measure in the National Survey because it has not been collected since 2014-15. Small numbers in Wales for those born outside of Wales or the UK also means that the National Survey sample size would need to be much larger to report on this type of characteristic.

In June 2022, the Welsh Government published the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan (ArWAP) (Welsh Government, 2022) with a commitment to make a measurable difference to the lives of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people (ethnic minority people) in Wales. By implementing this plan, the Welsh Government is working towards a vision of Wales becoming an anti-racist nation by 2030. The action plan was developed after many discussions and conversations with ethnic minority people from a range of communities and organisations across Wales. By taking this approach, the action plan is based on the experiences of ethnic minority communities and aims to tackle the root causes of racism. Within the plan, the Race Disparity Evidence Unit is stated as a key resource for ensuring the ArWAP is evidenced, monitored and evaluated.

The language used in this report follows the anti-racist language agreed in the action plan, specifically 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people' and 'ethnic minority people'. Language can vary and differ, and people may use a range of terms to self-identify. Language used in this report aligns with the ArWAP anti-racist language as it has been identified and developed by those with lived experiences of racism.

National identity

National identity is a measure of self-identity that allows a person to express a preference as to which country or countries, nation, or nations they feel most connected to. A question on national identity was recommended following an increased interest in this topic. A GSS harmonised standard (Government Analysis Function, 2021) has been developed for collecting data on national identity.

The National Survey captures a respondent's national identity through the recommended GSS harmonised standard question (Government Analysis Function, 2023) which asks respondents:

How would you describe your national identity? Please choose all that apply.

Running prompt

Welsh,

English,

Scottish,

Northern Irish,

British, or

Other national identity?

Don't know - **spontaneous only**

If other national identity:

Ask or code: What is the other national identity?

Enter text

Ethnicity

To capture ethnicity, the National Survey uses the GSS ethnicity harmonised standard (Government Analysis Function, 2011). Respondents are asked to choose 'one option that best describes your ethnic group or background'. The options given to respondents are comprehensive. Several options are included within each high-level category, as well as an option for respondents to describe their ethnicity if none of the listed groups best describe their ethnic background.

The 18 options given to respondents are listed below, categorised within 5 high-level groupings.

1. What is your ethnic group? I will read out the options.

Please choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background.

Individual prompt

White,

Mixed or multiple ethnic groups,

Asian, Asian Welsh, or Asian British,

Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean, or African,

Other ethnic group?

Don't know – **spontaneous only**

2. And within that, which one of these best describes your ethnic group or background?

Running prompt

If white:

Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British,
Irish,

Gypsy or Irish Traveller, or

Any other White background?

Don't know – **spontaneous only**

If mixed or multiple ethnic groups:

White and Black Caribbean,

White and Black African,

White and Asian, or

Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background?

Don't know – **spontaneous only**

If Asian, Asian Welsh, or Asian British:

Indian,

Pakistani,

Bangladeshi,

Chinese, or

Any other Asian background?

Don't know – **spontaneous only**

If Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean, or African:

African,

Caribbean, or

Any other Black, African or Caribbean background?

Don't know – **spontaneous only**

If 'any other...' response option selected: Please can you describe your ethnic group or background?

Enter text

3. **If other ethnic group:** Please can you describe your ethnic group or background?

Enter text

The achieved sample size for most of these ethnic groups is too small to produce precise estimates, reflecting the population makeup of Wales. To prevent the small sample size issue, the 18 groups are routinely combined into three categories for reporting purposes: 'White (Welsh, English, Scottish and Northern Irish)', 'White (Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller or another white background)', and 'Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic'. However, this approach treats all the subgroups within each category as being the same as each other and so can overlook any nuances amongst these groups.

For the purposes of this report project, data was aggregated into five high-level ethnic groups: 'White', 'Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups', 'Asian or Asian British', 'Black, African, Caribbean or Black British', and 'Other ethnic group: Arab, or Any other ethnic group' (referred to as 'Another ethnicity' throughout this report). However, this grouping is problematic because of its association with othering.

It is acknowledged that the 5 high-level ethnic groups are disparate groups and that people within these have different experiences which may be hidden because of this aggregation. For example, Census for Wales 2021 data from the Ethnic group differences in health, housing, education and economic status in Wales, Census 2021 bulletin (Welsh Government, 2023) indicates that people in the high-level 'Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British' ethnic group were most likely to hold a level 4 or above qualification (43.9%). However, within this group there were large differences. Those who identified as 'Indian' were the most likely to hold qualifications Level 4 or above (61.9%), whereas those within the 'Bangladeshi' ethnic group were much less likely to hold qualifications at Level 4 or above (25.0%).

Both the unweighted 2021 to 22 National Survey data and Census 2021 report broadly similar proportions of people within the three ethnic groups shown in Table 3. The National Survey reported that 95% of respondents identified as 'White (Welsh, English, Scottish or Northern Irish)', compared to 91% of the population in Census for Wales 2021. Whereas 3% of respondents identified within the 'Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic' group and 2% of respondents identified within the 'White (Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller or another white background)' group. This compares with 5% and 3% in the 2021 Census respectively.

Table 3: Percentage of people aged 16 and over by ethnic group, comparing unweighted National Survey 2021 to 22 data with Census for Wales 2021 data

Ethnicity	National Survey 2021 to 22	Census 2021 (Wales)
White (Welsh, English, Scottish or Northern Irish)	95%	91%
White (Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller or another white background)	2%	3%
Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	3%	5%

Description of Table 3

Table 3 shows that the proportions of people in the aggregated three ethnic group categories of 'White (Welsh, English, Scottish or Northern Irish)', 'Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic', and 'White (Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller or another white background)' were broadly similar for the National Survey and Census 2021.

Source: National Survey for Wales, Census for Wales 2021

Notes:

1: 2021 to 22 National Survey sample size is 12,580

The pooling of four years of National Survey data increased the sample size of each ethnic group. However, despite this pooling, analysis could still not be undertaken using all 18 options listed for ethnicity in the National Survey due to small achieved sample sizes for the various subgroups.

Religion or belief

Religion, but not belief, is captured in the National Survey. This is not uncommon in social surveys as belief is often included under religion instead of a separate

category. The concept of belief is not as easily identified or understood as religion, making it difficult to include in surveys, especially in self-completion surveys where an interviewer is not present to help.

Religion follows similar issues as ethnicity within the pooled National Survey data as sample size across various groups is small. The National Survey follows the GSS harmonised standard for religion (Government Analysis Function, 2020):

And, what is your religion?

Individual prompt

No religion,

Christian - all denominations,

Buddhist,

Hindu,

Jewish,

Muslim,

Sikh, or

Any other religion?

Don't know - **spontaneous only**

Prefer not to say - **spontaneous only**

If any other religion:

What is the other religion?

Enter text

Previous analysis on religion has grouped responses into 'No religion', 'Christian' and 'Another religion' due to small sample sizes. In the 2021 to 22 survey year, only 3% of adults were in the 'Another religion' group.

The ability to capture all religious groups in a randomised household survey is limited and, even with the pooling of four survey years, the sample size remained too small for granular analysis across all eight categories but did support analysis across the four categories of 'Christian', 'No religion', 'Muslim' and 'Another religion' (see chapter 4 for more details).

The 2021 to 22 National Survey reported that the largest religious group category amongst respondents was 'Christian (all denominations)' at 53%, compared to the second largest category of 'No religion' at 44%. This broadly compares with Census for Wales 2021, where Christian is the largest category at 50% for those aged 16 and

over and 47% of adults reported 'no religion'. However, note that the Census 2021 figures reported Table 4 differ slightly to those reported in the Welsh Government statistical bulletin Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion in Wales (Census 2021) (Welsh Government, 2022). This is because the Census 2021 data in Table 4 reflects adults aged 16 and over who responded to the question to directly compare with 2021 to 22 National Survey respondents.

Table 4: Percentage of people aged 16 and over by religion, comparing unweighted National Survey 2021 to 22 data with Census for Wales 2021 data

Religious group	National Survey 2021 to 22	Census 2021 (Wales)
No religion	44%	47%
Christian (all denominations)	53%	50%
Another religion	3%	4%

Description of Table 4

Table 4 shows that in Wales, according to Census 2021, the largest religious group amongst people aged 16 and over was Christian (50%), followed by those who have 'No religion' (47%). Whereas the 2021 to 22 National Survey data shows that 53% of respondents reported their religion as Christian and 44% reported 'No religion'.

Source: National Survey for Wales, Census for Wales 2021

Notes:

1: 2021 to 22 National Survey sample size is 12,580

2: The figures reported for Census 2021 exclude those who did not respond to the question.

Sex

The OSR guidance on collecting and reporting data about sex and gender identity published in 2024 referred to sex as "a binary variable categorised as female or male", which in the UK is recorded at birth based on biological characteristics. It also recognised that at the time of writing (December 2024), those over the age of 18 in the UK were able to apply for a Gender Recognition Certificate which would change their legally recognised sex. Further, OSR used the term gender identity to refer to individuals' sense of their own gender, acknowledging that gender identity can go

beyond the binary categories of male/female, and can differ from an individual's sex. These definitions have been used for the purposes of this report.

The development of Harmonised Standards for sex and gender data collection is ongoing, and subject to change in light of recent developments including the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of a woman. As the data in this report is historical, reporting is based on definitions used at the time of collection which are discussed below.

