
Mark Pont, Assessment Programme Lead

Stephanie Howarth
Chief Statistician, Welsh Government
(by email)

3 February 2023

Dear Steph

School Workforce Annual Census statistics

We recently completed our Compliance Check against the Code of Practice for Statistics of the [School Workforce Annual Census \(SWAC\) statistics](#). Our review primarily focused on the Value pillar and identified several strengths of the SWAC statistics as well as a number of ways in which we consider the quality and value of the statistics could be further enhanced:

- The SWAC statistics provide valuable information on teachers and support staff in local authority maintained schools in Wales and are the only comprehensive source of information on teachers' pay, meeting a vital policy need. We understand that you are planning on exploring the possibility of developing a teacher pay data series that is coherent with one or more of the other UK nations. We consider this to be a positive step that will enable users to build a cross-UK picture in this policy area and we look forward to the outcomes of this work.
- The SWAC data are available in the [Secure Anonymised Information Linkage \(SAIL\) Databank](#). This means that they can be linked to other data sources to provide valuable insights into the school workforce staff in Wales, greatly increasing the value of the statistics. One example of such work was the [linking of the SWAC data to the shielded patient list \(SPL\)](#) in 2020 which enabled analysis of the number of teachers and teaching assistants on the SPL by local authority as well as by school phase and medium. This analysis contributed to a strong evidence base for policy decisions relating to the reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Administrative Data Research \(ADR\) Wales Planned Programme of Work for 2022-2026](#) outlines several planned research areas using the SWAC data including: the role of Welsh language skills and usage in the teaching workforce, pay and progression differences in the teaching workforce, and the impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes. This work by ADR Wales will help inform policy, operational decisions and the legislative programme.
- The team has a good understanding of the key users of the SWAC data and has engaged with them throughout the development of the statistics. We understand that you are currently working on extending your engagement beyond your key users. This will enable you to gather a wider range of views on the statistics which will help

to maximise public value by ensuring that the statistics continue to meet the needs of users and potential users.

- There are other similar data in this space, for example, statistics on the school workforce published by the Education Workforce Council (EWC). We encourage you to continue to investigate and explain any differences between the SWAC statistics and alternative data sources. We consider that a close working relationship with such organisations would benefit both the statistics and the users.
- We welcome the use of technology and automated processes that are already in use in the collection and production of the SWAC statistics. We recommend that you consider incorporating principles of the Government Statistical Service's [Reproducible Analytical Pipelines](#) (RAP) which will help you to ensure that your processes are of high quality, transparent and efficient.

I would like to thank you and your colleagues for their positive engagement on this review and hope the points outlined above are beneficial in the further development of the SWAC statistics. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any aspects of this letter further.

I am copying this letter to Gareth Thomas, Head of School Workforce Statistics, Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely

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

Mark Pont
Assessment Programme Lead