

# Assessment of compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics

## Statistics on Transport in Wales

*(produced by the Welsh Assembly  
Government)*

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### **About the UK Statistics Authority**

The UK Statistics Authority is an independent body operating at arm's length from government as a non-ministerial department, directly accountable to Parliament. It was established on 1 April 2008 by the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*.

The Authority's overall objective is to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good. It is also required to promote and safeguard the quality and comprehensiveness of official statistics, and good practice in relation to official statistics.

The Statistics Authority has two main functions:

1. oversight of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) – the executive office of the Authority;
2. independent scrutiny (monitoring and assessment) of all official statistics produced in the UK.

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## ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION

The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* gives the UK Statistics Authority a statutory power to assess sets of statistics against the *Code of Practice for Official Statistics*.

Assessment will determine whether it is appropriate for the statistics to be designated as National Statistics.

Designation as National Statistics means that the statistics comply with the *Code of Practice*. The *Code* is wide-ranging. Designation can be interpreted to mean that the statistics: meet identified user needs; are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards; and are explained well.

Designation as National Statistics should not be interpreted to mean that the statistics are always correct. For example, whilst the *Code* requires statistics to be produced to a level of accuracy that meets users' needs, it also recognises that errors can occur – in which case it requires them to be corrected and publicised.

Assessment Reports will not normally comment further on a set of statistics, for example on their validity as social or economic measures. However, Reports may point to such questions if the Authority believes that further research would be desirable.

Assessment Reports typically provide an overview of any noteworthy features of the methods used to produce the statistics, and will highlight substantial concerns about quality. Assessment Reports also describe aspects of the ways in which the producer addresses the 'sound methods and assured quality' principle of the *Code*, but do not themselves constitute a review of the methods used to produce the statistics. However the *Code* requires producers to "seek to achieve continuous improvement in statistical processes by, for example, undertaking regular reviews".

The Authority may grant designation on condition that the producer body takes steps, within a stated timeframe, to fully meet the *Code's* requirements. This is to avoid public confusion and does not reduce the obligation to comply with the *Code*.

The Authority grants designation on the basis of three main sources of information:

- i. factual evidence and assurances by senior statisticians in the producer body;
- ii. the views of users who we contact, or who contact us, and;
- iii. our own review activity.

Should further information come to light subsequently which changes the Authority's analysis, it may withdraw the Assessment Report and revise it as necessary.

It is a statutory requirement on the producer body to ensure that it continues to produce the set of statistics designated as National Statistics in compliance with the *Code of Practice*.

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# 1 Summary of findings

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is one of a series of reports<sup>1</sup> prepared under the provisions of the *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007*<sup>2</sup>. The Act requires all statistics currently designated as National Statistics to be assessed against the Code of Practice for Official Statistics<sup>3</sup>. The report covers the sets of statistics included in the following National Statistics publications produced by the Welsh Assembly Government:

- *Welsh Transport Statistics*<sup>4</sup>;
- *Monitoring the National Transport Plan, Interim Report*<sup>5</sup>;
- *Police Recorded Road Casualties*<sup>6</sup>;
- *Road Casualties in Wales*<sup>7</sup>;
- *Motorcycle User Casualties*<sup>8</sup>;
- *Pedestrian Road Casualties*<sup>9</sup>;
- *Pedal Cyclist Casualties*<sup>10</sup>;
- *Young Drivers and Road Accidents*<sup>11</sup>; and
- *Road Casualties: Drinking and Driving*<sup>12</sup>.

1.1.2 The *Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007* also allows Ministers to request an assessment of other official statistics in order for them to gain National Statistics status. This report also covers the sets of statistics included in the following publications in response to such a request:

- *'A Walking & Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-2013' Monitoring Report*<sup>13</sup>; and
- *Road Casualties: Wales*<sup>14</sup>.

1.1.3 This report was prepared by the Authority's Assessment team, and approved by the Board of the Statistics Authority on the advice of the Head of Assessment.