The approach to collecting data on sex in the National Survey has undergone several changes over the years, informed by learning and developments in this research area, survey redesigns, and sample size limitations. In 2018 to 19 and 2019 to 2020, when the survey was conducted face to face, the following question was used:

[Respondent's/Name's] gender

However, this wasn't an explicit question interviewers needed to ask, and was often coded by the interviewers themselves, without them asking respondents. Interviewers could code:

Male

Female

Other - **spontaneous only**

Don't know - **spontaneous only**

'Other' is a closed response, meaning there is no follow up question or opportunity to write in what 'Other' is.

As the question wasn't asked in a consistent manner, and often coded by interviewers without asking respondents, it is therefore likely that the question wording at the time would have captured sex and gender interchangeably.

Guidance relating to sex and gender survey questions has been developed and refined further in more recent years. These guidance developments, including updates to the harmonised standard, are reflected in changes made to this question in the National Survey over the years, including relabelling the variable for this question 'Sex' instead of 'Gender' to better reflect the data it aims to capture. The current version in 2024-25 asks:

What is [your / Name's] sex?

Prompt if necessary: Female or male?

If necessary: We ask this so we can produce results for different groups of people. Like all your answers, this information will only ever be used for research purposes and you will never be identifiable from the results.

Interviewer instruction should only appear when asking question of respondent, not the other household members: it's important that you ask the question, even if you feel the respondent's sex is obvious, to ensure it is recorded correctly.

Female

Male

Respondent prefers not to select female or male here - **spontaneous only**

Don't know - **spontaneous only**

These changes follow the Analytical Function approach (Government Analysis Function, 2019), however, the National Survey still does not collect any data on gender identity or gender reassignment.

Alongside aligning with harmonised standards, questions collecting data on sex and gender identity should also conform to the new 2024 Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) collection and reporting guidance (Office for Statistics Regulation, 2024). This OSR guidance states that it is important for government organisations to understand their own data collections, to know the difference between sex and gender identity, and know what data they are collecting (including the type of sex being captured). It also reminds data producers that when deciding whether to collect data about sex or gender identity, data quality should be a key consideration including question acceptability and small sample sizes. The ONS have released plans to further develop their harmonised standard on collecting sex and gender identity data alongside the OSR (Office for National Statistics, 2024). In addition, the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units are developing guidance to bring coherence on sex, gender and trans history data collection in Wales. Before any alterations are made to the National Survey's approach, the above guidance should be considered. Recommendation 3 from this report covers the guidance suggested.

The unweighted 2021 to 22 National Survey data reported that 56% of respondents were female, compared with 52% in the 2021 Census.

Table 5: Percentage of people aged 16 and over by sex, comparing unweighted National Survey 2021 to 22 data with Census for Wales 2021 data

Sex	National Survey 2021 to 22	Census 2021 (Wales)
Male	44%	48%
Female	56%	52%

Description of Table 5

Table 5 shows that in Wales, according to Census 2021, 48% of adults were male and 52% were female. Whereas 44% of respondents to the 2021 to 22 National Survey were male and 56% were female.

Source: National Survey for Wales, Census for Wales 2021

Notes:

1: 2021 to 22 National Survey sample size is 12,580.

Gender reassignment

The National Survey does not currently collect gender identity nor gender reassignment. For the Census for Wales 2021, a new voluntary question on gender identity was developed and included resulting in the first published Official Statistics (Office for National Statistics, 2023) on the size of the transgender population in England and Wales. However, following a written request from the ONS and due to ONS awareness of data limitations, these statistics have been re-categorised by the Office for Statistics Regulation as ‘Official Statistics in development’ (Office for Statistics Regulation, 2023). This reflects their innovative nature and the evolving understanding of measuring gender identity, as well as the uncertainty associated with these estimates. More detail can be found by referring to the Sexual orientation and gender identity quality information (Office for National Statistics, 2024) on the Office for National Statistics website.

The question asked, ‘Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?’. In response, 0.4% of the population in Wales ages 16 years and over answered ‘No’. Further findings from Census 2021 on gender identity in Wales can be found in the Welsh Government statistical bulletin Sexual orientation and gender identity in Wales (Census 2021) (Welsh Government, 2023). This is indicative that if

gender identity or a related demographic was captured by the National Survey it would be a very small proportion of the overall sample size (i.e. if the achieved sample was 12,000, there would likely be fewer than 50 respondents in this group).

Scotland's Census 2022 also included a new voluntary question on trans status or history. The wording, which differs from that in England and Wales, asks "Do you consider yourself to be trans, or have a trans history?". People could tick "No" or "Yes". Those who ticked "Yes" were then asked to describe their trans status (for example, non-binary, trans man, trans woman).

In Scotland's Census 2022, 0.44% of the population (aged 16 and over) reported being trans or having a trans history, almost half of whom reported they were non-binary. However, although 94% of respondents answered the question, the reported statistics calculate the percentage of people who are trans or have a trans history as a proportion of the overall population (i.e. including the 5.92% who did not answer). The Scottish Census Question wording on trans status is now included as part of the GSS harmonisation team's interim guidance for gender identity as a harmonised standard question for collecting this information (Government Analysis Function, 2024). Neither the England and Wales Census nor the Scottish Census question set on gender identity and trans status map exactly onto the legally recognised gender reassignment protected characteristic. This is because none of the question sets capture those who are planning to undergo, are undergoing or have gone through the process of reassigning their sex, which includes obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2021).

Sexual orientation

The 2022-23 National Survey asked the following question on sexual orientation:

I will now read out a list of terms people sometimes use to describe how they think of themselves.

Heterosexual or Straight

Gay or Lesbian

Bisexual

Other

As I read the list again please say 'yes' when you hear the option that best describes how you think of yourself.

Code first that applies

Heterosexual or Straight,

Gay or Lesbian,

Bisexual, or

Other?

Don't know - **spontaneous only**

For respondents who select 'Other', there is no opportunity to state what 'Other' means to that individual.

Due to the largely 'Heterosexual' survey population, yearly analysis on sexual orientation by the National Survey team has been conducted through deriving a variable that compares straight and LGBTQ+ respondents. This is because the small sample sizes for the more detailed categories prevent more detailed analysis. There is no inclusion of any data on transgender people within the National Survey, hence the LGBTQ+ acronym.

The line of questioning and response categories for capturing sexual orientation follows harmonised standards (Government Analysis Function, 2019). However, ahead of the 2021 Census, research was undertaken to redevelop the sexual orientation questions for the 2021 Census for England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, n.d). The 2021 Census sexual orientation question asked:

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

This question is voluntary

Straight or Heterosexual

Gay or Lesbian

Bisexual

Other sexual orientation

Enter sexual orientation

The 2021 Census includes a link on screen below this question on 'Why your answer is important'.

Census response categories have also changed based on user feedback so do not exactly mirror harmonised standards. 'Straight' now comes before 'Heterosexual' as some respondents were not sure of the meaning of heterosexual. The 'Other' option now contains a box in which people can write down their orientation. Quantitative testing detailed in a 2021 Census feedback report, found that there was a higher non-response rate (4.1%) for the question with both a 'Prefer not to say' and a 'This question is voluntary' instruction compared to the question with only 'Prefer not to say' (2.7%) (Office for National Statistics, 2021). Because of this, the 'Prefer not to say' option was removed, and a statement that the question is voluntary is presented in bold type, with a hyperlink to information on why this question is important. The sexual orientation question development for Census 2021 report may provide useful guidance on the structure of the sexual orientation question for future iterations of the survey (Office for National Statistics, 2021).

Sexual orientation was included in the National Survey before COVID-19. However, due to the change in mode arising from the pandemic, it was not included in 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022 and only reinstated in 2022 to 2023. As sexual orientation data for 2021 to 2022 is not available, a comparison with 2021 Census data has not been undertaken.

Associated characteristics

Socio-economic status

Socio-economic status can be measured in a variety of ways. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2024), for example, use several factors to determine socio-economic disadvantage: area deprivation, material deprivation, low or no wealth, low or no income, and socio-economic background. These factors are referenced in the statutory guidance (Welsh Government, 2020) that accompanies the Socio-economic Duty introduced in Wales. Over the years, the National Survey has covered most of these factors (food poverty, fuel poverty, financial difficulties, economic status, material deprivation and income), however wealth and socio-economic background haven't been included.

The GSS harmonisation standard (Government Analysis Function, 2023) for socio-economic background recommends eight questions relating to: school type; free school meals; employee, self-employed or not working; number of employees (employed version); number of employees (self-employed version); supervisor status; parental occupation; parental qualification. However, to date, the National Survey has not collected any information on parental occupation, parental qualification school type, free school meals, supervisor status or number of employees.

Findings: pooled analysis of National well-being indicators

This chapter details analysis of a dataset comprised of four pooled years of National Survey data (2016 to 2017, 2017 to 2018, 2018 to 2019, and 2019 to 2020).

The sections below summarise the findings from the pooled analysis for each equality characteristic for all four National Indicators. However, the charts included only present data on material deprivation to illustrate the impact on data quality of pooling four years of data.

The groups presented for each equality characteristic reflect the greatest level of detail possible whilst ensuring that estimates are based on sufficiently large sample sizes. Data tables of the complete pooled analysis have been published alongside this report as open data spreadsheets.

