
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Stephanie Howarth
Chief Statistician, Welsh Government
(by email)

10 November 2021

Dear Steph

Regional Economic and Labour Market Profiles for Wales

We recently completed our compliance check of the [Regional Economic and Labour Market Profiles](#) against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). The profiles bring together data on Welsh economic regions in one bulletin to enable comparisons to be made more easily. The team told us that the regional profiles are largely used to signpost users to the latest data.

We note that the publication of the regional profiles was paused in 2020 due to resource and priority implications arising from Covid-19. The data were still made available elsewhere through existing dissemination tools including StatsWales and the [Welsh Economy in Numbers dashboard](#), which presents key economy and labour market indicators for Wales with comparisons against the other UK countries and regions.

In carrying out this review, the statistics team told us that it has been considering the future of the regional profiles as part of its post-pandemic reprioritisation. This resonates with the findings from our recent [review](#) of lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to health and care statistics, where we recommended that “Producers should continue to review their existing statistical releases. They should decide, based on balancing user needs with resource and the ongoing burden on staff, which statistics should be continued, restarted, or stopped, and how or with what frequency.”

We welcome the team’s plans to engage with users to inform its prioritisation and to consider where best to allocate its resource to add most value. We look forward to your planned blog which will set out several proposed changes to the suite of economic statistics releases, one of which will be the possibility of stopping the regional profiles in favour of making incremental improvements to the dashboard. The Code advocates that producers should take a continuous improvement approach to their statistics. Making greater use of the existing dashboard is a positive example of how an innovative approach to dissemination can better meet users’ changing appetite for accessing and engaging with statistics, and reduce the resource spent producing long bulletins in pdf format.

In developing the dashboard, the statistics team should ensure that the numbers are not published in isolation and that supporting quality and background information remain accessible, to ensure that users can draw the appropriate insights from the data. Much like a compendium release, the dashboard contains data from a range of statistics. The team should look to signal which statistics are National Statistics to allow users to identify which statistics have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation and to reassure users of the quality of the statistics.

We would encourage the team to consider ways that it can inform users when updates are made to the dashboard and we are pleased to hear it is considering establishing an economic statistics user panel, to strengthen its relationship with users and to guide future developments of its economic statistics releases.

I'd like to thank your team for its positive engagement on this review. We will continue to engage with the team over coming months as it determines the future for these statistics.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Pont', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead