
Director General for Regulation

Glyn Jones
Chief Statistician
Welsh Government
(by email)

27 April 2020

Dear Glyn

PROVISION IN LOCAL AUTHORITY SETTINGS DURING THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC

I am writing to endorse the new official statistics Welsh Government is about to publish. I would like to congratulate everyone involved for their work to produce these timely and valuable statistics in challenging circumstances.

As discussed, I am also happy to confirm the exemption from the Code of Practice for Statistics' standard publication time of 9.30am to permit a later release time of noon each Monday for these statistics. This will enable the statistics to be as timely as possible under the circumstances, and I welcome your endeavours to publish such timely information.

My team has conducted a [rapid regulatory review](#) of these statistics. We have reviewed the extent to which they have been produced in accordance with the Code of Practice's Trustworthiness, Quality and Value pillars, while taking account of the pressures you and your teams have faced to deliver timely statistics about a rapidly evolving situation. A summary of our findings is set out below. More detailed feedback has been provided to your team.

Value

- We welcome the rapid development and publication of these statistics so they can support understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on schools and pupils. We note that this is an evolving release and acknowledge your commitment to keep the statistics under review as the demand for new insights changes over coming weeks and months.
- We support your decision to bring forward publication of headline figures from the January 2020 School Census to enable the numbers of pupils and staff to be put in context, and your assurances that you have been able to deliver robust headline estimates to a compressed timetable. We will keep the National Statistics designation of these statistics under review whilst the impact on users of the changes to the level of insight provided, and the restricted quality assurance is better understood.

Quality

- Using the expertise of Data Cymru to quickly establish a system for collecting daily data from local authorities has established a firm footing for the collection of the data. The robust mechanisms that you have established for assuring the quality of the data, along with clear, prominent statements within the statistical bulletin about the source of the data and quality assurance that has taken place provide appropriate assurances about quality.

Trustworthiness

- The decision to publish these statistics as a full statistical bulletin and your efforts to preannounce as soon as possible both offer transparency to users.
- You have reprioritised resources quickly to enable people to work on this. It has required a considerable effort from many different teams, which is to be commended.

We look forward to seeing these statistics develop as circumstances change. As set out in the guidance on changes to statistical outputs you can include a statement in your release such as “These statistics have been produced quickly in response to developing world events. The Office for Statistics Regulation, on behalf of the UK Statistics Authority, has reviewed them against several key aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics and regards them as consistent with the Code’s pillars of Trustworthiness, Quality and Value.”

I am copying this to Steve Hughes, head of schools statistics at the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Humpherson', written in a cursive style.

Ed Humpherson

Director General for Regulation