Although pooling years of data improves sample sizes to an extent, there are still sample size limitations when disaggregating by equality groups. This means that some of the estimates presented in this chapter are very imprecise. These estimates are solely included to illustrate this lack of precision rather than to evidence inequality of outcome. They should not be taken out of context and should be interpreted with caution. Information on the precision of all of the estimates shown in this report can be found in the open data spreadsheets.

Also outlined in this section is information on where more up-to-date equality breakdowns have already been published for the National Indicators.

National indicators by age

The analysis shows that National Survey sample sizes were large enough to provide single-year analysis broken down by age on all four National Indicators. Some age breakdowns are already published on the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023) and are also presented on the Wellbeing of Wales: National Indicators data dashboard (Welsh Government, 2022) (which uses data published on StatsWales (Welsh Government, 2022)).

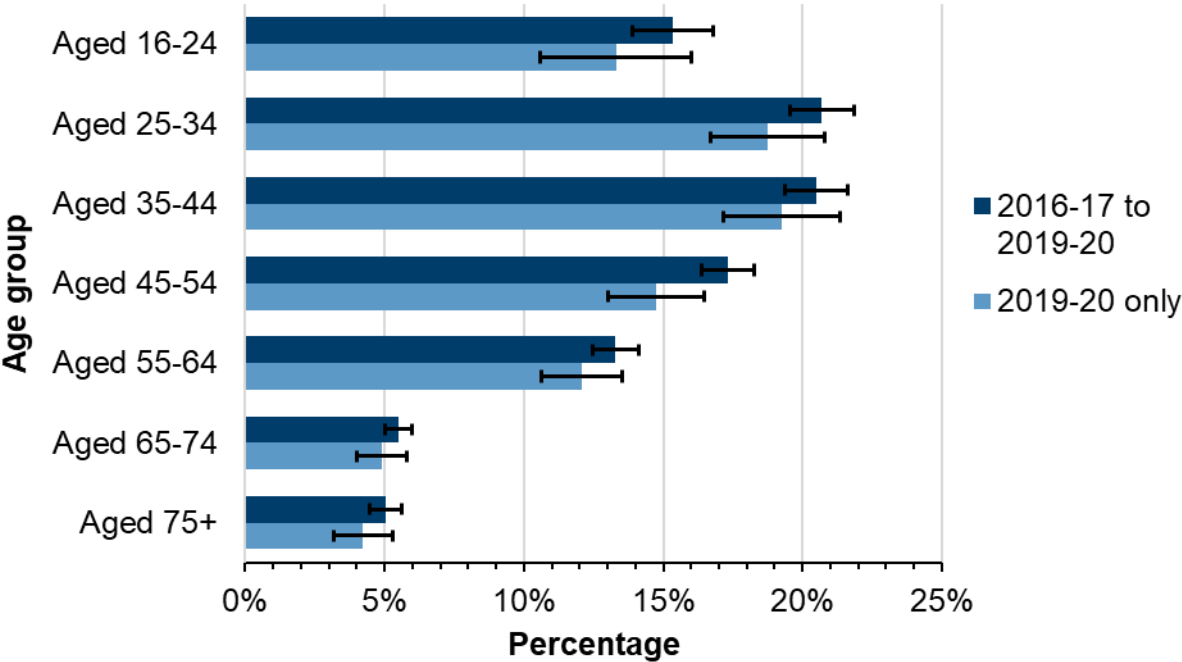
For all indicators except the healthy adult lifestyle behaviours, data up to 2022-23 has been published broken down by five age groups (16 to 24, 25 to 44, 45 to 64, 65 to 74 and 75 and over). For healthy adult lifestyle behaviours, data has been published

by three age groups (16 to 44, 45 to 64 and 65 and over). Single-year data was also precise enough to publish age breakdowns for some but not all Local Authorities.

In the pooled analysis, National Indicator data was broken down by seven age groups (16 to 24, 25 to 34, 35 to 44, 45 to 54, 55 to 64, 65 to 74 and 75 and over) and, generally, single-year analysis at this level of granularity was possible.

When looking at material deprivation by seven age groups, four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data can be considered precise with narrow confidence intervals (all lower than $\pm 2\%$ around the central estimate). Confidence intervals were slightly higher in the single year analysis, but all still less than $\pm 4\%$. Trends in material deprivation by age were the same in single-year and four-year pooled data and of relatively good precision in both cases (as seen in Figure 1). It also shows where there were real differences between age groups in terms of material deprivation rates. For example, the confidence intervals (shown as error bars in the figure) associated with the 65 to 74 and 75 and over age group do not overlap with those of any other age group. So, there can be relative confidence that the likelihood of being in material deprivation was lower for those in these age groups compared to the other groups. However, as the error bars for the 65 to 74 and 75 and over age groups overlap with each other, the differences between these age groups were not statistically significant. No difference was found between these age groups in terms of how likely they were to experience material deprivation.

Figure 1: The percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by age category, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of Figure 1

Figure 1 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation broken down by age group. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that material deprivation was experienced by a larger proportion of younger adults than older adults and that trends are equal for both the single-year and pooled analysis.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 45,770 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 12,380 (2019 to 2020 single-year data).

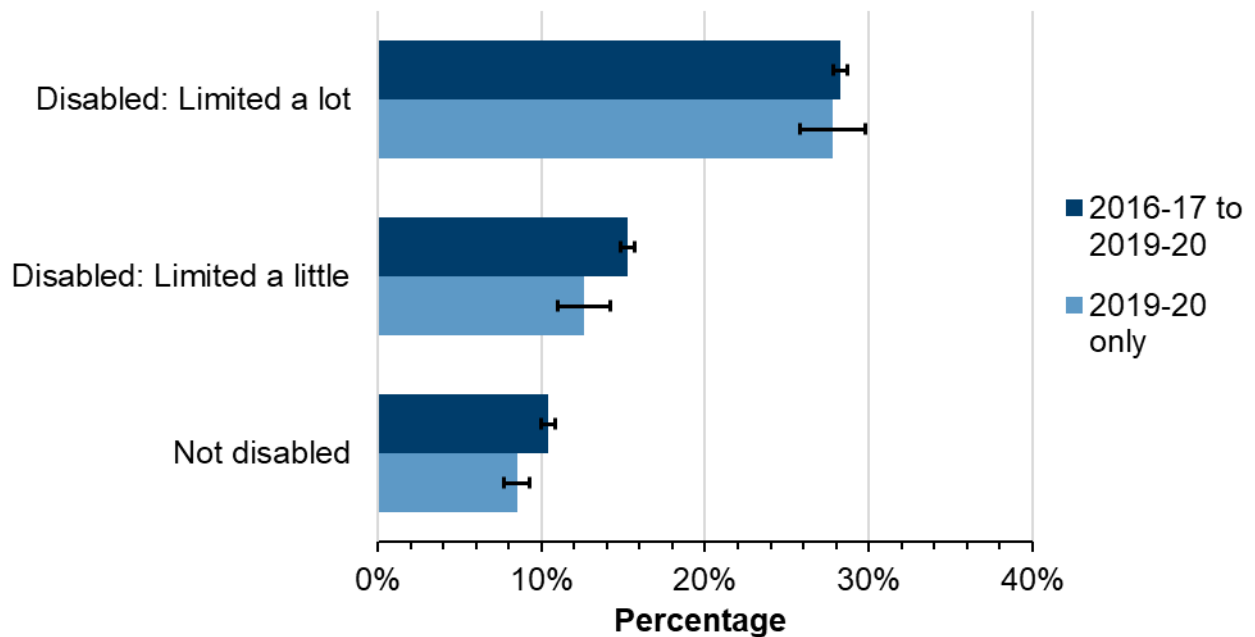
National indicators by whether a person is disabled or not

The analysis shows that National Survey sample sizes were large enough to present single-year analysis by disabled and non-disabled adults on all four National Indicators. However, more up-to-date information is only available via the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023) for the material deprivation national indicator. The most recent release shows that in 2022-23, disabled adults were significantly more likely to live in a household in material deprivation (25%) than non-disabled adults (11%). Data on adults participating in sporting activities three or more times a week by whether a person has a long-term condition or illness is also available on the results viewer. However, this is a different measure to the protected characteristic because it doesn't differentiate whether the condition or illness limits a person's day to day life.

The analysis also shows that single-year data allows disaggregation of the disabled group further into 'disabled: limited a little' and 'disabled: limited a lot' categories. Whilst pooling data across years does increase the precision of estimates, single-year 2019 to 2020 data is relatively precise with a less than 2% error margin.

Figure 2 below shows how pooling four years of data improves the precision of estimates, with narrower error bars shown for the pooled estimates compared to the single-year estimates. In particular, the precision of estimates for the 'disabled: limited a lot' and the 'disabled: limited a little' groups were notably improved. The patterns shown across groups were similar for both single-year and pooled data, with relatively good precision in both cases. It also shows where there were real differences between groups in terms of material deprivation rates. For example, the confidence intervals (shown as error bars in the figure) associated with the 'disabled: limited a lot' group do not overlap with those of any other group. So, there can be relative confidence that the likelihood of being in material deprivation was notably higher for this group compared to the other groups. Further to this the error bars for the 'not disabled' group do not overlap with either the 'disabled: limited a little' or 'disabled: limited a lot' groups. Therefore, the differences between the groups were statistically significant and it can be concluded that the 'disabled: limited a lot' group is most likely to experience material deprivation followed by the 'disabled: limited a little' group. Whereas the 'not disabled' group is least likely to experience material deprivation.

