Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee
Minutes of meeting held on 05 June 2024
Via Teams

Attendees

Andy	Bennett	AB	Marvell Consulting
Lee	Clarke	LC	Cardiff County Council
Richard	Davies	RD	Welsh Government
Aspasia	Dellaporta	AD	Marvell consulting
Vicki	Doyle	VD	Caerphilly County Borough Council
Janine	Edwards	JE	Denbighshire County Council
Carol	Evans	CE	Conway Council
Lloyd	Fisher	LF	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Tyla	Fuller	TF	Estyn
Ian	Hughes	IH	Ceredigion County Council
Rhian	Hughes	RH	NHS Wales
Eleri	James	EJ	Welsh Language Commissioner
Bryn	Jeffries	BJ	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council
Martin	Jennings	MJ	Assembly Commission
Helen	Jones	HJ	Senedd Research
Luned	Jones	LJ	Welsh Government
Paul	Jones	PJ	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Steve	King	SK	City and County of Swansea
Henry	Knowles	HK	Natural Resources Wales
Sue	Leake	SL	Welsh Government
Morgan	Lowden	ML	Cyngor Ynys Môn
Ben	Marvell	BM	Marvell Consulting
Jamie	Maynard	JM	Marvell Consulting
Geraint	Morgan	GM	Powys County Council
Hayley	Randall	HR	Data Unit Wales
Lesley	Rees	LR	Carmarthenshire County Council
Dafydd	Sedgwick	DS	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Elaine	Smith	ES	Wrexham County Borough Council
Helena	Snuggs	HS	Sport Wales
Sam	Sullivan	SS	Data Cymru
Caitlin	Theodorou	CT	Ceredigion County Council
Alwyn	Williams	AW	Isle of Anglesey County Council

Andy	Wilson	AnW	Torfaen County Borough Council
Sian-Elin	Wyatt	SW	ONS Local
Lowri	Wyn Morton	LWM	Cyngor Gwynedd
Nia	Wyn Vaughan	NWV	Cyngor Gwynedd

Speakers

Steph	Howarth	SH	Welsh Government
Steve	Hughes	SHu	Welsh Government
Stef	Taylor	ST	Welsh Government
John	Morris	JM	Welsh Government
Nicole	Burchill	NB	Welsh Government
Nia	Jones	NJ	Welsh Government
Aspasia	Dellaporta	AD	Marvell
Ben	Marvell	BM	Marvell

Minute takers

Dan	Boon	DB	Welsh Government
Gowan	Watkins	GW	Welsh Government

Apologies

Gwyneth	Ayers	Carmarthenshire County Council
Phillip	Barlow	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
Holly	Christensen	NHS Wales
Sioned	Cardew-Richardson	Estyn
Chris	Clarke	Torfaen County Borough Council
Leanne	John	Swansea Council
Kate	Jones	HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales
Nathan	Lester	Public Health Wales
Victoria	Morgan	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Neil	Townsend	Office for National Statistics

1	**Welcome, Introduction and Apologies** – Steph Howarth, Welsh Government	**Actions**
	SH welcomed everyone. Simultaneous translation was not provided for this meeting as the quota was not met. Many thanks for cooperating with the late change to the meeting – ONS were unable to attend due to the pre-election period. The presentation on OData has replaced their talk.	

2	**Note of last meeting, update on action points and review of information papers** – Steph Howarth, Welsh Government	
	No comments were made on the minutes from the previous meeting.	Action – SL to invite Social Care Wales members to future meetings.
	All actions from the previous meeting have been completed. Regarding Action 2 from the previous meeting, members from Social Care Wales will be invited to the next meeting in October. Regarding Action 3, LGA has not yet confirmed if it is ceasing support of POPGROUP. However, code has been produced in R within WG so that POPGROUP is no longer needed. JE mentioned that there could be an agenda item on population projections at a future WSLC meeting to address this and share the code with LAs.	Action – SH or SL to pick up with Population Stats team about capability building and sharing R code for population projections.
	Statistics Wales quarterly update (see papers for more info): - There are continued quality issues with the Labour Force Survey at a Wales level, and even more so at a local authority level, with regards to producing labour market stats. The team at WG are working with ONS on this. - Some key publications for education statistics are coming out over the next couple of months, including a new report of reading ability. School census and workforce census publications are due for July. - The Commission for Tertiary Education Research (CTER) will be established in August [to be known as Medr]. Members of the current post-16 statistics team in WG will be moving over to the Commission. Data on NEETs will be staying within WG. - Road collisions data for the final quarter of 2023 is being published on 6 June. This includes the first substantial data since the default 20mph limit was brought in. - The final publication from the Welsh Language Use survey has been published. The team are looking for feedback from members understanding the need and use for stats on Welsh language users outside of Wales – see the paper for contact details. - JE mentioned that there had been some issues with homelessness data on StatsWales – see actions for more details.	Action – SH to ask the Homelessness Stats team to check the homelessness data on StatsWales for rounding issues
	Demography update: - Key points from the paper were covered, including national park data, electoral roll stats and an analysis of rebasing the population article.	
	Data Cymru update: - SS gave an update. They have set up a strategic data leads network, for which they have held two meetings so far with one due next week. It is aimed at senior officers in local government who have a responsibility for strategic data. If anyone isn't involved but would like to be, please get in touch with SS. - They have set up some performance profiles for local authorities as a series of dashboards. It is a resource for	

