

Welsh Assembly Government

Consultation Document

Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics

Date of issue: **8 September 2010**

Action required: Responses by **30 November 2010**

- Overview** The Welsh Assembly Government is seeking views from users of education and lifelong learning statistics on our current suite of outputs and a number of specific issues.
- How to respond** The closing date for replies is **30 November 2010**. You can reply in any of the following ways:-
- By email** Complete the electronic version of the questionnaire and email to:- post16ed.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk or school.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk
- By post** Return your completed questionnaire to:-
Rachel Lloyd
Welsh Assembly Government
Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit
2nd floor, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ
- Other languages/formats** Large print, Braille and alternate language versions of this document are available on request.
- Contact Details** For further information please contact Rachel Lloyd on 029 2082 3357 or email: post16ed.stats@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Data Protection

How the views and information you give us will be used:

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Assembly Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Welsh Assembly Government staff to help them plan future consultations.

The Welsh Assembly Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. This helps to show that the consultation was carried out properly. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then blank them out.

Names or addresses we blank out might still get published later, though we do not think this would happen very often. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 allow the public to ask to see information held by many public bodies, including the Welsh Assembly Government. This includes information which has not been published. However, the law also allows us to withhold information in some circumstances. If anyone asks to see information we have withheld, we will have to decide whether to release it or not. If someone has asked for their name and address not to be published, that is an important fact we would take into account. However, there might sometimes be important reasons why we would have to reveal someone's name and address, even though they have asked for them not to be published. We would get in touch with the person and ask their views before we finally decided to reveal the information.

Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics

The One Wales document highlights the Welsh Assembly Government's vision of "Learning for Life" being fundamental to the achievement of social justice, ensuring economic productivity and meeting the challenges of new technology, and the desire to ensure the best possible environment to encourage learning at all stages of people's lives.

In support of this the Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit within the Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for the analysis and dissemination of data on all aspects of education in Wales, and for promoting its use as part of the evidence base in the development and monitoring of education policy in Wales.

Through this consultation we are seeking views from all users of our education and lifelong learning statistics on the current suite of outputs we produce, and a number of specific issues.

The Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit forms part of the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate. The Directorate is responsible for the collection, analysis and dissemination of statistics on all aspects of Welsh life. The latest Statistical Workplan can be found here:

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/statsplan1011/?lang=en

Our current outputs

The Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit is responsible for the analysis and dissemination, and in some cases initial collection, of data across all aspects of education in Wales – schools, further and higher education, and work-based and lifelong learning.

We have an annual programme of around 40 different statistical outputs. These may be the first release of information on a particular area (e.g., annual release of data on schools and teachers collected through the schools census) or new, more in depth, analyses of data already published by ourselves or other government departments (e.g., analysis of participation of young people in education and labour market from the Office for National Statistics' Annual Population Survey). These outputs contain tables and charts of the data and commentary on the key messages and trends arising from it. They are made available through the Welsh Assembly Government website (www.wales.gov.uk/statistics). Lists of our current outputs by sector are shown within this document.

We also make much of our information available through online data tables at www.statswales.wales.gov.uk. This facility enables users to access the data directly, manipulate into tables, charts and maps to suit their own requirements and to export into their own documents for onward publication or further analysis.

In a time of constrained resources, and to ensure that we are fulfilling the needs of our users, the purpose of this consultation is to seek feedback on the usefulness and useability of what we currently produce, how it can be improved, any gaps in what we provide and an indication of the relative priority attached to a particular analysis.

We continue to be ambitious in our plans but this is tempered by the reality that we will need to prioritise our activity. We would welcome your contributions to help us understand the demand for information and what our users consider to be important, to inform our priorities for the years ahead.

We are looking for views in general but also in response to some specific issues we have raised. Given the breadth of data covered by the Education and Lifelong Learning Statistics Unit, and that users may be only interested in one particular area, this document has separate sections for schools, further education, higher education and a number of cross cutting areas. There are also two separate response forms, for schools and post-16 education statistics.

