

Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee

Minutes of meeting held on 10 October 2024

Via Teams

Attendees

Philip	Barlow	PB	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Lee	Clarke	LC	Cardiff County Council
Rachel	Clegg	RC	Carmarthenshire County Council
Peter	Davies	PD	Senedd
Vicki	Doyle	VD	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Janine	Edwards	JE	North Wales Regional Partnership Board
Carol	Evans	CE	Conway Council
Lloyd	Fisher	LF	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Catrin	Gilkes	CG	Cymen
Mari	Hopkins	MH	Ceredigion County Council
Eleri	James	EJ	Welsh Language Commissioner
Leanne	John	LJ	Swansea Council
Aled	Jones	AJ	Cymen (translator)
Nia	Jones	NJ	Welsh Government
Steve	King	SK	City and County of Swansea
Geraint	Morgan	GM	Powys County Council
Llio	Owen	LO	Welsh Government
Jonathan	Radcliffe	JR	Sport Wales
Hayley	Randall	HR	Data Cymru
Eifion	Rees	ER	Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Heledd	Rees	HRe	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Lesley	Rees	LR	Carmarthenshire County Council
Dafydd	Sedgewick	DS	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Elaine	Smith	ES	Wrexham County Borough Council
Helena	Snuggs	HS	Sport Wales
Alwyn	Williams	AW	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Megan	Williams	MW	Welsh Government
Lowri	Wyn Morton	LWM	Cyngor Gwynedd
Nia	Wyn Vaughan	NWV	Cyngor Gwynedd

Speakers

Sabir	Ahmed	SA	Welsh Government
Sarah	Crofts	SC	ONS
Owen	Davies	OD	Social Care Wales

Mary	Gregory	MG	ONS
Steph	Harries	SHa	Welsh Government
Nigel	Henretty	NH	ONS
Steph	Howarth	SH	Welsh Government
Sue	Leake	SL	Welsh Government
Martin	Parry	MP	Welsh Government
Sam	Sullivan	SS	Data Cymru
Kara	Steel	KS	ONS
Craig	Thomas	CT	Welsh Government

Minute takers

Ellen	Harper	EH	Welsh Government
Ryan	Jones	RJ	Welsh Government
Gunan	Singh	GS	Welsh Government

Apologies

Gwyneth	Ayers	Carmarthenshire County Council
Dan	Boon	Welsh Government
Brett	Davis	South Wales Police
Bryn	Jeffries	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Kate	Jones	HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales
Luned	Jones	Welsh Government
Steven	Marshall	Welsh Government
Kay	Palmer	Audit Wales
Caitlin	Theodorou	Ceredigion County Council
Neil	Townsend	Office for National Statistics
Andy	Wilson	Torfaen County Borough Council

1	Welcome, introduction and apologies – Steph Howarth and Sue Leake, Welsh Government	Actions
	SH and SL welcomed everyone. Simultaneous translation was provided for this meeting.	
2	Note of last meeting, update on action points – Steph Howarth, Welsh Government	
	There were no comments from attendees regarding the last meeting. An update on the actions was provided:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from Social Care Wales has been invited to the meeting. • Steph Harries sent out a note saying the next set of subnational population and household projections will now be calculated in R, replacing the previous POPGROUP programme. The next set of subnational projections are provisionally due to be published in spring/summer 2025, once the ONS has published the latest national population projections. • There was an action regarding the rounding of data on StatsWales on homelessness. Housing statistics will be publishing data on homelessness on StatsWales to address this. However, JE noted the wider impact of rounding cells to the nearest three as it causes additive errors. She suggested usefulness of this data needs to be reviewed. • VD brought up the LSOA re-naming exercise. The target to get this finalised is December 2024. SH said that Stef Taylor and John Morris have met with the local authorities who had previously responded on the topic. A new proposed list of LSOA names will be circulated in November to get local knowledge and feedback on this. 	
3	<p>Demography and Stats Wales quarterly updates – Steph Howarth, Welsh Government</p>	
	<p>Wellbeing of Wales report has been published. The lack of National Survey for Wales data limited what analysis could be done but previous trends, such as widening inequalities, are still observed. Future meetings focusing on sharing and using the reports’ findings are expected to take place with the Future Generations Commissioner and wellbeing of future generations board.</p> <p>Members noted the upcoming wellbeing assessments and population needs assessments. This should be considered as a standing item for WSLC meetings over the next year.</p> <p>VD stated that there have been frustrations with developing their own online database solution for wellbeing assessments that was rejected due to a Welsh Government solution supposedly being developed. This has stopped and now LAs are expected to make their own solutions, causing wasted time. SH was unaware of</p>	<p>Secretariat to include wellbeing assessments as a standing agenda item in future.</p> <p>SH to feedback on issues raised by VD about a local wellbeing assessment database to the relevant Welsh Government team.</p>