1.1.4 *Welsh Transport Statistics* and *Road Casualties: Wales* are compendium publications. Assessments of compendium publications against the Code of Practice relate to the processes involved in preparing the publication, rather than in producing the statistics that are included. Those sets of statistics will normally be subject to separate assessment. Designation of a compendium

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga\\_20070018\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2007/pdf/ukpga_20070018_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/transport2009/?lang=en>

<sup>5</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/100330/?lang=en>

<sup>6</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/1008051/?lang=en>

<sup>7</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/100624/?lang=en>

<sup>8</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/100805/?lang=en>

<sup>9</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/1007081/?lang=en>

<sup>10</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/100708/?lang=en>

<sup>11</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/trans2009/hdw20091208/?lang=en>

<sup>12</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/trans2009/hdw200912011/?lang=en>

<sup>13</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/transport2010/100803/?lang=en>

<sup>14</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/rcw2006/?lang=en>

publication as National Statistics therefore means that the producer body has, for example: identified and met user needs in terms of the content of the publication; considered the appropriateness of each series for inclusion; and written appropriate commentary.

## **1.2 Decision concerning designation as National Statistics**

1.2.1 The Statistics Authority judges that the statistics covered by this report are readily accessible, produced according to sound methods and managed impartially and objectively in the public interest, subject to any points for action in this report. The Statistics Authority confirms that the statistics listed in paragraph 1.1.1 are designated as National Statistics, and has determined that the statistics listed in paragraph 1.1.2 can be designated as new National Statistics products, subject to the Welsh Assembly Government implementing the enhancements listed in section 1.5 and reporting them to the Authority by May 2011. The Welsh Assembly Government has informed the Assessment team that it has already started to implement the Requirements listed in section 1.5. The Statistics Authority welcomes this.

## **1.3 Summary of strengths and weaknesses**

1.3.1 The Welsh Assembly Government engages with both government and non-government users of its transport statistics and recently carried out a consultation to ensure that the statistics meet users' needs. The statistics team has altered the format and timing of its transport statistics publications in response to users' requests.

1.3.2 The statistical publications contain some information about definitions and quality but there is scope to provide more information about quality and about the sources and methods used to compile the statistics.

1.3.3 Following the Authority's assessment of GB road casualty statistics<sup>15</sup> produced for the Department for Transport (DfT) – derived from the STATS19 form which police complete following an accident – the Welsh Assembly Government has taken some steps to explain the figures more clearly but has not yet undertaken or published any estimation of under-recording.

1.3.4 There is scope to improve the accessibility and understanding of the statistics by providing more commentary and analysis, by revising the relevant pages on the Welsh Assembly Government's website, and by ensuring that all transport and road casualty data are available for users to analyse and re-use.

1.3.5 Where possible, the Welsh Assembly Government uses administrative data sources to produce its transport statistics, and it is currently investigating new administrative sources to deal with gaps in the data it receives. The Welsh Assembly Government also broadens the analysis of existing data sources by integrating them with other information sources, and by modelling.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-4---road-casualty-statistics--27-july-2009.pdf>

## 1.4 Detailed recommendations

- 1.4.1 The Assessment team identified some areas where it felt that the Welsh Assembly Government could strengthen its compliance with the Code. Those which the Assessment team considers essential to enable re-designation as National Statistics are listed in section 1.5. Other suggestions, which would improve the statistics and the service provided to users but which are not central to their designation, are listed at annex 1.

## 1.5 Requirements for designation as National Statistics

<b>Requirement 1</b>	Publish information about the methods used to compile Welsh road casualties statistics (para 3.10).
<b>Requirement 2</b>	Provide more information about the quality of the statistics, including strengths and limitations (para 3.11).
<b>Requirement 3</b>	Explain the distinction between National Statistics and the other types of statistic that are in the compendium publication, and confirm that the non-National statistics are of adequate quality (para 3.12).
<b>Requirement 4</b>	Report clearly the findings from DfT's work to estimate the under-counting of road casualties reported to the police (para 3.13).
<b>Requirement 5</b>	Publish the guidance used to assess the quality of the data in the transport statistics publications (para 3.14).
<b>Requirement 6</b>	Provide more commentary and analysis in the transport compendium and road casualties statistics publications to aid understanding and interpretability (para 3.28).
<b>Requirement 7</b>	Publish a timetable for the forthcoming transport statistics publications for the next 12 months (para 3.32).
<b>Requirement 8</b>	Include relevant providers of transport data in the Statement of Administrative Sources (para 3.40).