Figure 2: The percentage of disabled and non-disabled adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation broken down by 'disabled: limited a lot', 'disabled: limited a little', and 'not disabled'. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that those who were disabled and limited a lot by their condition were more likely to be in material deprivation. Non-disabled adults were less likely to be materially deprived.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 45,590 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 12,340 (2019 to 2020 single-year data).

National indicators by marital and civil partnership status and household type

Both marital status and household type were included in the pooled analysis. The household type variable provides additional insight as it details whether there are working-age adults, pensioners, or children in the household. This type of breakdown is more widely used in poverty and socio-economic disadvantage analysis.

Marital and civil partnership status

It is possible to produce single-year breakdowns of the four National Indicators by marital status / civil partnership status for some groups. The analysis showed that estimates based on single-year 2019 to 2020 data for those that are married, single, divorced and widowed were relatively precise, with confidence intervals of less than $\pm 3\%$. However, underlying sample sizes are too small to produce acceptably precise estimates of people in a civil partnership. As such, these respondents have been aggregated into the married category. There was also a lack of precision associated with single-year data for the separated (but still legally married) group, with error margins of 6% or above in 2019 to 2020. When pooling four years of data together, precision improves for those in the separated group, but small sample sizes and large confidence intervals remain for those in a registered civil partnership.

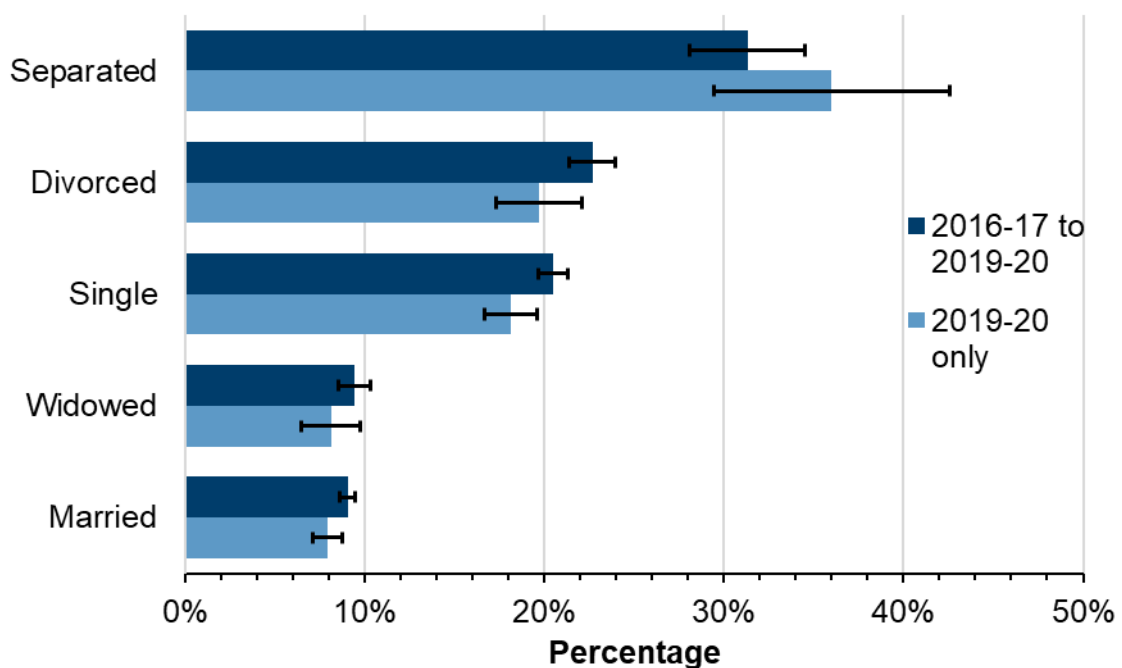
It is not possible to produce acceptably precise estimates for the 'spontaneous only' groups due to very small numbers, so they have been excluded from the analysis.

Material deprivation by respondent's current legal marital status is published on the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023) and shows that, in 2022-23, those who were married and widowed were the least likely to be in material deprivation (10%). Those who were single or divorced were over twice as likely to be in material deprivation (22%). The group most likely to be in material deprivation were those who were separated but still legal married (36%). This most recent data shows a similar pattern to the findings presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows improved precision of estimates, with narrower error bars, for the four-year pooled estimates compared with the single-year estimates. It also shows where there were real differences between groups in terms of material deprivation rates. For example, although the separated (but still legally married) group had larger error margins than the other groups, the confidence intervals (shown as error bars in the figure) associated with this group do not overlap with those of any other group.

So, there can be relative confidence that the likelihood of being in material deprivation was higher for the separated group compared to the other groups. However, as the error bars for the widowed and married group (and the divorced and single group) overlap with each other, the differences between these groups were not statistically significant. Based on this analysis no difference was found between these groups in terms of how likely they were to experience material deprivation.

Figure 3: The percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by marital status, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of Figure 3

Figure 3 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by marital status. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that, those who were separated (but still legally married) were the most likely to be in material deprivation and those who were married or widowed were the least likely.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 45,670 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 12,360 (2019 to 2020 single-year data).

Notes:

1. Due to small underlying sample sizes, Civil Partnerships have been aggregated into the Married group.

Household type

The pooled analysis presents data on those in material deprivation broken down by household type. The household types included were as follows:

- Single pensioner (no children)
- Married couple pensioner (no children)
- Single person, not a pensioner (no children)
- Two adult household with children
- Two adult household (up to one pensioner) without children
- Single parent household
- Other households

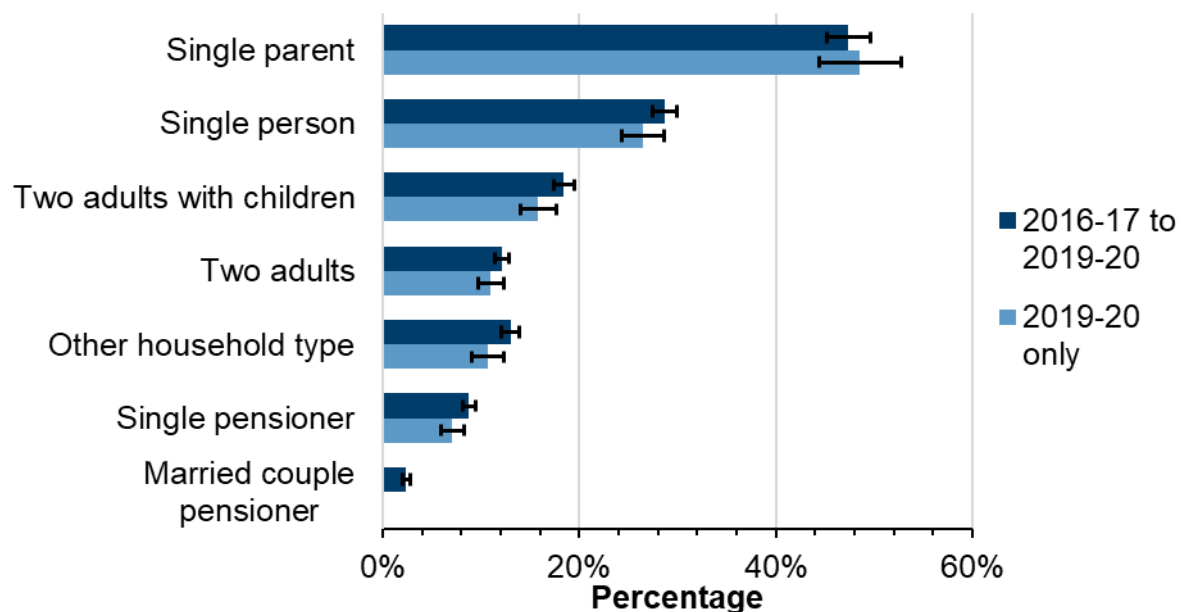
There are no household-type breakdowns currently published for the four National Indicators included in this report.

In general, the analysis shows that it is possible to produce single-year breakdowns of the four National Indicators by the household types listed above. Estimates for these figures mostly had confidence intervals of around +/- 3% or less. However, single-year 2019 to 2020 data shows that the 'married couple pensioner' category was suppressed for material deprivation estimates due to a sample size of less than 30. Further to this, data for single parent households were associated with larger confidence intervals at +/- 4% or 5%. When pooling 4 years of data together, quality improves, with confidence intervals reducing to +/- 2% or less for single parent households.

Figure 4 shows that pooling 4 years of data together allows material deprivation estimates for married couple pensioners to be presented with good precision. This was not possible with the single-year, 2019 to 2020 analysis. Figure 4 also shows that even for the single-year data, there were significant differences between groups for those household types that were most likely to be in material deprivation. Error

bars for the single parent, single person and two adults with children household types do not overlap in the analysis. Therefore, the differences between these groups were statistically significant and it can be concluded that the 'Single parent' group is most likely to experience material deprivation followed by the 'Single person' and the 'Two adults with children' groups. Similarly, the error bars associated with the 'Married couple pensioner' and 'Single pensioner' do not overlap with each other or any other household types. Hence it can be concluded that the 'Married couple pensioner' group is least likely to experience material deprivation followed by the 'Single pensioner' group. However, the error bars for the 'Two adults' and 'Other household group' groups overlap meaning that the differences between these groups were not statistically significant. No difference was found between these groups in terms of how likely they were to experience material deprivation.

