

Assessment of compliance with the Code of
Practice for Statistics

Statistics on the Wellbeing of Wales

(Produced by Welsh Government)

Office for Statistics Regulation

We provide independent regulation of all official statistics produced in the UK. Statistics are an essential public asset. We aim to enhance public confidence in the trustworthiness, quality and value of statistics produced by government.

We do this by setting the standards they must meet in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). We ensure that producers of government statistics uphold these standards by conducting assessments against the Code. Those which meet the standards are given National Statistics status, indicating that they meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and value. We also report publicly on system-wide issues and on the way statistics are being used, celebrating when the standards are upheld and challenging publicly when they are not.

Introduction

- 1.1 The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) (“the Act”) requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. Part of this legislation requires Welsh Ministers to publish national well-being indicators and an annual well-being report. Following the enactment of this legislation, the Welsh Government developed a suite of outputs comprising an annual Wellbeing of Wales [report](#) published alongside an [indicator dashboard](#).
- 1.2 The report presents an update on progress made toward the achievement of the [seven well-being goals](#) drawing on statistics that represent 50 national indicators, along with other relevant data.
- 1.3 OSR began its assessment of the statistics in 2018 against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). We published interim [findings](#) in 2019, where our primary concern was regarding wider engagement to known and potential users, to help understand the range of users and their needs. Our assessment was additionally paused during the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to our initial findings, we found that the statistics team has made substantial steps to engage users to understand their needs.
- 1.4 Through the developments made to the statistics over the last few years, and in requesting this assessment, the Welsh Government statistics team has demonstrated a strong commitment to the standards required of the Code of Practice. We judge that the suite comprising the statistical report and the dashboard of detailed data meets the standards of the Code and can therefore be designated National Statistics.

Trustworthiness

- 1.5 The Wellbeing of Wales report is released in an orderly manner, with future publication dates announced in advance. The report has usually been published each September to ensure its publication is as close as possible to the end of the preceding financial year. The report for 2020 was slightly delayed from the usual cycle of September publication because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.6 The statistics team is transparent in the report about changes to the chosen indicators. The report includes details of where the Covid-19 pandemic identified data gaps, and the statistics team’s approach to consulting users on filling those gaps.

Quality

Data sources

- 1.7 The Wellbeing of Wales report relies on statistics and data from a wide range of sources. The dashboard covers 50 national indicators, and these data along with others are used as the basis of the narrative in the report. The data were selected for their accuracy and robustness as varied measures of the seven well-being goals. Wherever possible, existing data sources are used, and the statistics team has taken a pragmatic approach to using existing official statistics where possible,

supplementing these with data from other sources where this will add value to the output.

- 1.8 The statistics team is proactive in improving coverage and quality of existing indicators and adding new indicators. This reflects a strong culture of improvement and innovation through the continuous process of indicator selection and refinement. For example, Welsh Government has:
- a. added four new indicators following extensive consultation and engagement to ensure that the indicator set remained relevant in the light of societal changes following the pandemic. These include the percentage of people who have confidence in the justice system, and an indicator about housing affordability. The team is in the process of developing questions for the National Survey for Wales to measure the former, and using data from an existing source – the Family Resources Survey – for the latter indicator, which had widespread interest from users.
 - b. Improved some indicators. For example, the team has worked with experts in the sector to develop a new method to fill a gap in the indicator set on biodiversity. More generally the team has improved coverage of protected characteristics, or signposted to where this information can be found, across a range of indicators.

Documentation about quality

- 1.9 The narrative within the report allows the statisticians to incorporate information about quality and uncertainty of the statistics on a case-by-case basis to help users interpret the statistics appropriately. For example, the 2021 report includes statements such as “Most labour market data is survey-based and volatile, and short run changes should not be over-interpreted” which gives a really clear sense of the uncertainties around the data. In other cases, the report notes where differences are statistically significant. However, statements such as “The percentage of pensioners in relative income poverty fell by 1 percentage point for the second consecutive period following a gradual rise since around 2013” from the 2021 report would be better if they provided greater context around whether such a small numerical value actually represents a real-world change or not. We welcome the statistics team’s commitment to review how it presents uncertainty within the report.
- 1.10 The report also outlines where data are from official statistics (including those designated as National Statistics) or other sources to help support the understanding of data quality. The report is accompanied by an extensive range of information about the quality of the data used. Separate [quality reports](#) for indicator data and for other contextual information used in the report provide information about quality and links to further information, to help users interpret the statistics. The technical descriptions and source of each indicator are comprehensively [documented](#) along with a range of links, all of which helps users to understand the quality of the sources and the rationale for inclusion. For example, the inclusion of “Percentage of live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g” is explained with reference to the fact that low birth weights are associated with health risks in an infant’s first year of life, alongside the source and link to the data.

Value

Insights

- 1.11 The Wellbeing of Wales report provides an update on the progress that Wales is making against a range of indicators. The way that it brings together a range of indicators into a single place, with helpful commentary, means that the report is able to provide a useful resource for users ranging from policy-makers to individual members of public. The report also includes links to further contextual information, which adds additional value.
- 1.12 In addition, the report is accompanied by an indicator dashboard which enables users to easily access the statistics that they most care about without having to navigate the entire report.

Use and user engagement

- 1.13 The primary motivation for the development of the report is to monitor progress towards the well-being goals. As part of that, the Future Generations Commissioner is a key user in order to be able to evaluate the ways in which Wales is progressing in its pursuit of the seven well-being goals.
- 1.14 The report can also be used across a range of sectors including local government to help shape local well-being plans. The report is also useful for sector organisations to use when applying for funding. For example, the National Lottery Heritage Fund's [Strategic Funding Framework](#) used the report to understand progress toward development goals as part of evidence considered in funding allocation.
- 1.15 Our interim findings from 2019 identified that the Welsh Government needed to do more to understand who uses the Wellbeing of Wales report, for what, and to use the information gathered as the basis for continuing to improve the offering to users.
- 1.16 Since then, the statistics team has implemented an outreach strategy to develop its understanding. This has included consultations in the form of forums, blogs, webinars, engagement with young people such as with [Young Wales](#) to engage with a panel of young people, engagement with public bodies, and with the third sector. The team has used the [Shaping Wales's Future blog](#) to provide regular updates and seek views on the report and indicators. Subsequently, the statistics team published a summary of its [findings](#) in 2019, which it then further updated in 2021. Statistical matters related to the Act were also a standing agenda item for the Welsh Statistical Liaison Committee during 2021, recognising the intense use of the indicators during that time as local well-being assessments were being developed.
- 1.17 These findings demonstrate an increased understanding of the user base. We are further reassured by the statistics team's commitment to continue to enhance its understanding of use and to build publicity for the Wellbeing of Wales statistics. This includes plans for blogs and promotion of the report both within and outside the Welsh Government, for example by discussing regularly with policy teams as well as meetings that the Welsh Government holds with third sector organisations.

Innovation and improvement

- 1.18 Section 20 of the Act gives the Future Generations Commissioner power to carry out reviews into the extent that public bodies are implementing the Act. In January 2022, the Commissioner launched such a [review](#) into how the Welsh Government implements the Act. We welcome the statistics teams' commitment to use the findings of that review, along with other insights generated through feedback from other users, to further improve the public value generated by the Wellbeing of Wales report and dashboard.

Accessibility

- 1.19 The report is available in html and pdf formats. In addition, the Welsh Government has published an 'easy read' version of the report, to broaden accessibility to a wider audience. That the report is accompanied by detailed data ensures that users can access the data and the insights generated from them, at a range of levels that meet their needs.