		corporate performance colleagues to see how LAs in Wales perform across a series of indicators. - The National Residents survey is going live in July, after a successful pilot last year. An overview of the results will be disseminated in the coming weeks. It is likely 15 LAs will be taking the survey this year, with the hope of more next year. - An update to the Wales strategic data dashboard, which included data on asylum seekers and refugees, has been delayed until after the election. - An equalities dashboard is due to be launched soon, bringing all equalities data together.	
3	**School attendance** – Steve Hughes, Welsh Government	
	SHu gave a presentation. An analysis has been carried out using two attendance sources – annual and weekly. Stark differences can be seen in pupil absences between pre- and post-pandemic years. Some small improvements this year but still large absences compared to pre-pandemic years. Data linking work has also been going on through SAIL to help understand reasons/trends behind school absenteeism. Questions and discussion: - JE asked if the data could be grouped by local health board areas. SHu mentioned that the LA data can be grouped into LHBs but there are some rounding issues with that. - JE also asked about looking into children accessing mental health counselling sessions. SHu confirmed that this can be something that is looked into through SAIL, although it is not yet collected at a pupil level so there may be some difficulties. - GM asked in the chat if absences could be broken down by access to mental health services or on a waiting list for them. SHu said this was also something SAIL were looking at and there may be a publication on this soon.	
4	**Update on LSOA naming** – Stef Taylor and John Morris, Welsh Government	
	ST and JM gave a recap of the work and an update. There was a recent review of electoral wards in 2022 in Wales. New names were given so there was a mismatch between some current names, and in addition to this some new LSOA boundaries were created. New names (English and Welsh) are being given to the new LSOAs and some old areas are being renamed. A blog post has been drafted on this topic and will be released in the coming weeks. Six LAs so far have given feedback with details on their preferred names. This process is difficult to do in an automated way, so JM has decided it would be best to engage with LAs individually to get the local knowledge on what names suit areas best. There may be	Action – ST to share link to blog post once published [Post meeting note: The blog has now been published]

	some time taken (certain LAs only) for the Welsh and English names to be confirmed by the Welsh Language Commissioner's Office, but they are going to test this process with the Gwynedd names first as an example and see how the process goes. VD agreed that it may be difficult to group LAs in order to gather feedback, so an individual approach may be best. VD also mentioned that this needs to be resolved before the next WIMD release. JM agreed and has set a target of December 2024 to get this finalised.	
5	**Retiring the current StatsWales OData service** – Steph Howarth and John Morris, Welsh Government	
	SH shared a presentation. The current version of StatsWales has been running since 2012 – WG are in the process of replacing it with a new version (see next agenda item). However, the current tech for the OData service that Microsoft provides will be retired at the end of August, which means there will be a period of disruption between then and the start of the new StatsWales system (2025). The rest of the site should be unaffected, but SH will let users know if there are any issues. Currently, SH and JM are working on a temporary OData solution which could work during this disruption period. The aim would be to create csv files which are formatted in a similar way to OData. Questions/Discussion: - SS asked about the scale – how many users will be affected internally or externally? And timing – there is only a couple of months to go but some organisations (Data Cymru included) have work scheduled for further ahead of time than that, that would have used the OData service. - SH explained that as this has come from Microsoft, it's a tough decision to make but there are too many costs involved in temporarily fixing StatsWales for it to be replaced with the new version next year. WG will be looking to work with Data Cymru and others about how to make it easier and lighten the load on users during the disruption period. JM also explained that the new StatsWales site is being future proofed so that this issue can be avoided in the future – more details in item 6.	Action – (all members) email JM with current uses of OData to better understand what needs to be prioritised when creating replacement csv files.
6	**Developing the new Stats Wales service** – Nicole Burchill, Welsh Government, Ben Marvell and Aspasia Dellaporta, Marvell	
	NB shared a presentation that on the project to redevelop StatsWales, the feedback/issues they've had, and their next steps. The site is being developed using an Agile approach and the plan is to go live in summer 2025. They are still looking for people to help with feedback, particularly Welsh language users.	Action – NB to provide link to members to the fortnightly show and tell session. [Post meeting note: Next