Figure 4: The percentage of people aged 16 and over in material deprivation by household type, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of figure 4

Figure 4 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation broken down by household type. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that single parent households were most likely to be in material deprivation followed by single person

households. Married couple pensioner households were the least likely to be in material deprivation in 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 45,750 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 12,380 (2019 to 2020 single-year data).

Notes:

1: The 2019 to 2020 single-year estimate for the married couple pensioner group is based on a very small sample size. As such, the '2019 to 2020 only' data bar has been suppressed for this group.

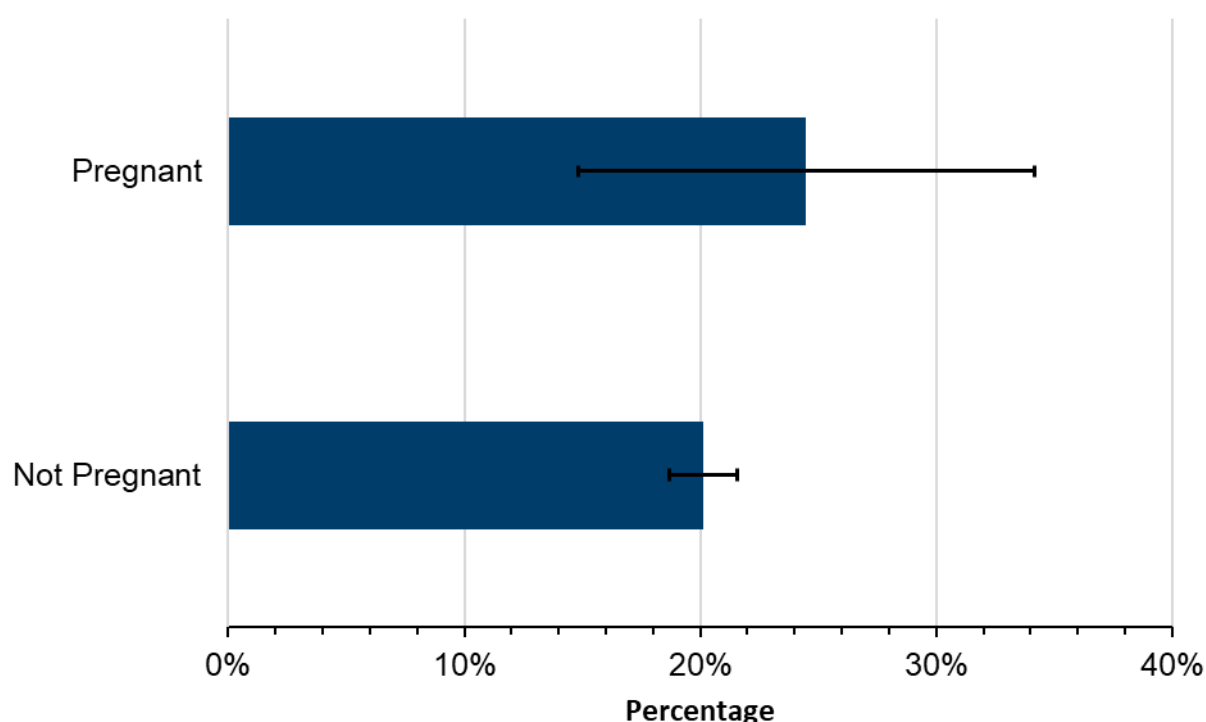
National indicators by pregnancy

It is not possible to produce acceptably precise breakdowns by pregnancy for any of the four National Indicators. This is primarily because the sample sizes are too small even when pooling four years of data together. However, for some National Indicators it may also not be relevant or possible to break figures down by pregnancy. For example, information on body mass index is not calculated for pregnant women, therefore it is not possible to report on the percentage of women with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours by pregnancy (where one of the five healthy lifestyle behaviours included in calculating the indicator is 'maintaining a healthy weight of body mass index').

Similar pooled analysis by pregnancy was published by the Welsh Government in August 2024. This explored the 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data against adult lifestyles and general health and illness (Welsh Government, 2024).

Figure 5 shows that although 2016 to 2017 to 2018 to 2019 four-year pooled sample sizes are above 30, and therefore do not need to be suppressed, the estimate is still associated with large confidence intervals ($\pm 10\%$). This uncertainty means the estimate for pregnant women is very imprecise and so has limited use. As the error bars for the two groups overlap, it is not possible to report whether there was any difference in likelihood of material deprivation between pregnant women and women who were not pregnant.

Figure 5: The percentage of women aged 16 to 54 in material deprivation by pregnancy, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of Figure 5

Figure 5 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of women aged 16 to 54 in material deprivation, broken down by pregnancy. Error bars show that the estimate for the pregnant group was very imprecise.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 6,500 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 1,600 (2019 to 2020 single-year data).

National indicators by ethnic group

Although some ethnic group breakdowns are available for some National Indicators via the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023), single-year sample sizes were not large enough to present analysis at a more granular level. Published ethnicity breakdowns are therefore limited to the following high-level categories:

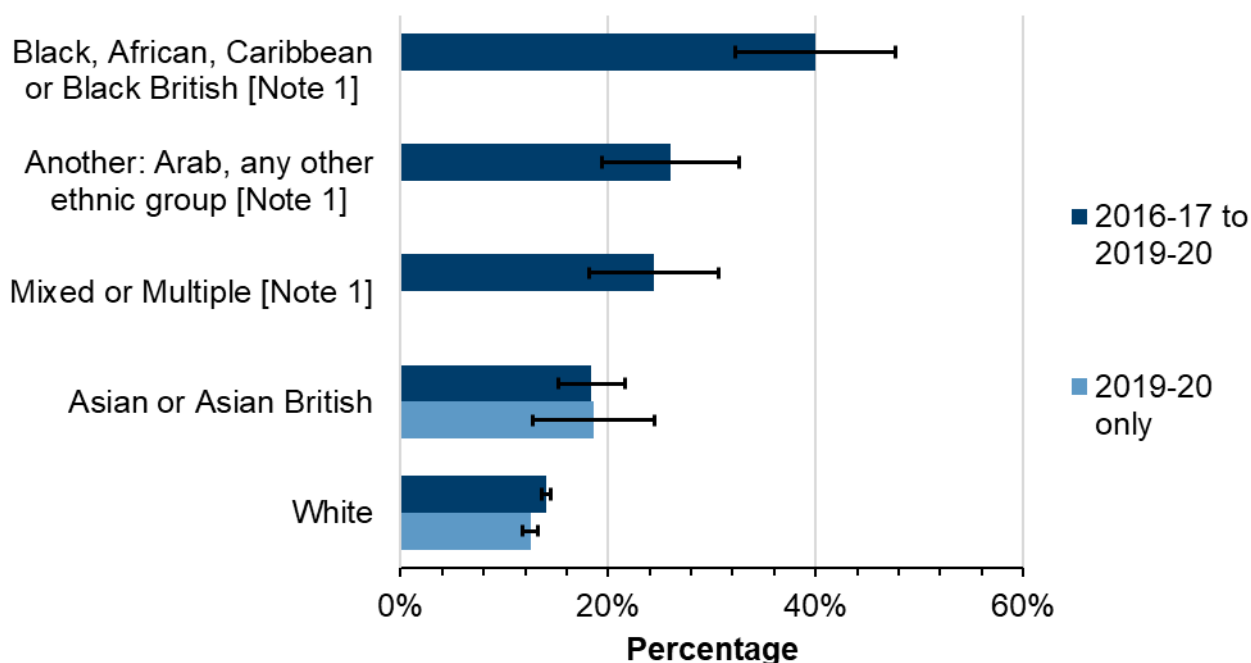
- White Welsh/ English/ Scottish/ Northern Irish
- White Irish/ Gypsy/ Irish Traveller or another white background
- Black, Asian or Minority ethnic group

Even at this high level of aggregation, there was still uncertainty in the single-year estimates for the latter two groups. For example, the data for 2022-23 showed that the percentage of adults from the Black, Asian or Minority ethnic group that participated in sporting activities three or more times a week (47%) had confidence intervals of over $\pm 6\%$.

The pooled analysis shows that it is possible to derive some National Indicator estimates by the more granular five ethnic group categories outlined in section 2.27 when pooling four years of data together. However, the analysis is still limited.

As shown below in Figure 6, four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data provides sufficiently precise estimates for material deprivation split by the five high-level ethnic groups. However, pooled estimates were associated with large confidence intervals (more than $\pm 6\%$) for the 'Mixed or Multiple', 'Black, African, Caribbean or Black British' and 'Another ethnic' groups. The error bars for the 'White' ethnic group do not overlap with any other ethnic group. Hence it can be concluded that the 'White' ethnic group are less likely to experience material deprivation than other ethnic groups. However, there was a significant overlap between the error bars for the 'Another ethnic group', the 'Mixed or Multiple' and the 'Asian or Asian British' groups. This means that it cannot be reported with confidence that any one of these ethnic groups were more or less likely to live in material deprivation than the others.

Figure 6: The percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by high-level ethnic group, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data.



Description of Figure 6

Figure 6 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation, broken down by high-level ethnic group. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that material deprivation was highest for those within the 'Black, African, Caribbean or Black British' high-level group and lowest for the 'White' group.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 45,720 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 12,380 (2019 to 2020 single-year data).