	<p>this Welsh Government solution and will feedback frustrations to the relevant Welsh Government team.</p> <p>The official statistics accreditation for the Annual Population Survey has been suspended due to falling response rates and widening uncertainties in data quality for small groups and low-level geographies.</p> <p>National Survey 2024-25 fieldwork has begun and planned to be published for July 2025. There are challenges in cost pressures and maintaining response rates, with a final response rate of 9,000 or lower being anticipated. Due to this, 2025-26 fieldwork will not take place and there will be a re-design of the National Survey.</p> <p>JE commented that the WIMD advisory group meeting occurred Wednesday 9 October and SL confirmed that a report on the proposals for indicators for WIMD 2025 is planned for mid-November. Related documents will be circulated to WSLC members for comments on the proposed indicators.</p> <p>Fire stats outputs are being streamlined and relevant stats team are looking for input from users on what is and is not used. Please contact Stats Inclusion team to provide feedback.</p> <p>The previous OData service has now been discontinued and an interim solution is now running. Work to republish the any cubes without OData files is ongoing. Users should notify SH if they want to use a cube that has now OData, in order to inform what data to prioritise for republication.</p> <p>SH reminded members of the opportunity to join fortnightly show and tell sessions on the development of the new StatsWales site.</p>	<p>WSLC fire statistics users to provide feedback to StatsInclusion@gov.wales on what is and is not used.</p>
4	<p>Data Cymru update – Sam Sullivan, Data Cymru</p>	
	<p>The Equalities Dashboard derived from the ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ report is out. This contains approximately 30-40 indicators and breakdowns on equality characteristics. Local councils also have access to equalities profiles, which are not currently in the public domain.</p>	

	<p>The National Resident Survey is now live and being continuously improved. It is being developed to be free, comparable and consistent to all local councils. Nine councils have signed up so far with more than half expected to join by the end of the year. Contact either Sam Sullivan or Hayley Randall for more information.</p> <p>Work has been done with the Welsh Language Commissioner to produce a Welsh language dashboard which includes Census 2021 data on Welsh language ability down to local level.</p> <p>Free training and upskilling courses are available in English and Welsh: ‘Data 101’ and ‘Understanding and using performance data’. ES asked about the number of participants for these per local council. SS responded that it is two local council members per course to prevent over-crowding, but dedicated courses are also on offer.</p>	
5	<p>GP activity data – Sabir Ahmed and Craig Thomas, Welsh Government</p>	
	<p>CT brought a presentation titled General Practice Activity. Until June this year only a number of items a general practice could prescribe were measurable. Now other data can be sourced. CT described the sources, quality considerations and new analysis available, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of appointments made • Attendance • Chronic or acute • GP, independent prescriber or other staff member • In person, face to face or phone <p>CT noted that the next steps are to link activity data with patient needs and workforce.</p> <p>The geography used in the analysis (primary care clusters) was discussed. GPs are part of primary care which is delivered on a cluster-based model. The cluster model is challenging to link to services which are delivered in different policy areas, through a local authority model.</p>	<p>All – join StatsWales show and tell to learn and give feedback for updates.</p>
6	<p>Understanding data from Social Care Wales – Owen Davies, Social Care Wales</p>	

	<p>OD presented slides on Social Care Wales, the role they play in Social Care data and some of their current work, and who play a large role in data collection and policy advice related to social care. They also work on the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP).</p> <p>Digital transformation and capabilities are seen as a key area for improvement, alongside engagement with the public who access data but often obtain bad quality data. OD also raised this as an issue for independent social care workers who are less likely to use digital services for their everyday tasks.</p> <p>Planning to bring as much social care data for Wales together in the National social care data portal for Wales. The sources come from many organisations, such as ONS and PHW. There is a lot of pressure to increase ease of use for non-technical audience and undertake digital transformation quickly.</p> <p>JE commented that lots of transformation could risk taking away the utility of the National data portal from analysts with upcoming projects like wellbeing and population projects. OD reassured that the transformation should not negatively impact analysts but is more to shift focus to include non-technical audiences.</p> <p>JE and OD are also happy to work together on work involving future projections and where demographers can be helpful.</p>	
7	<p>Future of population and migration statistics with admin-based data – Kara Steel and Sarah Crofts, ONS</p>	
	<p>KS and SC presented slides on the future population and migration statistics in Wales – the Future of Population and Migration Statistics (FPMS) programme.</p> <p>The ONS has been developing admin-based population and migration estimates for Wales and for England, and has been working with the devolved governments on the harmonisation of future population estimates. The ONS is planning for the admin-based population estimates to be the official measure of the population, replacing the traditional mid-year estimates, from summer 2025.</p>	

	<p>JE asked when the summary of responses from the ONS consultation on the future of population and migration statistics will be published. KS responded that the consultation report is planned to be published alongside the National Statistician's recommendation about the future of population and migration statistics in Wales and in England.</p> <p>The ONS are looking for feedback on the overall approach, but with additional focus on handling revisions and improving ease of use for local authorities in the long-term.</p> <p>JE asked what the admin-based population estimates will be measured against to check for validity, since the census has been used historically to check population estimates and additional demographic characteristics, including dwelling stock estimates. SC elaborated on some of the work that is currently being undertaken in the ONS to look at how estimates of some characteristics could be produced by admin data, and the options for coverage adjusting the admin-based population estimates without a census.</p> <p>JE asked if Welsh Government colleagues working in population are involved in this for a national perspective on the programme. SH and MP are both involved in the different parts of the programme. They are planning to liaise directly with the local authorities involved, as they would not necessarily be aware of locally available datasets.</p> <p>JE asked how this programme is progressing for other devolved governments. SC responded that they are working closely with Scotland and Northern Ireland, with a devolved government working group meeting regularly.</p> <p>SC clarified that the programme is starting at local authority level as a baseline. There is a strand of work that is looking at developing admin-based population estimates for lower-level geographies.</p>	
7	<p>ONS population estimates and projections – Nigel Henretty, ONS</p>	
	<p>NH from the ONS gave a talk on the future population projections and estimates in the UK.</p>	