	Breakout rooms were created for workshops on specific topics: Room 1: Improving the StatsWales catalogue to help users browse statistics by topic. - AD shared an exercise on topics, where you sort the cards into groups that make sense to you. This will help with sorting the categories on the new StatsWales system, in a way that makes sense to users. - Answers were collated from the survey being carried out and put into a dashboard which was shared. Individual results will be analysed afterwards. - Feedback was given that a few topics could have fit into many groupings, or that some groupings could have been renamed. A lot of people filling out the exercise were used to where categories already go in the current StatsWales system, which may have been influencing their input. One comment asked if it would be easier to start the exercise with fewer categories and then go into more detail. Room 2: Improving programmatic data access (Open Data and API) for automated access and data processing. - A slido poll was shared by BM, and users gave feedback through these. Most people were using OData currently for dashboards and PowerBI. There have been some issues with dashboards breaking due to slight changes in variable names or formats. - The feedback on future needs highlighted clear documentation and user guides and a stable service as important aspects. People generally preferred NOMIS as an example interface compared to the ONS website. - BM encouraged members to get involved with the weekly reports and fortnightly show and tell sessions.	show and tell is Thursday 27/06/24 at 10:30.] Meeting link: meet.google.com/zes-ejbu-ero **Join by phone** (GB) +44 20 3957 0318 PIN: 264286221	
7	**WIMD update –** Nia Jones, Welsh Government		
	NJ shared a presentation. The timetable for WIMD was shown, with publication estimated to be around November 2025. The criteria need for data to be included under an indicator was also covered, as well as an explanation on how the new LSOAs will be used. The WIMD team are collaborating with the English and/or Scottish IMD teams on income, employment, crime and housing. Members should also note that the current interactive WIMD website will need to be updated/redeveloped for WIMD 2025 as the software is now out of date. SK asked if any thought had been given to certain annual indicator updates post WIMD 2025. NJ mentioned that if the data is available, we would consider restarting this given enough user need and will look into that after WIMD 2025 is published. JE asked about subgroups for the indicators, such as a child index. NJ said there were no plans to produce a child index, but		

	we will explore age breakdowns for indicator data where possible and will explain what is or isn't available and why in the guidance document. Nothing specific is planned on rural deprivation (beyond breakdowns where possible by settlement classification and built up areas) this time around, but the team are keeping in touch with the English IMD team as they are carrying out some work on this. Digital deprivation is also being looked into but is difficult to measure some aspects of it, such as digital skills, at a small area level.	
8	**AOB**	
	The next meeting will be held on Thursday 10 October 2024. Please email KASevents@gov.wales with any topics you'd like to see included or to present at future meetings.	
	Population projections and social care were noted as potential items for a future meeting (see actions). SK mentioned an overview of working with constituency areas data as a possible topic for a future meeting.	
	CT asked the group about CACI PayCheck. SS gave some details about how it is calculated, but the overall issue is the cost, and LAs are wondering if anything alternative is available (as budgets are tight). SS is available to talk to for discussion if LAs would like to discuss this.	

	Actions	Member(s)
1	Invite Social Care Wales members to future meetings.	Steph Howarth/Sue Leake
2	Contact Population Stats team about capability building and sharing R code for population projections.	Steph Howarth/Sue Leake
3	Check the homelessness data on StatsWales for rounding issues.	Steph Howarth/Homelessness Stats team
4	Share a link to the blog post on LSOA names, once published.	Stef Taylor
5	Contact JM with current uses of OData to better understand what needs to be prioritised when creating replacement csv files.	All members
6	Provide a link to members to the fortnightly show and tell session.	Nicole Burchill