Notes:

1: For the 'Black, African, Caribbean or Black British', 'Another: Arab, any other ethnic group', and 'Mixed or Multiple' groups, single-year (2019 to 2020) data was suppressed due to small sample sizes. There is no '2019 to 2020 only' data bar for these groups.

National indicators by religion

There are some high-level breakdowns on religion available for the National Indicator on participation in sporting activities via the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023). The published single-year breakdowns by religion are limited to the following high-level categories:

- No religion
- Christian (all denominations)
- Another religion

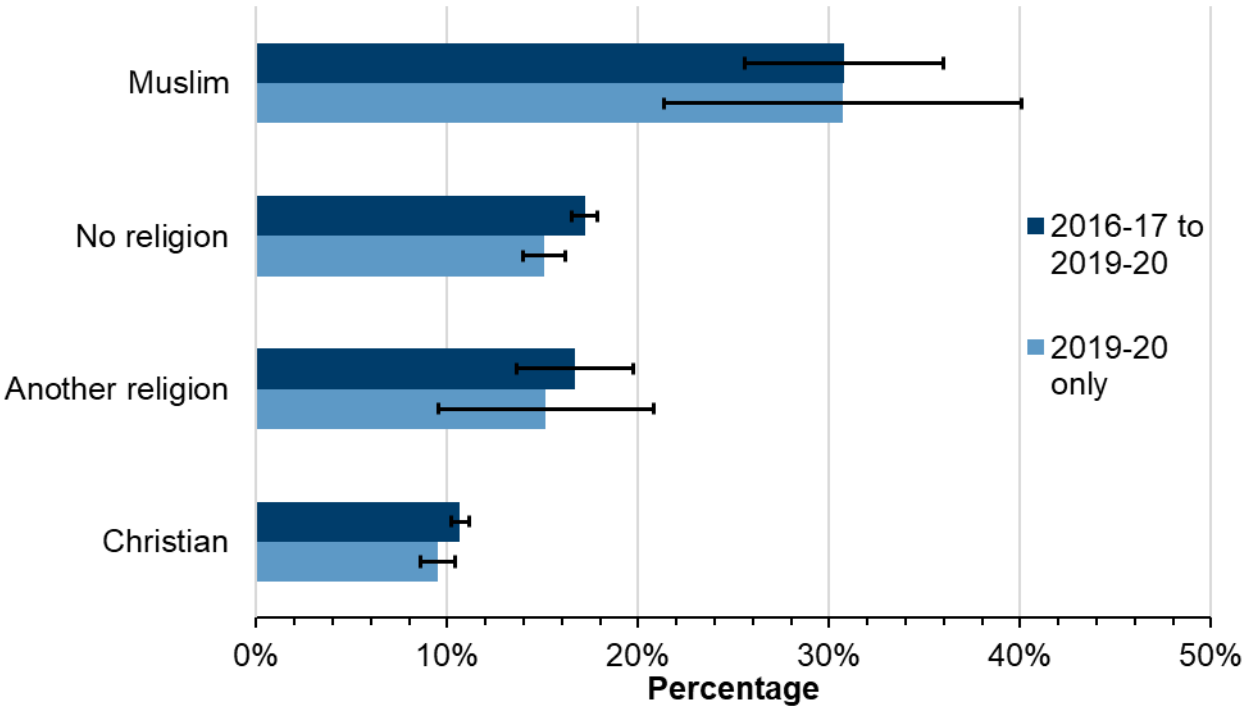
Even at this high level of aggregation, there is still uncertainty in the single-year 2022-23 estimate for the 'Another religion' group, with a confidence interval of over +/- 6%.

The pooled analysis shows that data did not support sufficiently precise estimates of National Indicators broken down by the eight religion groups described in section 2.35, even when four-years of data were pooled. However, some breakdowns are possible when the eight religion groups are aggregated into the following four groups: No religion, Christian, Muslim and 'Another religion', as shown in Figure 7. The 'Another religion' group includes the following: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, and any other religion.

When looking at material deprivation by the four high-level religion groups, single-year data was based on sufficient sample sizes and did not need to be suppressed. However, 2019 to 2020 single-year estimates had large confidence intervals for the Muslim and 'another religion' groups (+/- 9% and 6%). Figure 7 shows improved precision of estimates for the four-year pooled estimates but confidence intervals of +/- 5% for the Muslim group. Even so, the results show that material deprivation is higher for the Muslim group compared with the other groups, and that this difference is likely to be statistically significant given that the error bars for this group do not overlap with those of any other group. However, the error bars for the 'No religion' and 'Another religion' groups overlap meaning that it cannot be reported that one of these groups were more or less likely to experience material deprivation than the other.

For the Christian and 'no religion' groups, precision of estimates was high, even when only showing single-year 2019 to 2020 data.

Figure 7: The percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by religion, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data.



Description of figure 7

Figure 7 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation broken down by ethnic group. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that material deprivation was experienced by a larger proportion of Muslims than those with no religion, or those with ‘another religion’. Christians were the least likely to experience material deprivation.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 41,170 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 11,350 (2019 to 2020 single-year only).

National indicators by sex

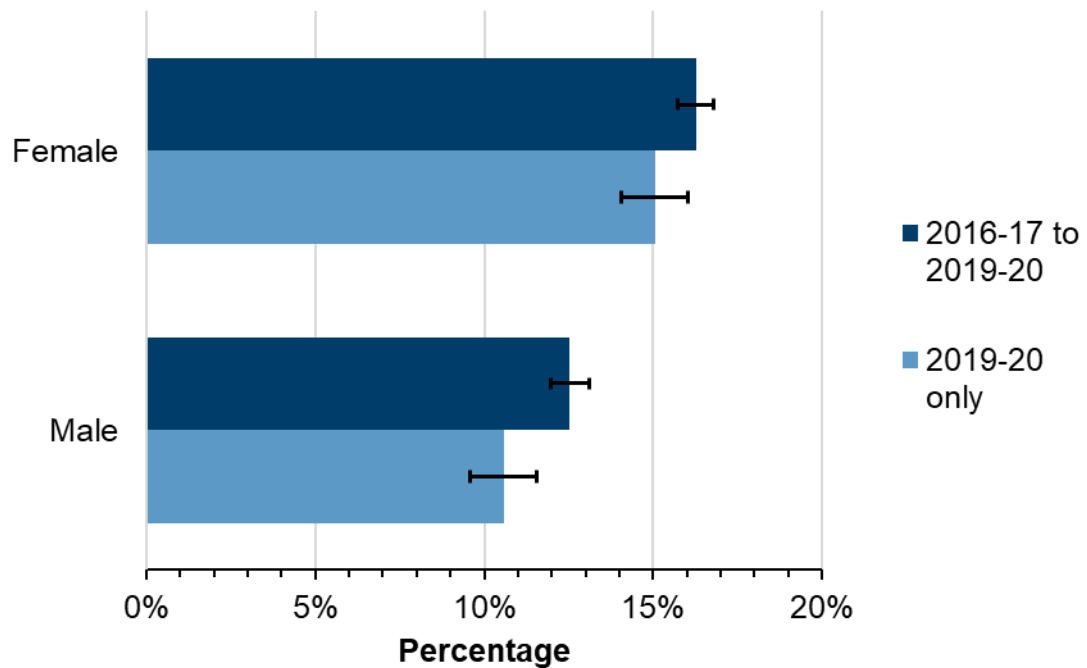
The pooled analysis shows that National Survey sample sizes were large enough to present single-year analysis by sex on the four National Indicators, with confidence intervals of +/- 2% or less. Data broken down by sex has already been published for all four National Indicators and is available on the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023) and via the Wellbeing of Wales: National Indicators data dashboard Welsh Government. (2022) (which uses data published on StatsWales (Welsh Government, 2024)).

The most recent data shows that in 2022-23:

- 19% of females were in material deprivation, compared with 12% of males.
- Females were more likely to have two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours (93%) than males (91%).
- 12% of females reported that they speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words compared to 9% of males.
- Males were more likely to participate in sporting activities at least three times a week (43%) than females (35%).

Figure 8 shows that whilst pooling four years of data improved the precision of estimates for material deprivation broken down by sex, precision was already high for single-year 2019 to 2020 data and the error bars did not overlap between groups. This means that it can be reported that the difference in material deprivation rates for males and females is statistically significant.

Figure 8: The percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by sex, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of Figure 8

Figure 8 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation, broken down by sex. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that females were more likely to be in material deprivation than males. It also shows that the data is sufficiently precise for both the single-year and pooled data.

Source: National Survey for Wales

Sample sizes: 45,750 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 12,380 (2019 to 2020 single-year only).