	<p>The release date for 2022-based national population projections is planned to be November and will include a set of principal and variant population projections with updated assumptions based on data up to 2022. The ONS also plan to publish a subnational projections for England in spring 2025. There are no specific dates announced for the subnational projections for any other country. NH added that the ONS is considering publishing national and subnational projections roughly every two years.</p> <p>An interim set of population projections was published in January with updated migration assumptions, but without updating fertility and mortality assumptions. The biggest driver for population changes in the short-term has been migration.</p> <p>The MHCLG has been consulting on proposals for housing market assessments in England, which could change how household projections are used. ONS is waiting to hear from this to determine whether more user engagement is needed to decide whether to keep doing household projections.</p> <p>NH clarified that there are many other uses outside of housing policy, and that there are currently discussions about producing projections for other characteristics like ethnic group and health status.</p>	
8	<p>Welsh Government’s plans for population projections and capability building - Martin Parry, Welsh Government</p>	
	<p>MP and SHa gave a presentation.</p> <p>MP mentioned that they would be talking about subnational projections, household estimates, user engagement and capability building. And then ending with questions and discussion.</p> <p>Then SHa took over and presented an update on subnational population and household projections, focusing on recent developments, challenges, and future plans.</p> <p>Subnational population projections:</p>	

- These projections estimate the future size and structure of the population based on age, sex, birth/death rates, and migration trends (including international, cross-border, and within Wales).
- Last projections were based on 2018 data and published in 2020 for local authorities and 2021 for national parks.
- Projections are critical for planning and funding allocation in areas such as housing, healthcare, education, and transport.

Subnational household projections:

- Estimate future household numbers and types, based on demographic trends and census data.
- Last projections were published in 2020 for local authorities and 2021 for national parks.
- Updated projections will incorporate Census 2021 data and likely be published in spring/summer 2025, dependent on the timing of the ONS national population projections publication.

Challenges with POPGROUP software:

- Welsh Government previously used POPGROUP software to calculate projections, but the software is no longer supported.
- The team has transitioned to using the R programming language to replicate these processes, which provides greater control and flexibility.
- The Welsh Government hopes to be able to dual-run POPGROUP and R for 2022-based projections and will make R code available to users.

Population changes since Census 2021:

- Census 2021 showed a lower than expected population in Wales, with decreases in several local authorities.
- Rebased population estimates for 2012 to 2021 were published by the ONS in 2023. Welsh Government analysis of these estimates was published in July 2024.

	<p>Future plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subnational projections will be updated to reflect 2022 data. - Updated projections for local authorities and national parks are planned for spring/summer 2025. - Variants of the projections, based on different scenarios (for example, lower birth rates), will also be published to show the impact of varying assumptions. <p>Household estimates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work is underway to update household estimates for 2012 to 2023, using Census 2021 data. These estimates will be published before the household projections. <p>MP and SHa then held an interactive session using Slido, with feedback from these questions to be used to shape future plans.</p>	
9	Any other business	
	<p>HRe is seeking feedback on local data gaps, particularly around child poverty, and on how data quality concerns affect usage. Attendees are invited to contact her directly for more information.</p> <p>An upcoming UK Statistics Authority Assembly, scheduled for 22 January 2025 in London (with virtual participation available), was mentioned. This event aims to discuss user needs and priorities for the statistical system. MP and SH will attend in person, and it was suggested that WSLC consider nominating a member to represent Welsh interests. JE and VD expressed interest in attending remotely.</p> <p>SL is stepping down from her role at WSLC due to a reduction in working hours. Attendees expressed gratitude for SL's many years of service and contributions to the committee. Martin Parry will take on Sue's responsibilities in relation to WSLC moving forward.</p> <p>JE highlighted that ONS has signed an agreement to cooperate with Eurostat.</p>	

	<p>The next WSLC meeting is scheduled for 6 February 2025. Topics for future meetings will include well-being assessments and updates from ONS on population statistics.</p>	
--	--	--

	Actions	Member(s)
1	Secretariat to include wellbeing assessments as a standing agenda item in future.	Secretariat
2	SH to feedback on issues raised by VD about a local wellbeing assessment database to the relevant Welsh Government team.	Steph Howarth
3	WSLC fire statistics users to provide feedback to StatsInclusion@gov.wales on what is and is not used.	WSLC fire statistics users
4	Join StatsWales show and tell to learn and give feedback for updates. Welcome to StatsWales Marvell Consulting Projects (marvell-consulting.github.io) .	All members