## 2 Subject of the assessment

2.1 The statistics covered in this assessment cover various aspects of transport in Wales:

- *Welsh Transport Statistics* is a compendium publication which provides statistics on a range of transport topics including road conditions, vehicle licensing and ownership, motoring offences, personal travel, road traffic, public service vehicles, and rail, sea and air transport. In recent years the output has moved from a single annual publication to a web-based publication that is updated on a topic-by-topic basis as new statistics become available;
- *Monitoring the National Transport Plan, Interim Report* summarises progress against the delivery of the *National Transport Plan*<sup>16</sup> which the Welsh Assembly Government developed to deliver the *Wales Transport Strategy*<sup>17</sup>. The publication presents statistics on various social, economic and environmental outcome indicators. The rationale for these indicators and outcomes is included in the strategy;
- *Police Recorded Road Casualties* presents quarterly provisional estimates of casualties resulting from personal injury road accidents in Wales. The estimates monitor emerging trends between the publication of the annual statistics. The publication presents trends on the severity of casualties, progress towards casualty reduction targets and types of casualty including pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists;
- *Road Casualties in Wales* is an annual publication which provides finalised statistics from the quarterly estimates presented in *Police Recorded Road Casualties*. The publication includes summary statistics on the number of casualties by local authority, type of road user and severity of casualty;
- *Motorcycle User Casualties* presents statistics on motorcyclist road traffic casualties in Wales. The publication contains information on the relative risk for motorcyclists compared with other road users, and includes breakdowns of the data by the age and sex of the motorcyclist, category of motorcycle and location of casualties by local authority;
- *Pedestrian Road Casualties* provides details of all pedestrian road traffic casualties in Wales and separate analyses of child casualties. The publication presents trends over time and contains statistics on the circumstances associated with pedestrian casualties, including the age and sex of pedestrians, type of road, type of vehicle involved and weather conditions;
- *Pedal Cyclist Casualties* presents statistics of all pedal cyclist traffic casualties in Wales and separate analyses of child casualties. The publication shows annual trends in the number and severity of casualties, and information about the circumstances associated with pedal cyclist casualties, including the severity of casualty and the time and location of the accident;
- *Young Drivers and Road Accidents* provides details of road traffic accidents in Wales involving drivers aged under 25. The publication

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<sup>16</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/ntp/?lang=en>

<sup>17</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/publications/transportstrategy/?lang=en>

includes comparisons with older drivers and contains breakdowns of the data by the age and sex of driver, type of vehicle, and local authority and police force area;

- *Road Casualties: Drinking and Driving* presents statistics which aim to assess the relationship between drink driving and road accidents and casualties in Wales. The publication provides a range of information about: the association between drink driving and road accidents; the results of breath tests of drivers involved in accidents; and enforcement action related to drink driving, including screening breath tests and outcomes of court prosecutions;
- *'A Walking & Cycling Action Plan for Wales 2009-2013' Monitoring Report* summarises progress against the targets and monitoring indicators in the Welsh Assembly Government's plan to support walking and cycling in Wales. The first report was published in August 2010 and future reports will be published annually. Statistics in this report are compiled from data from the National Travel Survey, the Labour Force Survey and Sport Wales participation surveys; and
- *Road Casualties: Wales* is a compendium publication which presents analyses of the road accident statistics database for Wales. The most recent publication contains data for 2006 and includes historical data and some UK-wide and international comparisons. The publication provides trends on the numbers of casualties, progress towards casualty reduction targets and breakdowns of casualties by severity and by the age and type of road user.

2.2 The Welsh Assembly Government's transport statistics are used for a variety of purposes, including:

- developing the Welsh Assembly Government's *National Transport Plan* which aims to deliver the *Wales Transport Strategy*; and monitoring progress against the outcome indicators in the plan;
- providing the evidence base for determining the Welsh Assembly Government's road casualty reduction targets<sup>18</sup>, and measuring progress against these targets;
- informing resource allocations to local authorities – for example, statistics on road length in *Welsh Transport Statistics* are a component of the formula used to calculate the local government revenue settlement in Wales;
- identifying accident 'hot spots' and other factors relating to road accidents and casualties to help prioritise spending and other interventions related to road safety;
- monitoring progress against the targets in the Welsh Assembly Government's *Walking & Cycling Action Plan for Wales*<sup>19</sup>;
- forecasting the level of grants paid to local authorities to fund bus subsidy schemes such as concessionary fares; and

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<sup>18</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/roads/roadsafety/?lang=en>

<sup>19</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/transport/publications/walkcycleactionplan09/?lang=en>

- briefing Welsh Ministers and Welsh Assembly Government policy officials of relevant trends and developments in transport.

