Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee
A National Statistics Joint Consultative Committee
Minutes of meeting held on 6 February 2020
Cathays Park, Cardiff (with VC link to Llandudno)

Attendees

Steph	Howarth	SH	Welsh Government (WG) - **Chair**
Richard	Cardwell	RC	Natural Resources Wales
Lee	Clarke	LC	Cardiff County Council
Janine	Edwards	JE	Conwy County Borough Council - **Skype**
James	Harris	JH	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Leanne	John	LJ	City and County of Swansea
Helen	Jones	HJ	National Assembly for Wales
Nia	Jones	NJ	Welsh Government (WG)
Steve	King	SK	City and County of Swansea
Sue	Leake	SL	Welsh Government (WG)
Richard	Leyshon	RL	Data Cymru
Geraint	Morgan	GM	Powys County Council
Siôn Aled	Owen	SAO	Geirda
Jonathan	Radcliffe	JR	Sport Wales
Nita	Sparkes	NS	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC)
Rob	Starr	RS	Ceredigion County Council
Andrew	Stephens	AS	Data Unit Wales
Sam	Sullivan	SS	Data Cymru
Caitlin	Theodorou	CT	Ceredigion County Council
Sean	White	SW	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Alwyn	Williams	AW	Isle of Anglesey County Council - **Skype**
Nia	Wyn Jones	NWJ	Gwynedd Council - **Skype**
Lowri	Wyn Morton	LWM	Gwynedd Council - **Skype**

Note Takers

Yasmin	Parekh	YP	Welsh Government (WG)
Dylan	Stocker	DS	Welsh Government (WG)
Niamh	Yale-Helms	NYH	Welsh Government (WG)

Speakers

Catherine	Bremner	CB	UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)
Scott	Clifford	SC	Welsh Government (WG)
Chris	Davies	CD	UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)
James	Harris	JH	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Nia	Jones	NJ	Welsh Government (WG)
John	Morris	JM	Welsh Government (WG)

Nita	Sparkes	NS	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC)
Neil	Townsend	NT	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Sean	White	SW	Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Apologies

Lucy	Butler	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Chris	Clarke	Torfaen County Borough Council
Fiona	Clay-Poole	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Vicki	Doyle	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Paul	Jones	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
William	Miles	Monmouthshire County Council
Rhys	Powell	Public Health Wales
Sergio	Recio	Estyn
Lesley	Rees	Carmarthenshire County Council
Andy	Wilson	Torfaen County Borough Council

1	Welcome, Introductions & Apologies	
	SH opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, including those on VC from Llandudno Junction. Glyn Jones was unable to attend due to a prior commitment in London. SH invited attendees to speak in either Welsh or English, as there was a simultaneous translator present in Cardiff.	
2	Note of last meeting and update on action points	
	The note of the last meeting was agreed. JE was unable to find the minutes of the last meeting online. Update on Action Points from previous meeting: - Action 2 was marked as completed, but SK raised that the response hadn't been seen. JM fed back that the unofficial MSOA names are not being adopted by the Government Statistical Service (GSS). JM will check this position hasn't changed and recirculate original ONS response. - On action 7, GJ circulated link with WSLC members but asked that their feedback waited until the next meeting due to his absence. No other comments were made on Action Points.	**Action:** Minutes from last WSLC to be emailed to JE. **Action:** JM to check ONS' position on unofficial MSOA names list hasn't changed and recirculate the response.

3	**Review of information papers**	
	Statistics Wales quarterly update from SH: • Economic Statistics team are seeking feedback from users of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates to establish if both Short Term Output Indicators (STOI) and GDP estimates need to be produced. • Updated estimates of housing need based on 2018 data are due to be published in February 2020. • Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 was published in November 2019. Demography update from JM: • A blog had been published to outline the reasons why the 2017-based Subnational Population Projections and Household Projections for Wales had been postponed (publication was originally scheduled for 31 October 2019). • The projections are now due to be published on 27 February 2020 and will be 2018-based. There won't be a lengthy statistical release due to time constraints – more details will be explained in an upcoming blog over the next couple of weeks. Variants will also be published on 27 February. • All LAs will be invited to a QA event in 2 weeks for the Population Projections. • LWM asked if QA event would only be held in Cardiff, and JM clarified QA will be offered virtually if travelling down was unrealistic given the short notice. • JE advised that anyone taking part in the QA event should do some prior research on future population trends, and JM suggested looking at previous ONS National Population Projections which provide an important context for policy. • Future trends include the decline in population growth for the first time in recent years, and that reductions in the working age population are likely. • SK emphasised the importance of the Chief Statistician's Blog in explaining the reasons for postponement and changes in methodology used to produce population projections. • SH suggested a fuller discussion on population projections could be a useful future agenda item, but AS suggested a population symposium may be a better option, as discussion that could be had around the topic would be longer than a single WSLC agenda item. AS offered to help organise this as it would be good for it to	**Action:** JM to consider the possibility of organising a population symposium to continue discussion around population projections,

