



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ed Humpherson
Office for Statistics Regulation

Via email

18 July 2025

Dear Ed,

National Survey for Wales – request to suspend Accredited Official Statistics status

The National Survey for Wales is designed to meet user needs for data on a wide range of topics at different geographical levels within Wales, down to local authority level.

The achieved sample size for 2024-25 (6,000 respondents) is smaller than originally planned, and so for this year it will not be possible to produce breakdowns by local authority and for smaller subgroups. The smaller sample size is due to the contractor encountering fieldwork issues including response rates being lower than in previous years, as experienced by many large-scale surveys at present. We have also noted a higher than expected level of change in results compared with previous years.

A first release of the 2024-25 results is due to be published on 27 August 2025. I am writing to request a temporary suspension of Accredited Official Statistics status for this release and for all other outputs based on the 2024-25 data. Suspension would help us in providing clear guidance to users that the 2024-25 outputs will generally not provide sufficiently precise results for small geographic areas and other subgroups, and that care should be taken in comparing some 2024-25 results with those from previous years. Outputs based on 2024-25 data will be badged as official statistics in development, with clear guidance for users on how the data should be used and interpreted.

Given the fieldwork issues experienced, in autumn 2024 it was decided that the contract to deliver the survey be brought to an end following the end of 2024-25 fieldwork. In future years, as part of the plan to address these challenges, the survey will switch from a telephone-first to an online-first design. Accordingly, we have now procured a new contract to deliver an online-first survey (with paper and telephone alternative modes). Set-up work for the new contract is progressing well, and mainstage fieldwork will begin in March 2026. One key advantage of the new approach is that it will be possible to deliver much larger achieved sample sizes, and therefore much more precise estimates for small subgroups.

Following the development work being undertaken throughout 2025-26 and the start of mainstage fieldwork under the new design in 2026-27, we intend to request that Accredited Official Statistics badging be reinstated by OSR for survey outputs from 2026-27 onwards. We will of course provide all information needed by OSR to reach a decision on compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics and whether accreditation can be re-applied .

In the meantime, we will keep OSR and survey users up to date with progress.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Howarth
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Chief Statistician, Welsh Government