2.3 The Welsh Assembly Government told the Assessment team that it currently costs around £75,000 a year to compile, check and publish its transport and road casualties statistics, and to deal with ad hoc queries from users about the statistics.

### 3 Assessment findings

#### Principle 1: Meeting user needs

**The production, management and dissemination of official statistics should meet the requirements of informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.**

- 3.1 The Welsh Assembly Government's statistics team engages with various user groups, including the Transport Statistics User Group (TSUG) in Wales<sup>20</sup> and the Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee<sup>21</sup>. The TSUG in Wales includes non-government members such as transport consultants and representatives from local authorities and academia. The membership of the Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee includes representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, police services and the Welsh Language Board. The Welsh Assembly Government publishes the minutes of Committee meetings<sup>22</sup> on its website. The TSUG in Wales also publishes minutes of meetings on its website, but these are only accessible in the members' login area of the website.
- 3.2 A monitoring group within the Welsh Assembly Government enables government providers and users of Welsh transport statistics to discuss the statistical priorities and requirements of Welsh Assembly Government transport policy officials. The Welsh Assembly Government's Transport Planning section has recently established a road safety data monitoring group with representatives from organisations with road safety responsibilities, such as police forces and ambulance services. The first meeting took place in November 2010. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government publish information about these monitoring groups to show how it meets all users' needs relating to Welsh transport and road casualties statistics.
- 3.3 From March to June 2010 the Welsh Assembly Government carried out a web-based consultation<sup>23</sup> on its transport statistics. One objective of the consultation was to ensure that the statistical outputs meet users' needs. The Welsh Assembly Government plans to publish the responses to this consultation by the end of January 2011 and will publish a summary of the outcome of the consultation in spring 2011. The statistics team also keeps records of enquiries from government and non-government users to monitor requests and the ways that the statistics are being used. The Welsh Assembly Government has published information on the uses of its transport statistics in recent statistical publications.
- 3.4 The Welsh Assembly Government publishes an annual statistical work plan<sup>24</sup> which contains its overall user engagement plan and the Statistical Directorate's priorities for the year ahead. The plan includes the publication timetable for statistical outputs for the forthcoming year, and sets out the work programme for transport statistics which the statistics team developed following

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<sup>20</sup> <http://www.tsug.org.uk>

<sup>21</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/liaison/?lang=en>

<sup>22</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/liaison/meetings/?lang=en>

<sup>23</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/transport/?lang=en&status=closed>

<sup>24</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/statsplan1011/?lang=en>

consultation with government colleagues. The Welsh Assembly Government invites users to comment on its statistical plan.

3.5 Since 2009 the Welsh Assembly Government has changed the format and timing of its road casualties statistical publications in response to users' feedback – for example, it now publishes:

- quarterly casualty figures (in addition to annual data) in response to users' requests for more frequent data;
- data tables<sup>25</sup> at local authority level; and
- maps for each local authority area in Wales showing the locations of car occupant<sup>26</sup>, motorcyclist<sup>27</sup> and pedestrian<sup>28</sup> casualties.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/roadcasualties/?lang=en>

<sup>26</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/casualtiescar2008/?lang=en>

<sup>27</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/casualtiesmotorcyclist2008/?lang=en>

<sup>28</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/casualtiespedestrian2008/?lang=en>

## Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity

**Official statistics, and information about statistical processes, should be managed impartially and objectively.**

- 3.6 The Welsh Assembly Government releases transport statistics according to a published timetable and makes the statistics available free of charge on its website. It presents the statistics impartially and objectively.
- 3.7 The Welsh Assembly Government has published a statement<sup>29</sup> to explain how it communicates revisions to its statistical outputs. The transport statistics team includes revisions in the *Welsh Transport Statistics* outputs, and in the Key Quality Information section of the *Police Recorded Road Casualties* publication. The statistics team told us that no errors have been found in the Welsh Assembly Government's transport statistical publications.
- 3.8 If there are changes to methods which affect historical comparisons, the Welsh Assembly Government highlights the point in the appropriate data table at which the change was made. The statistics team first discusses with suppliers whether a change in methods merits this treatment. Although it has not done so in the past, the transport statistics team informed us that, where appropriate, it will also announce changes to methods and classifications in advance of the release of the changed statistics.

