

A dark purple silhouette of the map of Wales is positioned on the left side of the main graphic, with numerous thin, dark purple lines radiating outwards from its edges across the magenta background.

Changing Wales: WISERD at 10

Foreword



This is an important milestone in the history of the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD). As an external observer it seems to me that a pan Wales approach and a focus on impact are two particularly important factors behind WISERD's success to date. The benefits of a collaboration across five major Welsh universities include having a wide range of skills and academic interests available to contribute to a programme of quality research and crucially it also means that the benefits of such an institute are felt across Wales.

WISERD has demonstrated a proactive approach to engagement outside of academia with research from WISERD being discussed in National Assembly for Wales committees on a number of occasions and WISERD research contributing to the impact case studies of Welsh universities for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework exercise.

Since it was established in 2008, WISERD has continued to grow and has achieved an impressive track record in attracting funding to Wales with more than £27million

from a wide range of sources, including research councils, European funding, Global Challenges research funding, government funding and charitable funding.

In addition to grant funding, WISERD has also been successful in winning competitive contracts, including the evaluation of the Foundation Phase for the Welsh Government. As a pan Wales institute it helps promote closer working between academic and government researchers outside of traditional boundaries. The growing reputation of WISERD has also meant an increasing range of international academic collaborations and internationally recognised research makes a positive contribution to Wales' global presence.

The strengths and successes of WISERD provide the foundations for ongoing growth into the future and I wish it every success in the next decade and beyond.

Rt Hon Carwyn Jones AM
First Minister of Wales

The state of Wales

Wales is a proud nation with a rich history of enterprise and innovation. But we also face many social and economic challenges. Over the past decade, the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) has undertaken pioneering, policy-relevant research to better understand and address these issues.

In the economic sphere, our work has explored the relationship between fluctuating economic performance and the inequality and poverty affecting many of our communities today. Following the creation of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999, the past decade has also seen major constitutional and political developments, and WISERD's work has provided new and timely evidence on a broad range of policy challenges.

We have a higher percentage of people in the oldest age groups of our population than elsewhere in the UK, which presents significant policy challenges around social care, housing, poverty and retirement. We also face key challenges in terms of how the new institutions of Welsh democracy operate, for example, in securing diversity amongst our parliamentarians and tackling increasing disengagement with politics. Looking to the future, WISERD's research outputs combined with pioneering legislation, such as the

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, present new opportunities to improve social and economic life.

As a collaborative partnership of five universities working across disciplines, we have developed innovative and successful research that draws on the strengths of each institution. Our research also reflects Wales' position as a small country operating in a global context. As our work has developed we have broadened our reach and forged many new partnerships with colleagues across the UK and internationally, exploring a broad range of areas, including the foundational economy, ageing and dementia, civil society and effective human rights practice. These international links have brought new ideas and perspectives, allowing us to draw on a wealth of expertise in addressing both local and global challenges.