		happen before the Census takes main focus. SL stated the topic is also important for wellbeing assessment discussions.	with support from DataCymru
		Data Cymru (DC) update from AS: • Profiling Places is due to be updated on 24 February 2020 with new data and other functionalities. • DC has recently filled 2 new statistical posts, and both are attending their first WSLC today (SS and RL). • Further details for the 2020 LARIA conference have been released; this will be held in Manchester from 2-3 June. • DC are developing their Open Data Hub, a platform LAs may be interested in. • JR questioned how the Hub will differ from Data Map Wales (DMW). AS reported that DC are working closely with WG to ensure that the Hub complements DMW, but geography-based data isn't one of the aims of the Hub. He suggested a future presentation alongside WG colleagues involved with DMW might help to better convey these differences. • AS drew attention to DC's new National Social Care Data Portal for Wales, (a potentially important tool for reviewing population projections and resource allocations) and to some examples of recent social research projects the organisation has been involved with. • 'Data Basics: Introduction to Data', a course aimed at anyone working within an LA with any level of previous knowledge, has been piloted in Powys and South Wales. The course is designed to give an introduction to the different data sources available to LAs and how these can be used effectively. Full rollout is subject to final discussions about funding. There is likely to be one more pilot, and LWM volunteered Gwynedd to be part of this. • JE highlighted that WG ran Open Data events in South Wales but not North Wales. • SK questioned what would happen to Daffodil Cymru following the development of the National Social Care Data for Wales. AS clarified that Daffodil has been transferred from WG to Social Care Wales, who have in turn commissioned DC to redevelop it. SK asked for an update on this at a future meeting. JE added that her LA hadn't found Daffodil Cymru to be very useful in the past, and that hopefully the redevelopment would focus on targeting user need.	**Action:** Presentation between DC and WG on the differences between DC's Open Data Hub and WG's Data Map Wales to be given at future WSLC. **Action:** Update on the redevelopment of Daffodil to be given at a future WSLC meeting.

	Census update from NT (via phone):	
	• Census rehearsal was run on 13 October 2019 in 4 locations across England and Wales, including Ceredigion.	
	• Ceredigion was chosen to give an insight into carrying out the Census in an area that is bilingual, rural and where many people have second homes.	
	• Apart from scale, the rehearsal is believed to be a very close replica of the 2021 Census.	
	• The rehearsal had a 31 percent return rate, however this was a voluntary exercise. Ceredigion had the highest paper form return rate, but this was expected as more initial contact was made with paper forms due to rurality.	
	• For the 2021 Census, areas with low internet take-up will be given paper forms as their initial contact.	
	• Analysis of the Census rehearsal has been undertaken, and an evaluation report will be released later this spring.	
	• ONS are carrying out a geography consultation and visiting different areas to discuss how best to ensure Census participation.	**Action:** NT to share tips for good practice on community engagement based upon Census rehearsal findings. To be considered for a future agenda item.
	• NT commented that ONS received lots of support for the Census rehearsal from Ceredigion County Council, and that he is happy to share tips on good practice for community engagement with the WSLC.	
	• RL asked if the share of online returns is expected to change when participation becomes compulsory. NT replied that ONS might anticipate a higher proportion of paper submissions for the full 2021 Census.	**Action:** NT to provide update to WSLC on Census output geographies.
	• LWM enquired about changes to the ward boundaries used for Census output. NT replied that ONS will be running a consultation on this shortly with the exact dates to be confirmed. The Welsh Census Advisory Group will also discuss the issue. NT will feed back details of which geographies Census outputs are due to be published for and when.	
	• SH asked if NT had any updates on Action Point 11 from the previous WSLC (EQ analytics). NT will update on this at a future meeting as it is still a work in process.	**Action:** Action Point 11 from October 2019 WSLC to be rolled forward.
	Impact of Universal Credit (UC):	
	• A paper detailing UC and its progress so far was provided by Sara Ahmed (SA), who was unable to attend the meeting.	
	• Full rollout of UC has now been delayed until September 2024.	
	• JE requested clarification on how LAs could use UC data. SH will take this forward as a possible future	