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<sup>29</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/compliance/revisions/?lang=en>

### **Principle 3: Integrity**

**At all stages in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics, the public interest should prevail over organisational, political or personal interests.**

- 3.9 No incidents of political pressure, abuses of trust or complaints relating to professional integrity, quality or standards were reported to or identified by the Assessment team. The Welsh Assembly Government issues guidance to staff detailing their responsibilities regarding the use of statistics.

## Principle 4: Sound methods and assured quality

**Statistical methods should be consistent with scientific principles and internationally recognised best practices, and be fully documented. Quality should be monitored and assured taking account of internationally agreed practices.**

- 3.10 *Welsh Transport Statistics* contains the Welsh component of a GB-level dataset. The annual compendium publication includes a description of how the Welsh Assembly Government used these GB-level data to compile the publication but this information is not included in the topic-based outputs. The Welsh Assembly Government's road casualties statistics publications contain definitions, and some outputs include information about data sources, but there is little information about the methods used to compile the statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should publish information about the methods it uses to produce its transport and road casualties statistics<sup>30</sup> (Requirement 1).
- 3.11 The Welsh Assembly Government's transport compendium publications contain little information about the quality of the statistical outputs. The road casualties statistical publications include some information about aspects of quality such as data coverage. However, there is scope to provide more detail about quality, such as their relevance to users and the accuracy of statistics derived from other organisations' data (for example, DfT). As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should provide more information about the quality of these statistics, including relevance and accuracy<sup>31</sup> (Requirement 2).
- 3.12 The compendium publications, *Welsh Transport Statistics* and *Road Casualties: Wales*, mainly comprise National Statistics but also contain some non-National Statistics such as Civil Aviation Authority data. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should explain the distinction between National Statistics and the other types of statistic that are in the compendium publications, and confirm that the non-National statistics are of adequate quality<sup>32</sup> (Requirement 3).
- 3.13 The statistics team has made some changes to its road casualties publications following the Authority's assessment of GB Road Casualty Statistics – for example, clarification that the statistics are derived from information reported to the police. The road casualties publications also contain some information about the possible under-recording of road casualties data. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should report clearly the findings from DfT's work to estimate the under-counting of road casualties reported to the police<sup>33</sup> (Requirement 4).
- 3.14 The Welsh Assembly Government has developed an internal quality framework but it has not published any quality guidelines. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should publish the

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<sup>30</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 1 of the Code of Practice

<sup>31</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

<sup>32</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

<sup>33</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice



guidance it uses to assess the quality of the data in its statistical publications<sup>34</sup> (Requirement 5).

- 3.15 The Welsh Assembly Government carries out various quality assurance procedures after receiving transport and road casualty data from its suppliers – for example, the statistics team ensures that each road accident is allocated to the correct local authority area. However, these checking procedures are not currently documented. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government document its procedures for quality assuring the data it uses to compile its transport and road casualty statistics.
- 3.16 Because most of the data in *Welsh Transport Statistics* are provided by GB-wide bodies such as DfT and the Office for Rail Regulation, the underlying data in *Welsh Transport Statistics* are comparable with those for the rest of GB. The Welsh Assembly Government publishes a report on GB comparisons<sup>35</sup> as one of the topic-based outputs of *Welsh Transport Statistics*. The Welsh Assembly Government's road casualties publications use data derived from the STATS19 form which is used by police forces across the UK. The Welsh road casualties statistics are comparable with those for the rest of the UK but the statistical publications do not include any UK-wide comparisons. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government include appropriate signposting to equivalent road casualties statistics published by the other UK administrations.