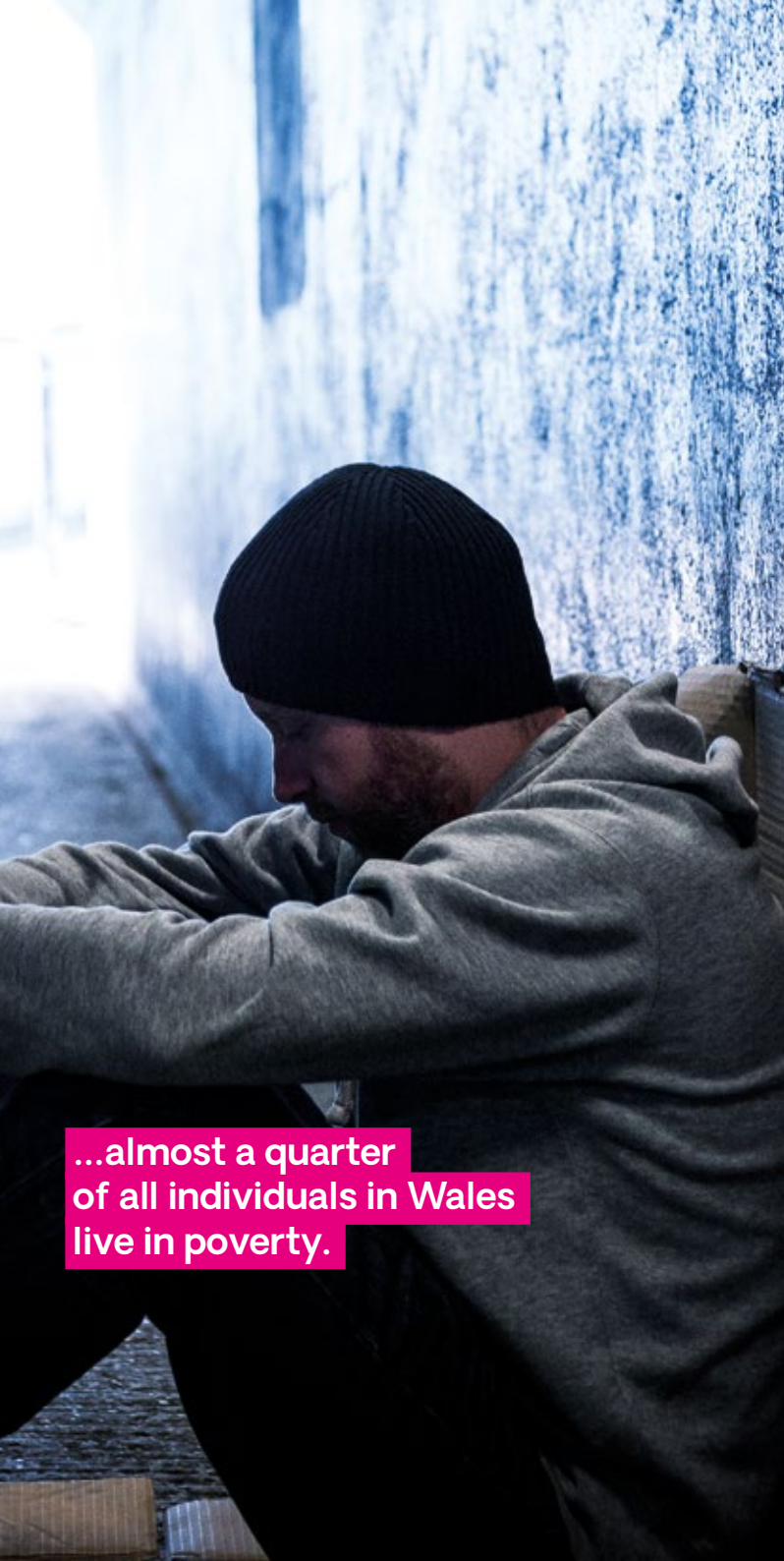
Over the past ten years, WISERD has established a strong research community that has strengthened the capacity for rigorous social science research in Wales – among academics, policy makers and the third sector. In turn, this research underpins the development of effective, evidence-based policy to address many of the challenges that Wales faces.

Inequalities of place

In 2017, the Social Mobility Commission called for more attention to be given to inequalities across British society. At a time of heightened interest in the policy impacts of perceived divisions within UK society the Commission highlighted a growing need for research on the role of geography.

The Commission also found that almost a quarter (23%) of all individuals in Wales live in poverty. The *UK Poverty 2017* report of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted consistently high levels of poverty in Wales in comparison to English regions. Within Wales, the focus has primarily been on the problems facing the deindustrialised areas of south Wales, and some communities within the larger urban areas. An important body of research has also highlighted some of the problems facing rural communities in Wales where the true extent of disadvantage may not be recognised in 'official' deprivation indicators.

The persistence of spatial patterns of inequalities has important implications in terms of employment opportunities, educational attainment and health and social care outcomes. The most recent annual report of the Chief Medical Officer for Wales, in 2016, re-iterated the continuing importance of social gradients for a range of health outcomes. It emphasised the urgent need to address the longstanding health problems facing the population, many of which are concentrated in the most deprived communities of Wales.

A photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a black beanie and a grey hoodie, sitting against a blue wall. He is looking down, and his arms are crossed. The background is slightly out of focus, showing a street scene with a car and a building.

...almost a quarter
of all individuals in Wales
live in poverty.

Our research

WISERD research has used secondary data and quantitative approaches to study economic inequalities in Wales in terms of employment, earnings and educational outcomes. Most recently our research has sought to measure inequalities in access to services, an issue of increasing importance as people travel greater distances to access services that are in decline, due to austerity. Our research explores the potential impacts of such disparities on outcomes such as educational attainment and health.

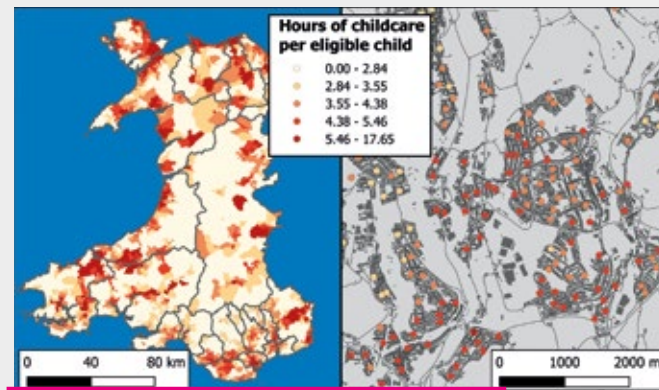
We have developed innovative techniques using Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to investigate accessibility to a wide range of public and private services. We have then compared the geographical variations in service provision with data on the socio-economic geography of Wales.

An important policy impetus for this research is the implementation of the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*, which requires every Public Service Board to publish assessments to address social well-being and potential associations between poverty and the availability and quality of public services.

Our research has now moved beyond basic mapping to provide a detailed picture of spatial inequality that uses the analytical functionality of GIS to address key policy issues. Recent WISERD research has included analysis of accessibility to childcare providers, sports facilities, primary healthcare facilities, post offices, and public library services.

Case studies

Availability of childcare in Wales

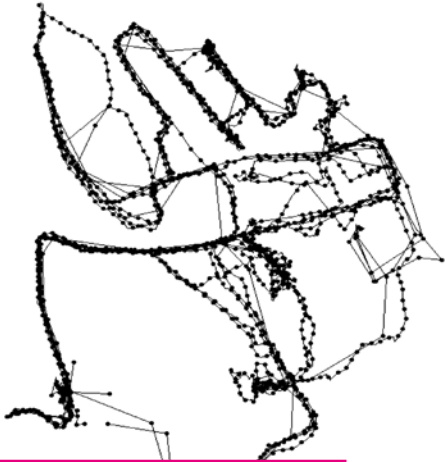


Access to childcare services in Wales

One of the flagship policies outlined in the current Welsh Government's *Programme for Government* sets out their ambition to provide 30 hours of free early education and childcare per week to the working parents of three and four-year-olds. This aims to remove one of the key barriers to parents or guardians gaining employment. WISERD research mapped existing levels of childcare provision at detailed geographical scales to provide an accurate picture of early childhood education and care across Wales. This was then compared to the potential demand for childcare, moderated by the impact of distance.

The research has identified those areas in Wales where there appears to be a lack of childcare supply against potential demand. The findings have also assisted the Welsh Government in the choice of pilot studies in seven local authorities that will inform the roll out of the full childcare offer by the Welsh Government in 2020.

Mapping knowledge in action



Local knowledge, spatial practice, and urban patrol

An early WISERD locality study aimed to gain a detailed, ethnographic understanding of local knowledge in Cardiff city centre by looking at the street-level management of public space. The research focused on those who patrolled the area as part of their daily work practices – street cleaning, police patrols, voluntary services to the vulnerable, and city centre management.

Over ten years, our researchers developed a long-standing engagement with outreach workers and patrols, and their interactions with two vulnerable populations – homeless people, and street-based sex workers.