We will publish a summary of consultation responses in early 2011, with details of actions we will take in light of those responses to follow in the Spring. This will be available through www.wales.gov.uk/consultations/statistics/

General issues

We would be interested in understanding, in general, whether our statistical outputs provide you with the information you need in an appropriate style and format. For example:

- Do you have the information you need about the **quality** of the data to enable you to use the statistics with confidence and in an informed way?
- Does the **commentary** and **analysis** that are published aid interpretation of the statistics they refer to?
- Are **graphs, tables and maps** used in the most effective way?
- Through our statistical outputs and associated StatsWales tables are you happy with the **level and detail** of the statistics provided?

Schools and Teachers

We collect a wide range of data on schools in Wales which are fundamental to the development and monitoring of policy, including:

- the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), which collects data for each individual pupil at school in Wales;
- individual level data on examination results (Key Stages 1 to 5) and attendance;
- aggregate surveys on other school characteristics including exclusions, special educational needs, class sizes and teacher numbers.

Additionally, we have piloted a census for pupils educated other than at school (EOTAS). An early years census, to capture information on pre-statutory school age learners whose provision is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, will be piloted in early 2011.

These data are published through the following statistical releases and bulletins :-

- *Absenteeism from Primary schools*
- *Absenteeism from Secondary schools*
- *Academic Achievement and Entitlement to Free School Meals*
- *Academic Achievement by Pupil Characteristics*
- *Assessment & Examination Performance: Comparison with England & its Regions*
- *Class Sizes in Primary Schools*
- *Examination Results*
- *Exclusions from schools*
- *National Curriculum Assessments of 7, 11 and 14 year olds*
- *Pupils Leaving Education with No Qualifications*
- *Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs*
- *Schools' Census (provisional)*
- *Schools' Census, Final Results*
- *School Statistics by Assembly Constituency and Region*
- *Teacher Assessments of the Non-core Subjects*
- *Teachers in Service, Vacancies and Sickness Absence*

We also publish an annual compendium publication, '*Schools in Wales: Examination Performance*', which collates all assessment and examination performance data for schools.

A wealth of schools data is also available through www.statswales.wales.gov.uk including reports for individual schools of examination and census results, and Local Authority analysis.

We are interested in your feedback on our existing outputs, and if there are other areas of school statistics that we do not publish any data on that you would like to see published.

School Finance

The Local Government Finance Statistics team, also part of the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate, collect data on the amount spent on each local government service, including education. They also collect data on the delegated budgets and reserves of individual local authority school.

These data are published through the following statistical releases and bulletins :-

- *Budgeted Expenditure on Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision*
- *Local Authority budgeted expenditure on schools*
- *Local Authority budgets for Education: Wales and England comparisons*
- *Reserves held by schools*
- *Welsh Local Government Financial Statistics*

There is also a wealth of data available through www.statswales.wales.gov.uk, including delegated budgets and reserves of individual schools.

We are interested in feedback you have on any of our outputs and if there are other areas of school finance statistics that we do not publish any data on that you would like to see published.

Further Education, Work-based learning and Community Learning

The Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) within the Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for collecting the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR). This is an individual record of all post-16 learners, including their learning activities and awards, within further education, work-based learning and community learning. These data underpin the National Planning and Funding System for post-16 learning providers (excluding Higher Education Institutions), and the Statistical Directorate analyse and publish the data for statistical purposes. Additionally until recently DCELLS have carried out a data collection of staff in further education institutions.

These data are published through the following statistical releases and bulletins :-

- *Analysis of Participation in Post-16 Education and Training*
- *Further Education, Work-based Learning and Community Learning in Wales* (Provisional and final releases and volume)
- *Learning Network Analysis*
- *National Comparators for Further Education and Work-Based Learning*
- *Staff at Further Education Institutions*

Data are also made available through www.statswales.wales.gov.uk. Detailed statistics on learner completion, attainment and success are disseminated to learning providers via an online benchmarking tool, hosted for DCELLS by Tribal Education.