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<sup>34</sup> In relation to Principle 4 Practice 4 of the Code of Practice

<sup>35</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2010/101118wts2009ch13ency.pdf>

## Principle 5: Confidentiality

**Private information about individual persons (including bodies corporate) compiled in the production of official statistics is confidential, and should be used for statistical purposes only.**

- 3.17 The compendium publications contain data collected by other organisations for their own purposes. None of these data are confidential or disclosive.
- 3.18 The information the Welsh Assembly Government uses to compile its road casualties statistics – for example, the time and location of an accident – does not present any confidentiality issues. Therefore, the Welsh Assembly Government does not need to apply any disclosure control to the publication of its road casualty statistics. The statistics team holds – but does not publish – some information which may enable the identification of individuals such as the registration numbers of vehicles involved in accidents and the postcodes of drivers and casualties. It uses the postcode data to investigate the links between road accidents and local areas' level of deprivation, and it sends vehicle registration information to DfT which examines accidents and casualties by the make and model of the vehicles involved.
- 3.19 The STATS19 database is password protected within the Welsh Assembly Government and is only accessible by transport statisticians. Other than DfT, the only recipients of individual records from the transport statisticians are Welsh Assembly Government policy officials who deal with trunk road management. These data exclude personally disclosive fields but the Welsh Assembly Government is considering whether a Data Access Agreement should be created if a database extract of individual records is required. Such an arrangement would enhance the utility of the statistics while ensuring that confidentiality is protected.
- 3.20 The standard terms and conditions for all Welsh Assembly Government staff include confidentiality arrangements, and the Welsh Assembly Government has published its arrangements for confidentiality protection<sup>36</sup>. These include the Statistical Directorate's current information security project, staff training, and organisational protocols such as statistical disclosure control techniques.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/compliance/confidential/?lang=en>

## **Principle 6: Proportionate burden**

**The cost burden on data suppliers should not be excessive and should be assessed relative to the benefits arising from the use of the statistics.**

- 3.21 The data that the Welsh Assembly Government uses to compile its transport statistics are generally sourced from other organisations such as DfT, and the Welsh components are a small part of the overall datasets. Therefore the Welsh Assembly Government has not needed to estimate the costs to data suppliers of providing the data. The Welsh Assembly Government is developing administrative sources to deal with gaps in data – for example, concessionary fares and road conditions – which will carry no additional statistics-related burden for data suppliers.
- 3.22 For road casualties statistics, new data requirements are developed through DfT’s quinquennial review of the STATS19 form. The form is part of the administrative procedure for monitoring road accidents and casualties, and these data would have to be collected to meet the statutory responsibilities of the police and local authorities. Therefore the Welsh Assembly Government has not needed to estimate the costs to data suppliers of providing the data.

## Principle 7: Resources

**The resources made available for statistical activities should be sufficient to meet the requirements of this Code and should be used efficiently and effectively.**

- 3.23 The Welsh Assembly Government's transport statistics team comprises four full-time staff. The team informed us that, although it currently has a vacancy, it has sufficient resources to produce and publish transport statistics to the standards of the Code of Practice.
- 3.24 The Welsh Assembly Government participates in the Government Statistical Service's recruitment schemes and uses a competency-based framework to manage staff performance. This involves assessments of continuing professional development and six-month performance reviews.

## Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility

**Official statistics, accompanied by full and frank commentary, should be readily accessible to all users.**

- 3.25 The format of *Welsh Transport Statistics* follows previous years' layout and presentation of tables. This topic-based publication is intended as a reference document, and the Welsh Assembly Government aims to present as much detail in one place as possible and to maintain consistency between tables over successive years. In recent years the Welsh Assembly Government has changed the output from a single annual publication to an annual series of topic-based web publications that are updated as new statistics become available. The layout of *Welsh Transport Statistics* is similar to the corresponding compendium publications in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 3.26 The statistics team publishes a range of road casualties outputs in various formats, including: statistical bulletins which contain both high-level and detailed figures, and progress against the Welsh Assembly Government's casualty reduction targets; statistical tables for local authority areas; and maps for each local authority area showing the locations of car occupant, motorcyclist and pedestrian casualties. The team developed these formats based on: recording users' requests; the results of the public consultation about transport statistics; and identifying key issues for a transport topic area and publishing data regularly on them.
- 3.27 For *Monitoring the National Transport Plan, Interim Report*, the statistics team aims to provide enough detail to inform users about each of the monitoring outcomes and indicators. In the recent consultation, users expressed a preference to continue with an annual publication rather than change to ad hoc publications produced as data become available.
- 3.28 The topic-based *Welsh Transport Statistics* outputs and the road casualties publications contain little analysis or commentary to help users to understand and interpret the statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should provide more commentary and analysis in its transport statistics publications to aid understanding and interpretability<sup>37</sup> (Requirement 6).
- 3.29 Where appropriate, the Welsh Assembly Government ensures that its statistical outputs are available in Welsh. The statistics team issues hard copies of publications when requested, although it is reviewing the requirements for any high-volume hard copy publications with a view to reducing its environmental impact. The Welsh Assembly Government also responds to any requests for large print publications and makes its transport statistics available on its website. Several users informed us that they have difficulty in finding the relevant web pages for transport and road casualties statistics. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government review the layout of the relevant web pages to ensure that users are able to locate transport statistics publications easily. We also suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government investigate ways to further publicise its transport statistics.