		agenda item involving a discussion rather than an information paper. For now, any questions should be directed to SA.	**Action:** Agenda item for discussion on using Universal Credit data to be included in a future WSLC meeting.
4	**Analytical Developments at ONS for Subnational Areas**		
		Presentation from James Harris – Centre for Subnational Analysis, ONS

ONS, through the new Centre for Subnational Analysis, aims to drive an expanded range of statistical analysis of smaller geographies in the UK. Ideally, they would like to produce postcode level statistics, but this data disclosure issues hinder this. The aim is to produce LA-level statistics, with City Region statistics produced as a minimum.

JH presented a list of the Centre's 2019 outputs but added that the latest Subnational Estimates of Productivity release has been delayed. For the Job Quality in City Regions release, only Swansea Bay and Cardiff City regions were included for Wales.

The Centre has been consulting with LAs in England to establish their data requirements and help prioritise future work of the Centre. They can also provide advice to LAs on how they can undertake their own analysis from available data. JH asked for any feedback from attendees, as ONS are keen to know what data requirements Welsh LAs have.
The Centre is keen to be part of analytical projects on a subnational level. They hope to create a series of case studies that can be rolled out to other areas. JH highlighted a few examples of such work e.g. work on homelessness with Greater Manchester. Bespoke analysis can be requested form the Centre, by completing a request form.(contact: cities@ons.gov.uk) The Centre will do what they can to assist. WSLC members are encouraged to sign up for the Centre's regular 'Cities briefing'; , the briefing isn't just focussed around a 'Cities' geography and covers other subnational geographies as well.

The Centre is developing a number of interactive dashboards, including 'Customise my Data', which is aimed at allowing policy officials to find the data they need in an easy format. This data will be at LA level (or City Region level if not possible).

Explaining 'Customise my Data' further JH indicated that it is very similar to NOMIS which is more widely used. ONS are currently building a data cube that contains all their existing | |

		information. 'Customise my Data' is a tool that allows you to extract information within this. JH explained that it is still being developed but that, in time, NOMIS will be phased out. Currently the tool is publicly available in Beta phase, and contains 12 ONS data sets. LWM enquired if Census data would be included in Customise my Data, and JH added they are hopeful it will. Members indicated that gaining easy access to rates as well as counts can be useful in such systems. JE questioned if the NUTS geographies would be incorporated into the work done by the Centre. JH clarified that these would still be used for the foreseeable future. ONS would advocate for geography groups like NUTS3 to be kept as these are most widely used. JH asked if the Centre should produce data for the Welsh Growth Deal areas, and members thought this would be beneficial as there are currently specific skills teams for each growth deal area. JH also made attendees aware of COGS (Connected Open Government Statistics), a projecting aiming to bring together cross-government data in one place.	
5	**WIMD 2019**		
		Presentation from Nia Jones and Scott Clifford – Social Justice Statistics, WG SC gave an overview of the background work done towards WIMD 2019 and discussed what WIMD can and can't be used for. He noted that Census-based indicators were the only ones that weren't updated for WIMD 2019. AS enquired about the reference period for data within the Employment domain, and if this was impacted by the Universal Credit rollout. NJ clarified that data was used for the 2016-17 financial year (the year before the UC rollout in Wales). Further work is being done to look at how UC can be used to compare areas that are in different stages of the rollout. JR asked how changes in the methodology could impact comparability with previous WIMD publications. NJ advised not to compare WIMD ranks over time as the Index is not designed to be interpreted this way.	