Change to Further Education Institution staff record - this data collection was put on hold in 2009/10, pending a review of user need for the information. We would welcome views on whether this information is required, and if so, on these specific issues :- Should it be collected at an aggregate or individual level? Does it need to extend to other sectors of post-16 learning providers? Would providers find it useful to have an online portal for analysing data and generating benchmarked reports? Should we collect information on staff qualifications and skills?

Analysis of Participation in Post-16 Education and Training output – we propose that this output is published every two years rather than annually as at present.

Annual volume – this is published electronically as PDF tables. We would welcome comments on whether another format would be preferable, eg StatsWales tables.

Timing of outputs – As an example, for academic year 09/10, we published early learner data (as at Dec 09) in Apr 10, will publish provisional all-year data in Nov 10, final data in Apr 11, and learner outcome data in May 11. This is based on an assessment of quality balanced against need for timely data. Publishing earlier may mean larger revisions between early and final data. We would welcome views from users on the timeliness of our outputs; and from providers on data submission for attainment:- could this be finalised earlier than March following the academic year?

Any additional information requirements - are there other specific areas of learning provision that users would like to have more information on?

Higher Education

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) collects annual data on the higher education sector across the UK from Higher Education Institutions. This includes data on individual students, staff and finance. HESA also collects data on the destinations of graduates after they qualify, which gives an important outlook on labour market outcomes.

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is responsible for managing applications to higher education courses in the UK and collates data on applications and acceptances for full-time undergraduate courses.

Making use of data from these sources we publish the following outputs :-

- *Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) in Wales: Longitudinal Survey*
- *Destinations of Students Gaining Qualifications from Higher Education Institutions*
- *Destinations of Students Completing Initial Teacher Training Courses*
- *Higher Education Performance Indicators*
- *Higher Education Student Enrolments and Qualifications Obtained at Higher Education Institutions in the UK (Headline summary of HESA data)*
- *Initial Teacher Training*
- *Staff and Finance of Welsh Higher Education Institutions*
- *Students in Higher Education institutions*
- *University and Colleges Admissions Service Statistics*
- *Welsh in Higher Education Institutions*

Detailed tables of HESA data are also available through StatsWales.

Access to Higher Education Statistic Agency (HESA) data - A number of our outputs in this area are headline summaries of the data published by HESA. These summaries draw out the key trends for Wales and point the user towards the wider UK release of data. We would welcome feedback on how well used and useful these headline summaries are. If users tend to access the HESA data directly then there may be scope to cut back on this area of work.

Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) participation report - the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) publish an annual report about participation in higher education, '[Participation rates for Welsh students in HE within the UK](#)', based on HESA and other sources of data. Please also provide feedback on this publication through this consultation. Any feedback provided will be passed onto HEFCW to use in their review of this publication.

Any additional information requirements - Are there other key measures of participation or performance in Higher Education missing from what is currently available from our outputs, or other sources? What could these be used for?

Student Finance

The Student Loans Company (SLC) is responsible for administering most student finance arrangements on behalf of WAG. As such, their administrative systems provide a valuable data source on the take-up and profile of the various grants and loans.

Making use of data from the SLC and our own data collection we publish the following outputs :-

- *Applications for Student Finance, Tuition Fee Loans and Tuition Fee Grants Awarded in Wales* (Headline summary of SLC data)
- *Assembly Learning Grants Awarded to Welsh Domiciled Further Education Student*,
- *Education Maintenance Allowances Awarded in Wales*
- *Financial Contingency Funds*
- *Student Loans for Higher Education* (Headline summary of SLC data)
- *Student Support for Higher Education* (Headline summary of SLC data)

Detailed tables are also available through StatsWales.

Access to Student Loans Company data - A number of our outputs in this area are headline summaries of the data published by the Student Loans Company (SLC). These summaries draw out the key trends for Wales and point the user towards the wider UK release of data. We would welcome feedback on how well used and useful these headline summaries are. If users tend to access the SLC data directly then there may be scope to cut back on this area of work.