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<sup>37</sup> In relation to Principle 8 Practice 2 of the Code of Practice

3.30 Until recently, the Welsh Assembly Government made some of its transport data available on the StatsWales<sup>38</sup> website to allow users to download the information for further analysis and re-use. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently moving these tables to its website. We suggest that the Welsh Assembly Government update these tables as soon as possible – and provide appropriate metadata and guidance – to allow users to analyse and re-use the data.

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[http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?CS\\_referer=&CS\\_ChosenLang=en](http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?CS_referer=&CS_ChosenLang=en)

## **Protocol 1: User engagement**

**Effective user engagement is fundamental both to trust in statistics and securing maximum public value. This Protocol draws together the relevant practices set out elsewhere in the Code and expands on the requirements in relation to consultation.**

3.31 The requirements for this Protocol are covered elsewhere in this report.

## Protocol 2: Release practices

**Statistical reports should be released into the public domain in an orderly manner that promotes public confidence and gives equal access to all, subject to relevant legislation.**

- 3.32 The Welsh Assembly Government publishes its transport and road casualties statistics on its website and on the National Statistics Publication Hub. The Welsh Assembly Government's annual statistical work plan includes details of the planned statistical outputs for the forthcoming year but this does not include all the transport publications – for example, *Police Recorded Road Casualties* is not included in the list. The statistics team plans the publication dates of its annual and quarterly road casualties statistical outputs to coincide with DfT's publication of GB-level first releases, and the Welsh Assembly Government publishes the release dates for its forthcoming transport publications for the next six months<sup>39</sup> on its website. However, it does not publish a timetable for these outputs for 12 months ahead. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should publish a timetable for its forthcoming transport and road casualty statistics publications for the next 12 months<sup>40</sup> (Requirement 7).
- 3.33 The only instance of a recent postponement of transport statistics occurred with the publication of the 2009 *Road Casualties* (second quarter) statistics as the database became corrupt shortly before the publication date. The statistics team issued a Ministerial Brief to inform the relevant Minister and Welsh Assembly Government officials and informed users about the postponement on its website.
- 3.34 In compliance with the Pre-release Access to Official Statistics (Wales) Order<sup>41</sup>, the Welsh Assembly Government publishes lists of people who have pre-release access<sup>42</sup> to its individual statistical publications on its website.
- 3.35 The Welsh Assembly Government has included the names and contact details of responsible statisticians in recent statistics publications on transport and road casualties.

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<sup>39</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/duw/duw-theme/trans/?lang=en>

<sup>40</sup> In relation to Protocol 2 Practice 6 of the Code of Practice

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2009/wsi\\_20092818\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/wales/wsi2009/wsi_20092818_en_1)

<sup>42</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/about/prerelease/?lang=en>



### **Protocol 3: The use of administrative sources for statistical purposes**

#### **Administrative sources should be fully exploited for statistical purposes, subject to adherence to appropriate safeguards.**