National indicators by sexual orientation

For the National Indicator on participation in sporting activities, there are some published breakdowns by sexual orientation available for 2017 to 18 and 2019 to 2020 data (available via the National Survey results viewer (Welsh Government, 2023)). However, these single-year breakdowns are limited to the following binary groupings:

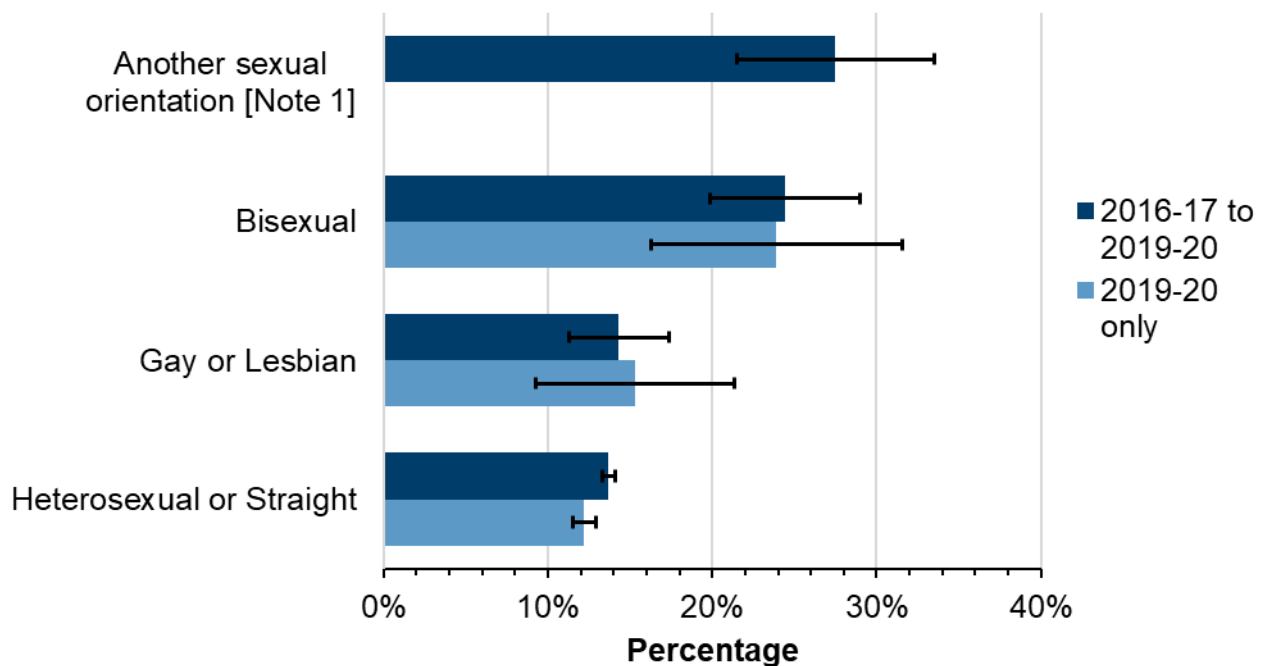
- Heterosexual or Straight;
- 'Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual or Another sexual orientation'.

To prevent further marginalising the respondents identifying as 'Other', this category was renamed 'Another Sexual Orientation'. As previously discussed, the 'Other' category can be seen as problematic and perceived as centring the majority which in this case is 'Heterosexual or straight' people. Renaming the 'Other' category as 'Another Sexual Orientation' doesn't substantively resolve this issue. There is not enough data to break down by these smaller groups to do much more than this, so does not increase precision.

Even at this high level of aggregation, there was still uncertainty in the single-year estimates for the 'Gay or Lesbian, Bisexual or Another sexual orientation' group, with an error margin of 5% or higher. The pooled analysis shows that it is possible to derive National Indicator estimates by the four more granular sexual orientation groups outlined in section 2.27 when pooling four years

Figure 9 shows that pooling together four years of data from 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 allows for more detailed material deprivation analysis by sexual orientation when compared to 2019 to 2020 single-year analysis. However, pooled estimates were still associated with confidence intervals of +/- 5% or greater for the 'Bisexual' and 'Another sexual orientation' groups. The overlapping error bars for the 'Another sexual orientation' group and the 'Bisexual' group mean that it cannot be reported with confidence that one of these groups were more or less likely to live in material deprivation than the other. Similarly, due to overlapping error bars it cannot be concluded that there is a difference between the 'Heterosexual or Straight' and 'Gay or Lesbian' groups.

Figure 9: The percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation by sexual orientation, 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data and 2019 to 2020 single-year data



Description of Figure 9

Figure 9 shows a horizontal, clustered bar chart of the percentage of adults aged 16 and over in material deprivation, broken down by sexual orientation. Error bars are also shown for both four-year pooled 2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 data and single-year 2019 to 2020 data. The figure shows that those in the 'Another sexual orientation' group or the 'Bisexual' group were more likely to be in material deprivation than those in the 'Gay or Lesbian', or 'Heterosexual or Straight' groups.

Source: National Survey for Wales.

Sample sizes: 41,170 (2016 to 2017 to 2019 to 2020 pooled data); 11,380 (2019 to 2020 single-year only).

Notes:

1: The 2019 to 2020 single-year estimate for the 'Another sexual orientation' group is based on a very small sample size. As such, the '2019 to 2020 only' data bar has been suppressed for this group.

Conclusions and recommendations

This review of the National Survey for Wales has aimed to assess to what extent the National Survey can be used to measure the results on the survey topics for equality groups in Wales. This chapter sets out recommendations on how to improve the precision of equality data collected in future iterations of this survey based on the findings.

Sample size and survey design

The analysis detailed in chapter 4 shows that, in general, pooling multiple years of National Survey data improves the precision of derived estimates. However, some limitations remain. Even after pooling four years of data, not all underlying sample sizes were of sufficient size to provide breakdowns for all protected characteristics at a more detailed level of granularity than is currently routinely published. In particular, the analysis showed that small sample sizes remained an issue for minority ethnic groups and those identifying within minority sexual orientation groups. Further to this, confidence intervals remained wide for certain groups, thereby making it impossible to conclude whether differences within the achieved sample reflected differences in the wider population or were a result of sampling error. As such, it is recommended that Welsh Government explore the feasibility of increasing the overall core sample size of the National Survey in the first instance.

However, even with a larger core sample size the sample sizes of protected characteristics subgroups may still be too small to support detailed analysis by those subgroups. Therefore, it is also recommended that Welsh Government explore options to boost the sample sizes for these specific subgroups.

The analysis detailed in chapter 4 was limited to four National Indicators. These indicators were chosen because the questions which are used to inform them were asked in all four survey years thereby giving the largest possible pooled sample base. There are several other National Indicators sourced from the National Survey. However, in order to allow more topics to be included in the survey, the questions underpinning some indicators are not asked every year; and some questions are only asked of a sub-sample of respondents.

To maximise the potential of pooling survey years as an analysis tool, Welsh Government's National Survey could reduce the number of topics covered and ask questions underpinning National Indicators to more respondents (prioritising

respondents from under-represented equality groups). Consideration should also be given to asking National Indicator questions more frequently to increase data volume.

Protected characteristics

If Wales is to keep pace with the UK more widely on data collection, the National Survey needs to implement all of the Inclusive Data Taskforce (IDTF) recommendations (UK Statistics Authority, 2021) that centre around the principle of 'leave no person behind'. Recommendation three from their report is most relevant in this context and states:

‘Ensure that all groups are robustly captured across key areas of life in UK data and review practices regularly’.

As detailed in chapter 3, the National Survey currently collects data on seven out of nine protected characteristics (age, disability, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). It also includes questions on ethnicity and national identity which are part of the protected characteristic of race. Not all the protected characteristics have been collected consistently in the National Survey. For example, the approach to collecting data on sex in the National Survey has undergone several changes over the years due to changes in harmonised standards and sexual orientation was not collected during the Covid-19 years due to a change in mode.

For pooled analysis to be beneficial protected characteristics where sub-groups are particularly small (such as ethnicity and sexual orientation) annual collection of relevant topics (e.g. national indicator questions) should be considered to better enable pooled analysis across core questions. However, the reason that National Indicator topics are not currently asked every year is to be able to fit more topics into the survey. Increasing the frequency of these topics being asked would need to be considered alongside the fact this would lead to less topics being asked overall.

There is no data currently collected on gender reassignment. Additionally, Census 2021 Wales gender identity estimates suggest any populations for this group captured in the National Survey would be very small. This, coupled with the findings around minimum sample sizes required for pooling to be successful, would mean that even with pooling regular data years it is unlikely that the National Survey for Wales would be able to provide sufficiently precise data on the protected characteristic of gender reassignment. Therefore, as outlined in recommendation 2 below, Welsh

Government could explore whether any boosting approaches in combination with pooling for the National Survey could increase the feasibility of collecting usable data on gender reassignment via the National Survey with the understanding that data quality may be reduced. Before collecting any data on gender identity, it should be considered alongside the OSR guidance mentioned in this report and the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units guidance on sex, gender and trans data collection, as indicated in recommendation 3.

As noted in chapter 3, the National Survey questions used to determine whether a respondent is disabled or not are aligned with the Equality Act 2010 definition of 'disability'. Welsh Government should consider whether the questions can be more closely aligned with the social model of disability. Collecting data in this way will identify the number of people with specific health conditions but also highlight where the inequality, disadvantage or discrimination occurs due to barriers in society. It will also provide vital evidence on what policies, interventions and adjustments are needed to remove the barriers that disabled people face. Research is currently being undertaken to develop survey questions that align with the social model of disability. Once the findings from this research are available, the National Survey for Wales should review and consider incorporating these questions, thereby aligning with the views of the Welsh Government and collecting better data on impairment/health conditions and disabling barriers.

