Welsh language quality information for Census 2021

Quality information affecting Welsh language data from Census 2021 to help correctly interpret them.

Contact:
Census customer services
Census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk
+44 1392 444972

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Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Quality information

Self-identified assessment

Welsh language data from Census 2021 comes from a self-assessment of ability. The Census 2021 question asked people to assess their ability to:

- understand spoken Welsh
- speak Welsh
- read Welsh
- write Welsh

Everyone will assess their own language skills differently. This means that two people with the same skills in Welsh language may give different answers about their ability.

It could also be an assessment of another person's ability if someone is answering on behalf of someone else. For example, a parent could be answering on behalf of a child. The parent may not know how well a child can understand, speak, read, or write Welsh.

Select all that apply

For the question "Can you understand, speak, read or write Welsh?", we asked people to select all that apply for each listed skill. Not everyone will have read this instruction and they may have selected only one box.

2 . Further research

The Welsh Government and Office for National Statistics (ONS) are jointly working on a research plan to improve understanding of main sources and administrative data sources used to produce statistics about the Welsh language. This research will include Census 2021 estimates on Welsh language skills.

In October 2023, Welsh Government published the first report based on analysis of data from individuals in Wales who had responded to Census 2021 and one of our household surveys, the Labour Force Survey (LFS). This report looks at differences between reporting of Welsh language skills across the two data sources. It was produced in partnership between analysts from Welsh Government, Administrative Data Research Wales (ADR Wales) and ONS. The analysis was conducted in the Integrated Data Service (IDS) and is the first published output using the IDS.

For more information on this research please see the joint work plan on coherence of Welsh language skills available on the Welsh Government website.

3 . Related links

[Differences between estimates of Welsh language ability in Census 2021 and household surveys]
External | Released 26 October 2023
Initial findings from a data-linking project which explores differences between estimates of Welsh language ability in Census 2021 and household surveys. This publication is a product of a joint workplan between the Welsh Government and Office for National Statistics (ONS) to improve our understanding of Welsh language statistics.

[Quality and methodology information Census 2021]
QMI | Updated 28 November 2022
Details the data strengths, limitations, uses, users and methods used for Census 2021, England and Wales.

[How we assured the quality of Census 2021 estimates]
Methodology | Released 7 November 2022
Methodology for the validation of Census 2021 population estimates for England and Wales, including the assurance of processes, assessment of estimates, and involvement of local authorities.

[Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion variables Census 2021]
Supporting information | Released 28 November 2022
Variables and classifications used in Census 2021 data about ethnic group, national identity, language including Welsh, and religion.

[Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Welsh Government joint work plan on coherence of Welsh language statistics]
External | Released 25 April 2023
Outlines the work that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Welsh Government are planning to undertake during 2023 to 2024 and beyond to improve our understanding of the main survey and administrative data sources used to produce statistics about the Welsh language.