- 3.36 Where appropriate, the Welsh Assembly Government uses administrative data – for example, on road lengths, vehicle licensing and road accidents – to compile its transport statistics. However, for some transport topics, the most appropriate sources are either: surveys (such as travel diaries) to assess personal travel patterns, attitudes to transport and reasons for travel; or industry data for information on road freight, bus operations and rail industry operations. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently developing administrative sources to fill gaps in data for several transport areas, including:
- concessionary fares, using administrative data from payments made under this scheme;
  - road conditions, using data on road quality which are collected to manage the road network; and
  - the effect of climate change on transport infrastructure, combining data on infrastructure with Environment Agency data on flooding.
- 3.37 For some transport topics, the Welsh Assembly Government uses modelling to exploit existing data sources – for example, in calculating of the proportion of households within specific travel times to various facilities.
- 3.38 The Welsh Assembly Government requests updates to data tables from suppliers such as DfT and has investigated alternative approaches such as getting copies of the Welsh component of DfT databases and extracting the data. The Welsh Assembly Government decided to retain the present approach as the statistics team requires little data and these can be supplied on an ad hoc basis.
- 3.39 In addition to reporting road casualties figures from STATS19 data returns, the Welsh Assembly Government has broadened the analysis by integrating STATS19 data with other information sources – for example:
- calculating accidents and casualties per head of population and relevant population group;
  - showing locations of accidents and casualties in maps in order to identify any ‘clusters’;
  - linking location of accident, postcode of casualties and postcode of driver with Welsh Index of Deprivation area rankings to investigate links between road traffic casualties and deprivation.
- 3.40 The Welsh Assembly Government has published a Statement of Administrative Sources which describes the administrative and management sources<sup>43</sup> which the Statistical Directorate currently uses – or which have the potential to be used – to produce official statistics. However, this Statement does not include the sources used to compile transport statistics. As part of the designation as National Statistics, the Welsh Assembly Government should include relevant

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<sup>43</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2010/100330adminen.pdf>

providers of transport data in its Statement of Administrative Sources<sup>44</sup>  
(Requirement 8).

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<sup>44</sup> In relation to Protocol 3 Practice 5 of the Code of Practice

## Annex 1: Suggestions for improvement

A1.1 This annex includes some suggestions for improvement to the Welsh Assembly Government in the interest of the public good. These are not formally required for designation, but the Assessment team considers that their implementation will improve public confidence in the production, management and dissemination of official statistics.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>Suggestion 1</b> | Publish information about transport statistics monitoring groups to show how users' needs relating to Welsh transport and road casualties statistics are met (para 3.2).                               |
| <b>Suggestion 2</b> | Document the procedures for quality assuring the data used to compile transport and road casualty statistics (para 3.15).  |
| <b>Suggestion 3</b> | Include appropriate signposting to equivalent road casualties statistics in the other UK administrations (para 3.16).  |
| <b>Suggestion 4</b> | Review the layout of the relevant web pages to ensure that users are able to locate transport statistics publications easily (para 3.29).  |
| <b>Suggestion 5</b> | Investigate ways to further publicise the transport statistics (para 3.29).  |
| <b>Suggestion 6</b> | Update the data tables previously available on the StatsWales website as soon as possible – and provide appropriate metadata and guidance – to allow users to analyse and re-use the data (para 3.30). |

## **Annex 2: Summary of assessment process and users' views**

- A2.1 This assessment of Welsh transport statistics – excluding road casualties – started in April 2010 but was suspended in May following the decision to carry out a combined assessment with Welsh road casualties statistics later in the year. The combined assessment was conducted from October to December 2010.
- A2.2 The Assessment team – Phil Grigor and Emma Bowditch – agreed the scope of and timetable for this assessment with Welsh Assembly Government representatives in October. The Written Evidence for Assessment was provided on 30 July and 7 September. The Assessment team subsequently met the Welsh Assembly Government during November to review compliance with the Code of Practice, taking account of the written evidence provided and other relevant sources of evidence.

### **Summary of users contacted, and issues raised**

- A2.3 Part of the assessment process involves our consideration of the views of users. We approach some known and potential users of the set of statistics, and we invite comments via an open note on the Authority's website. This process is not a statistical survey, but it enables us to gain some insights about the extent to which the statistics meet users' needs and the extent to which users feel that the producers of those statistics engage with them. We are aware that responses from users may not be representative of wider views, and we take account of this in the way that we prepare assessment reports.
- A2.4 The Assessment team received 11 responses from the consultation with users and suppliers. The respondents were grouped as follows:
- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Welsh Assembly Government            | 1 |
| Other government department / agency | 2 |
| Local Government                     | 5 |
| Private sector                       | 3 |
- A2.5 The users responding to the consultation carried out as part of the assessment reported being generally satisfied with the engagement with the statistics team responsible for producing these statistics. The statistics team has provided additional analysis for some key users and added these to the range of statistics publications. However, some users requested data at local authority level or by regional transport consortia areas, and more public transport statistics. Users also reported having difficulty navigating the transport statistics web pages on the Welsh Assembly Government's website.

### **Key documents/links provided**

Written Evidence for Assessment document