Timing of outputs - We would welcome views on how regularly data should be published. For example there may be scope to reduce the frequency of the updates on Education Maintenance Allowances which are currently published monthly.

Any additional information requirements - Are there other analysis of trends or patterns of take-up of student finance missing from what is currently available from our outputs, or other sources? What could these be used for?

Participation in education and the labour market

The proportion of young people not in education, training nor in employment (NEET) in Wales is of key concern to the Welsh Assembly Government, in the drive to push up the skills and qualification levels of the workforce.

In this area we publish the following bulletins and releases:-

- *Participation of Young People in Education and the Labour Market*
- *Pupil Destinations from schools in Wales* (Headline summary of Careers Wales data)
- *Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)*

with data also available through StatsWales.

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) output -During 2009 we introduced this new output, which presents more timely but less robust statistics on the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), drawing solely on survey data. Please provide any feedback on whether this new output adds value, or if having two different outputs on young people who are NEET is a source of confusion.

Qualifications and skills of working-age adults

The One Wales document included the ambition for a highly-educated, highly-skilled, and high employment Wales. The availability of data to measure progress in terms of skills and qualifications of the workforce is therefore vitally important.

In this area we publish the following bulletins and releases:-

- *Educational Attainment of Young People by age 19*
- *Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults*
- *Vocational qualifications* (Headline summary of DfE data)

with data also available through StatsWales.

Participation in UKCES 2011 Skills Survey - There has not been any Skills data for Wales since the Future Skills Wales survey in 2005. We are working, along with colleagues in Social Research Division and Skills Strategy and Policy branch, with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to fill this gap through an Employers Perspectives Survey this year. We are considering our inclusion in the UKCES skills survey next year and would welcome any views.

Levels of Highest Qualification held by Working Age Adults output - We are considering the value added by this output given that the position is fairly stable from year to year. We would welcome any views on the value of this specific output (data would still be available through StatsWales), and if any other analysis of this data would be beneficial.

Post-16 attainment data

In recent years, due to policy developments such as the 14-19 learning pathways, the distinct boundaries between the schools, further education and higher education sector are being blurred and we are being asked for more cross cutting and comparable information from across the education sectors. For example, there is interest in consistent performance measures for learners aged 16-18, and a complete picture of individual attainment.

In this area we publish the following bulletin-

- *Educational Attainment of Young People by age 19*

Investment in matching datasets Given that the data collection and reporting systems for each education sector have been developed in isolation from one another, bringing this information together is not a simple task, and requires us to bring in technical expertise in matching datasets. We have undertaken this work previously for the schools and post-16 sector to look at attainment levels and this year will be trialling the inclusion of Higher Education data to enable more analysis of progression levels against characteristics from the pupil level census. We would welcome any feedback on the value of this information, and any other areas of potential analysis through looking across the datasets.

Development of consistent performance measures for learners aged 16-18 During 2010 we have undertaken some exploratory work with our existing datasets to produce a set of consistent measures for school and further education sixth forms. We have encountered significant problems with this approach which are outlined in a [statistical article](#). We would value any comments on the priority which we should attach to this area of work, and any thoughts on what the consistent measures should look like.

Miscellaneous

We also publish the following:-

- *Cross Border Flows in Education*
- *International Comparisons of Education Indicators*
- *Youth Service* (from October 2010)

Cross Border Flows output - This was published in April of this year, and we have no plans to update this regularly. We welcome views on the usefulness of this data being available, either through a bulletin or StatsWales.

International Comparisons of Education Indicators output - This was published in February 2010 as an update to an article published 2 years earlier. We would welcome views on its usefulness and how regularly it should be updated or whether a series of StatsWales tables would be suitable.

Youth Service output - This is a new Statistical Release for 2010 presenting data on local authority youth services. This data was previously published by the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales, but has now brought into ELLS due to the transfer of the data collection team into the Welsh Assembly Government.