	RL questioned if the childhood obesity indicator used in the Health domain was based on BMI. NJ confirmed this and added that the data used was published by Public Health Wales. NJ discussed the results of WIMD 2019. Three of the top 10 most deprived small areas in Wales in WIMD 2014 have now moved outside of the top 10 in WIMD 2019. New analysis for this publication includes 'pen portraits' for the top 10 most deprived small areas, and analysis of small areas in 'deep-rooted deprivation'. WIMD 2019 has an improved interactive tool to allow better visualisation of the results, and the guidance accompanying the release has been expanded. This now includes advice on using WIMD to target specific resources or activities. New modelled data for the likelihood of poor quality housing indicator is included in the Housing domain for WIMD 2019. This is the first time modelled data has been used in WIMD, and discussions were held with 4 LAs during development of the indicator. The weighting of the housing domain in the overall Index has been increased to reflect this improvement. The WIMD team have been developing an interactive PowerBI dashboard that aims to increase usage and engagement of the data. NJ asked for feedback on the proposed ideas from attendees. NS suggested attendees go back to their LAs and ask for their views on the dashboard to relay at a future meeting. RC felt a dashboard would be more useful than StatsWales when representing certain aspects of WIMD. LWM commented that the dashboard could simplify the sharing of data with those who aren't familiar with StatsWales. NWJ asked if WIMD ranked areas at MSOA level. NJ stated that although this couldn't be done with the published WIMD data, the team is happy to deal with any specific requests LAs may have. JE asked if reaction to WIMD 2019 publication had been affected by the timing of the General Election. SL commented that communication had been limited due to the publication being during the pre-election period but noted that how the data is used over the next five years is more significant than immediate reaction to the release.	**Action:** WSLC members to ask their LAs/organisations for feedback on the proposed WIMD interactive dashboard.

6	**Small Area Income Data**	
	Presentation from Sean White – ONS SW gave an overview of his team's work on Small Area Income Estimates (SAIE), produced at MSOA level. Household Finance Statistics is undergoing a transformation following the availability of new technology. They are also working to reduce respondent burden by improving sampling methods, and making better use of administrative data. SAIE can be aggregated to LA level but confidence intervals at this level can't be produced due to the modelling methods used. The 2017/18 SAIE will be released on 5 March with a statistical bulletin, interactive maps and charts, technical report as well as the dataset. Future work will include small area poverty estimates, further use of admin data and combining the SAIE and admin-based income statistics (ABIS) to avoid overlapping datasets. A [research report](#) was published in Dec 2018 by ONS about potential methodology for estimating LSOA level income estimates from administrative data (PAYE and Benefits data). However, there is also little data obtainable as yet on self-employed incomes. Work is not likely to be updated until self-employment data becomes available. JE noted that PayCheck provides a competitive alternative to SAIE produced by ONS and that LSOA data are useful when aggregating local areas. Paycheck data also provides more of an indication of distribution of incomes in an area. JE noted that the SAIE are not always suitable for LAs purposes There was a general consensus that data at MSOA level is less useful than LSOA estimates. SW noted that the move towards making greater use of admin data could allow for more flexibility in geographical breakdowns. NJ asked for timing surrounding the availability of income estimates for self-employment, but SW was unable to give an estimate due to the ongoing data engineering work. Members were keen for ONS to continue the development, but such estimates would need to meet requirements before LAs can stop using alternative sources. SW asked attendees to get in touch to communicate what data they would want available and how they would use this.	**Action:** WSLC members to get in contact with SW to give feedback on how they use/would like to use Small Area Income Estimates (SAIE).
6	**Small Area Income Data**	

7	**Household Poverty Projections**	
	Discussion led by Nita Sparkes – NPTCBC. Fiona Clay-Poole was due to present but sent late apologies. NPTCBC recently organised a Poverty Symposium, where multi-agency organisations came together to share knowledge about tackling poverty through policy. Following this, NPTCBC is considering redesigning the existing services and support they offer. NS explained that NPTCBC have commissioned a London-based company to produce a 'poverty projections tracker', which enables NPTCBC to input data and see poverty predictions down to a street and household level. Examples of the data used includes data for income, child services, council tax and benefit claimants. The tracker enables the LA to see where changes to services may be needed in the future, with the aim being to provide those projected to enter poverty with the support they need to avoid doing so. RS questioned what the tracker's actual output was. NS explained that it projects the income on a particular house/street based on the input data, and highlights which existing support services should be targeted at specific households who are at risk of entering poverty. SH asked if there was a possibility of developing a similar system for Wales, as members had shown a keen interest in the tracker and its uses. NS agreed to provide WG with a link to the system to allow them to explore it further. NJ added that WG policy teams would be particularly interested. NS asked that any other questions about the poverty projections tracker are directed to FCP, as she has been more involved with its development. In around a year's time, when the tracker is more developed, a representative from NPTCBC would be happy to present another WSLC agenda item on the topic for further discussion. NS noted this would be her last WSLC meeting as she was moving post, but a new representative from NPTCBC would attend in her place.	**Action:** NS (or FCP) to provide WG with link to NPTCBC's poverty projections tracker for circulation