Associated characteristics

Adding more specific questions to the National Survey on socio-economic background would allow more nuanced analysis on socio-economic and cost-of-living vulnerabilities. This could enable analysis on the impact of the cyclical and inter-generational nature of socio-economic disadvantage. To meet the GSS socio-economic background harmonised standard, questions would need to be introduced on parental occupation and education level and would add a further layer to the material and area deprivation data already collected in the National Survey. However, given that the survey is time-bound and therefore the number of questions that can be included is limited, adding multiple questions to derive socio-economic background is unlikely to be a feasible option. Therefore, it is recommended that, the potential to link the National Survey to other data sources that already capture this information is explored in more detail.

By implementing these recommendations, the National Survey will improve its usefulness for understanding the survey results for equality groups in Wales. This will have considerable impact on the quality and granularity of equality data collected in future iterations of this survey, including for the National Well-Being indicators, providing better evidence for policy decision-making across Welsh Government and public sector it has responsibilities for.

Recommendation 1

The Welsh Government should explore increasing the overall core sample of the National Survey in conjunction with increasing representation through a targeted sample boost to create more timely equality survey results using the National Survey. The latter would need piloting prior to implementation but would likely be more cost effective, although would likely result in a trade-off in survey quality. A range of protected characteristics should be considered as part of exploring a boost.

Recommendation 2

The Welsh Government should consider asking questions that underpin National Indicators to more National Survey respondents (prioritising respondents who are from under-represented equality groups without overburdening these groups). All questions underpinning National Indicators should be asked more frequently to maximise the benefits of pooling across equality groups where possible (it is acknowledged that there is also a high level of demand on for other topics within limited overall survey time).

Recommendation 3

Guidance is being developed on sex, gender and trans questions by the Equality, Race and Disability Evidence Units. If there are implications for the National Survey, the Welsh Government's National Survey should review its approach to collecting data on these topics. Any updated guidance from the Office for National Statistics and the Office for Statistics Regulation guidance on sex and gender should be considered alongside any recommendations from the Evidence Units.

Recommendation 4

The Welsh Government's National Survey should review the findings of the research currently being undertaken by the Equality Race and Disability Evidence Units to develop social model of disability questions on impairment type and disabling barriers and consider adopting these questions.

Recommendation 5

The Welsh Government should explore whether National Survey data can be linked further via SAIL to data sources that capture additional equality data, for example, on the socio-economic background of respondents. Therefore, additional analysis can be undertaken on a wider range of equality characteristics.

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Annex A: Table 6. Equality characteristics and breakdowns used in analysis

This table outlines the equality characteristic breakdowns that Annex A is based on.

More detailed breakdowns are limited by small sample sizes and/ or survey design.

In the table 'Waves' refer to Survey years from 2016 to 2020, where 1 is 2016 to 2017 and 4 is 2019 to 2020.

Equality Characteristic	Categories	Waves available
Age group: 7 categories	16-24; 25-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65-74; 75+;	1,2,3,4
Disability: 2 categories	Disabled; Non-disabled	1,2,3,4
Ethnic group: 5 categories	Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British; Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African; Mixed or multiple ethnic groups; White; Other ethnic group	1,2,3,4
Household Type: 7 categories	Single pensioner (no children); Married couple pensioner (no children); Single person, not a pensioner (no children); Two adult household with children; Two adult household (up to one	1,2,3,4

	pensioner) without children; Single parent household; Other households;	
Religion: 4 categories	No Religion; Christian; Muslim; Other Religion	1,2,3,4
Sex: 2 categories	Female; Male	1,2,3,4
Sexual Orientation: 4 categories	Straight or Heterosexual; Gay or Lesbian; Bisexual; Other	1,2,3

Annex B: Table 7: List of National Indicators the National Survey for Wales collects data for.

Indicator	Measurement (this is the indicator as laid)	Technical measurement (this is the full technical description of the indicator, where appropriate)	Link to data source	Frequency
3	Percentage of adults with two or more two healthy lifestyle behaviours	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) with two or more two healthy lifestyle behaviours (not smoking, healthy body mass index, eat five portions fruit or vegetables, not drinking above weekly guidelines, meet guidelines on weekly minutes of physical activity)	<u>Adult lifestyle (National Survey for Wales)</u>	Annual

19	Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	<p>Percentage of households who cannot afford particular goods and activities that are typical in society at a given point in time, irrespective of whether they would choose to have these items, even if they could afford them.</p> <p>A score is calculated for each household based on weighted totals across a maximum of nine different measures. The weight for each measure is the proportion of the total population who have that item. For each measure a household is then assigned the weight if they do not have that item, these are summed across all items (and divided by a factor to ensure all scores fall on a scale from 0 to 100) to make a total deprivation score. Items that most people have are weighted more heavily, so if a household lacks that item then it counts more</p>	<u>National Survey for Wales: wellbeing and finances</u>	Annually
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		<p>towards the overall deprivation score than an item that fewer people have. Households with a score of 25 and over are classified as materially deprived.</p> <p>Note: The Family Resources Survey (FRS) produces material deprivation scores for the UK, but these are not comparable to National Survey deprivation figures due to different methods used.</p>		
23	Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) who agree or strongly agree with the statement: I can influence decisions affecting my local area.	<u>National Survey for Wales: democracy and government</u>	Every 2-3 years
24	Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) who feel satisfied that good services and facilities are available in their local area, and with their ability to get to these services and facilities.	<u>National Survey for Wales: local area, community and environment</u>	First collected in 2017 to 18, 2018 to 19 and then every 2 years (provisional)
25	Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) who report feeling very safe or fairly	<u>National Survey for Wales: local area,</u>	Every 2-3 years

		safe in all of the following situations: at home after dark, walking alone after dark, travelling by public transport after dark, and traveling by car after dark.	<u>community and environment</u>	
26	Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) who report feeling very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live	<u>National Survey for Wales: local area, community and environment</u>	Available in 2016-17 and then every 2 years (provisional)
27	Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different background get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) agreeing with three statements about their local area; feeling they belong to the area; that people from different background get on well together; that people treat each other with respect.	<u>National Survey for Wales: local area, community and environment</u>	Every 2-3 years
28	Percentage of people who Volunteer.	Percentage of people (aged 16+) who volunteer measured by the percentage of adults who give their time for free to help clubs or organisations (formal or informal); or who support family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or	<u>National Survey for Wales: wellbeing and finances</u>	Annual until 2017 to18, but trend data to be reviewed to determine frequency from 2018 to19

		problems related to old age.		
29	Mean mental well-being score for people.	<p>For adults (aged 16 or over), the mean mental well-being score according to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/</p> <p>For children, the mean score using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (information from the Understanding Society survey). http://www.sdqinfo.com/</p>	<u>National Survey for Wales: wellbeing and finances</u> <u>The UK Household Longitudinal Study</u>	<p>Adults - every 2 years</p> <p>Children - approx. every 2 years</p>
30	Percentage of people who are lonely.	Percentage of adults (aged 16+) who are lonely according to the De Jong Gierveld loneliness scale.	<u>National Survey for Wales: wellbeing and finances</u>	Every 2-3 years
35	Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times a year.	Percentage of adults (16+) who have attended arts events, participated in arts activities, or visited heritage sites, museums, libraries and/or archives at least 3 times in the last 12 months. Arts events	<u>National Survey for Wales: culture and Welsh language</u>	Annual until 2017 to18, but trend data to be reviewed to determine frequency from 2018 to19

		include: film showing, theatre, live music, dance performance, storytelling or reading events, and other arts events. Arts activities include: music, drama/theatrical activity, dance, film-making/photography, visual arts and crafts, creative writing, making artwork/animation using digital technology, and circus skills.		
36	Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.	Percentage of people who report in response to questions in the National Survey for Wales (for adults 16+ annually) and Welsh Language Use Surveys (for people 3+) that they are able to speak more than 'just a few words' in Welsh and that they speak Welsh on a daily basis.	<u>National Survey for Wales: culture and Welsh language</u> <u>Welsh language use survey</u>	Annually in National Survey for Wales. (Welsh Language Use Survey is not a regular survey)
38	Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.	Percentage of the population who report taking part in any outdoor or indoor sporting activity, and the frequency of their participation	<u>National Survey for Wales: sport and recreation</u> <u>School Sport Survey 2018</u>	Annual until 2017 to18, but trend data to be reviewed to determine frequency from 2018 to19

46	Active global citizenship in Wales	<p>From 2021 new questions about whether people in Wales are active global citizens will be included in the National Survey for Wales and will contribute to a revised indicator in 2022. The questions ask whether respondents have donated or raised money, volunteered or supported any activities tackling global issues such as human rights, refugees, or global environmental issues.</p>	N/A	Not known
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Annex C: Table 8: List of Future Generations indicators asked by year

Z = Not Applicable

FG indicator	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020 to 2021	2021 to 2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Percentage of adults with two or more two healthy lifestyle behaviours	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Z	Y
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Z	Y
Percentage who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	Y	Y	Y	Z	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Z	Y
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Z	Y
Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Z	Y

local area, and when travelling.													
Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Z	Y
Percentage of people agreeing that they belong to the area; that people from different background get on well together; and that people treat each other with respect.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Z	Y
Percentage of people who Volunteer.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Z	Y
Mean mental well-being score for people.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Z	Y
Percentage of people who are lonely.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Z	N
Percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	Z	N

activities at least 3 times a year.													
Percentage of people who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh.	Y	Y	Y	Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Z	Y
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Z	Y
Active global citizenship in Wales	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Z	Y	N	Z	Y