



Ed Humpherson  
Office for Statistics Regulation  
Via email

16 March 2026

Dear Ed,

I am writing to request the reclassification from Accredited Official Statistics to Official Statistics in Development of the Welsh Government [Relative income poverty report](#) due for release 26 March 2026.

The data that underpin this output is derived from the Family Resources Survey (FRS), carried out by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), with a funding contribution from Welsh Government.

DWP have been undertaking a substantial and welcome programme of methodological development, particularly in strengthening the use of administrative data through benefit and earnings linkage. These improvements represent a positive step forward and align with wider best practice in improving the quality, coherence and completeness of income-based poverty statistics.

Three substantial transformation components are being implemented in stages, as detailed in the [FRS](#) and [HBAI](#) release strategies:

- (i) Benefit linkage: replacing survey reported benefit receipt with administrative records to reduce historical underreporting, which will apply to the upcoming release on 26 March.
- (ii) A new grossing regime: updating grossing based on 2021 Census-based household projections, planned for future releases.
- (iii) Earnings linkage: replacing survey reported earnings with administrative earnings data to address underreporting.

DWP had originally planned to publish an experimental release covering both benefit and earnings linkage, in parallel with the traditional survey-based results, but this is no longer the proposed approach. Instead, benefit linkage will be incorporated directly into the accredited March 2026 outputs replacing survey data, with earnings linkage and the updated grossing regime planned to follow in later years.

*Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.*

*We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.*

While these developments represent essential modernisation, the scale and ongoing nature of the changes introduce uncertainty that is particularly acute for estimates below a UK level, including for Wales. A temporary suspension of accreditation would acknowledge that methods are in transition, enable clearer guidance to users on what is changing and why, and transparently signal uncertainty in the estimates and any trend comparisons, with figures subject to revision as transformation continues.

This approach is in line with that of the Scottish Government and Department for Communities NI, who produce similar reports for Scotland and Northern Ireland. A temporary suspension of the accreditation in Wales will therefore ensure a clear and coherent approach for users of poverty estimates.

For the above reasons and to maintain transparency and uphold standards, I request that this output be temporarily reclassified as Official Statistics in Development, starting with the 26 March 2026 publication.

If you agree to this suspension, this will mean that the key source of poverty estimates for Wales will no longer be considered accredited official statistics. In order to support users, we will continue to work with DWP on the communication of poverty estimates for Wales to ensure they are used appropriately whilst a suspension of accreditation is in place. We will, as always, keep users and yourselves abreast of any further developments.

Yours sincerely,

**Stephanie Howarth**  
Prif Ystadegydd, Llywodraeth Cymru  
Chief Statistician, Welsh Government