8	**Well-being of Wales National Statistics Assessment**	
	SH, SL and NJ left the room for this agenda item due to their involvement in the Well-being of Wales report.	
	Discussion led by Catherine Bremner and Chris Davies – UK Statistics Authority (UKSA)	
	CB explained that the UKSA has recently begun an assessment of the Well-being of Wales Report, with the aim of designating it as National Statistics. To do this, the UKSA needs to ensure the publication meets the standards outlined within the Code of Practice for Statistics. CB and CD would like to get feedback from attendees about their use of the Well-being of Wales Report, to better inform their assessment.	
	Attendees stated they sometimes use the report as a comparator for their own data, or to give national context, but generally LAs are more interested in local level statistics. Some LAs responded that they did not use it at all.	
	However, some LA representatives agreed that the report will be looked at more closely when the Local Wellbeing Assessments come under review.	
	Some attendees agreed that the report is comprehensive, but policy makers are more likely to be interested in it than LA analysts. They are glad that it is available, and it will be used more when councils and LAs are preparing their annual reports.	
	CB asked which groups of people they should go to next to discuss their use of the report, as most attendees had said they were not the right people to ask. Public bodies who work on a national level and the Wales Improvement Network were suggested as potential organisations who could give better feedback on the report.	**Action:** CB/CD to circulate link to online UKSA consultation for WSLC members to pass onto colleagues.
	CD added that the UKSA had set up a link on their website for further feedback, and this could be sent through to attendees to be passed onto colleagues.	
9	**Any other business**	
	LWM noted this would be her last meeting before going on maternity leave. SH thanked LWM for her contributions to the WSLC.	
	SH asked attendees to use the online feedback form that would be emailed out following the meeting to suggest potential items	

| | for future WSLC meetings. SH recapped some of the ideas for future items that had come up during today's meeting:

• Universal Credit – issues with using the data and how to get the most out of Stat Explore
• Population projections
• Update on Daffodil Cymru
• Poverty Projections tracker used in NPT
• Census outputs and community engagement

JH asked if attendees would like to hear more about engagement relating to Census outputs. SK thought it would be useful to know what LAs could do to better to help ONS with Census engagement.

Next meeting to be held on 04/06/20 in Llandudno Junction (with VC from Cathays Park, Cardiff available). | |

Summary of Action Points

No.	Action	Who?
1	Minutes from last WSLC to be emailed to JE.	Secretariat
2	JM to check ONS' position on unofficial MSOA names list hasn't changed and recirculate the response.	JM
3	JM to consider the possibility of organising a population symposium to continue discussion around population projections, with support from Data Cymru.	JM
4	Presentation between DC and WG on the differences between DC's Open Data Hub and WG's Data Map Wales to be given at future WSLC.	DC/WG
5	Update on the redevelopment of Daffodil Cymru to be given at a future WSLC meeting.	Data Cymru
6	NT to share tips for good practice on community engagement based upon ONS findings from Census rehearsal. To be considered for a future agenda item.	NT (ONS)
7	NT to provide update to WSLC on Census output geographies.	NT (ONS)
8	Action Point 11 from October 2019 WSLC to be rolled forward. (NT to raise the potential for EQ analytics to be discussed as part of the Welsh Language assurance group for the 2021 Census.)	NT (ONS)
9	Agenda item for discussion on using Universal Credit data to be included in future WSLC meeting.	Secretariat
10	WSLC members to ask their LAs/organisations for feedback on the proposed WIMD interactive dashboard.	All
11	WSLC members to get in contact with SW to give feedback on how they use/would like to use Small Area Income Estimates (SAIE).	All
12	NS (or FCP) to provide WG with link to NPTCBC's poverty projections tracker for circulation.	NS/FCP
13	Link to online UKSA consultation on Well-being of Wales report to be circulated for WSLC members to pass onto colleagues.	CB/CD (UKSA)