This research has contributed to discussions of the contemporary city and the politics of everyday public space, its care and repair, and has contributed to the development of this mobile methodology.



Integrative mechanisms for addressing spatial justice and territorial inequalities in Europe (IMAJINE)

The gap between rich and poor areas in Europe is examined in this pioneering research which looks at regional inequalities. Funded by the European Union, IMAJINE is a five-year project, taking a uniquely inter-disciplinary approach to studying regional inequalities. It combines the expertise of economists, geographers, planners, political scientists and sociologists working both on European-level analysis and detailed case studies in 11 countries, including Wales.

The research will explore public perceptions of regional inequalities and cohesion policies, and analyse socio-economic statistics on inequalities. It will also explore the connections between regional inequalities and migration and whether more political autonomy for regions could present an alternative way to address perceived injustices. The work will identify new policy approaches for tackling inequality and promoting a fairer distribution of resources across the EU.

Work



Since the Second World War, Wales has gradually moved away from traditional 'smoke stack' industries such as coal and steel. The effects of de-industrialisation are deeper than temporary jobs losses, resulting in loss of physical, social and human capital. This has left a gap in opportunity that communities have since struggled to bridge. While the gap has been partially filled by a move towards lighter manufacturing, service-sector based employment and a relatively large public sector, there are areas within Wales that suffer from substantial unemployment and social deprivation. Much of West Wales and the Valleys qualify for the highest level of EU structural funding – recently the only area in the UK for which this is the case.

Structural change has been associated with an increasing prosperity gap between Wales and the rest of the UK. Wales, once a relatively prosperous economy, now sits at

the bottom of the earnings league table in the UK and has the lowest level of GDP per head. On top of the challenge of managing restructuring, the Welsh economy is also facing two additional challenges – the government's austerity programme and Brexit. Austerity measures are experienced more acutely here, as Wales has the highest proportion of people receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Incapacity Benefit (IB). In addition, public sector wage freezes are also more damaging – around 21% of the workforce are employed in the public sector in Wales compared to around 17% in the UK. Since 2000, Wales has received approximately £5bn in EU structural funding so faces further economic losses as the UK exits the European Union.

Our research

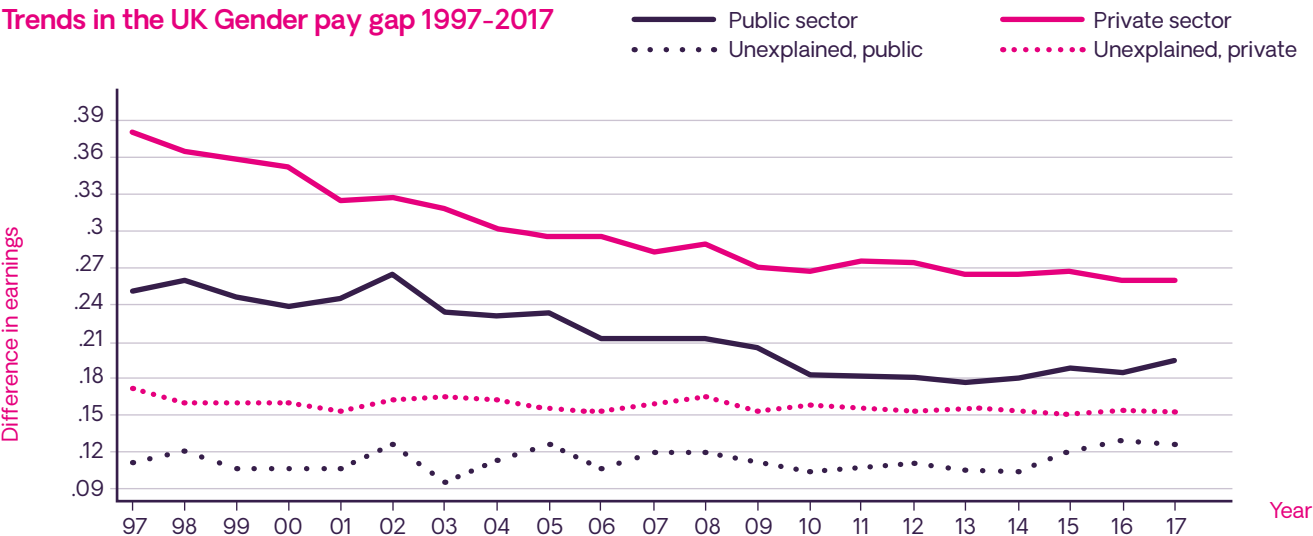
WISERD has a strong track record of research involving both qualitative and quantitative data analysis, on the Welsh economy and public policy – particularly the labour market and economic inequalities. Key research highlights include:

- > Workers' responses to redundancy and the impact on the local labour market, including the closure of Anglesey Aluminium which resulted in the loss of 400 jobs;
- > Transitions of the unemployed and the effectiveness of labour market interventions of European Social Fund (ESF) training programmes in Wales;
- > The employment gap experienced by those with disabilities;
- > The relationship between unemployment and disability and their importance as determinants of wellbeing;
- > Trends in the UK gender pay gap – see graph below. The 'unexplained' part of the gender pay gap within each sector is an estimate of differential (or unequal) treatment of men and women with the same (or very similar) characteristics within the labour market.

This research has led to a number of important reports that have been highly influential at national and UK level. WISERD's research has been presented at the House of Commons and extensively cited by the Work and Pensions Select Committee in their report on the disability employment gap. Recommendations regarding the probability of the government meeting its employment target for those with disabilities have also been made based on our research findings.

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Trends in the UK Gender pay gap 1997-2017



Case studies

Influencing policy in the area of public sector wages

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the Autumn Statement of 2011 that the public sector pay freeze would come to an end and that public sector pay should be more responsive to local labour market conditions. WISERD undertook a robustness test of the evidence underpinning these measures and demonstrated that they could not be justified. This research led to a number of invitations to meet with Her Majesty's Treasury and the Welsh Government. On the basis of this research, the Chancellor subsequently abandoned the policy of introducing market-facing pay.

Addressing the UK disability employment gap

WISERD has undertaken quantitative research on disability and employment to inform the UK Government's commitment to halve the disability employment gap. Our written and oral evidence is heavily cited in the House of Commons Work and Pension Select Committee report on the disability employment gap. It raises issues around deficiencies in the measurement of disability and disability-related gaps, which made tracking progress and evaluating policy interventions difficult.

Survey questions designed to capture disability had changed over time and precluded accurate evaluation of the effectiveness of changes in policy and practice. Researchers also identified that gaps in the in-work experience among employees (eg, in terms of pay and job satisfaction) were important additional measures to assess job quality. The recommendations we made have since been taken up by the Department of Work and Pensions.

Understanding the effects of labour market interventions in Wales

Research undertaken by WISERD on behalf of the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) has provided new evidence about the effectiveness of labour market interventions. Over six years, WISERD undertook annual surveys of participants in labour market interventions supported by the European Structural Fund (ESF) in Wales.

This involved approximately 24,000 telephone interviews and provided a unique insight into the experiences of people who participated in the training programmes, and the effectiveness of these schemes. The research revealed that ESF leavers reported a wide range of skills (most notably soft skills such as communication skills and organisational skills) which they believed had been acquired as a result of their participation. However, the research pointed towards the relatively modest effects of the programmes on supporting participation in employment.



Political disengagement

Citizen engagement remains one of the most pressing challenges of devolved governance.

Political disengagement is a key challenge facing liberal democracies around the world. Wales is no exception. There has been a decline of traditional forms of political participation, such as electoral turnout and levels of party membership, but also a more general erosion of engagement in civic life. The causes and extent of the decline in engagement are manifold and include individualism, populism and waning trust.

The creation of the National Assembly in 1999 was intended to move decision-making closer to the citizen. Its success depends on effectively engaging its citizens. If this is judged by the narrow indicator of turnout in National Assembly elections alone, progress has been poor. Yet it is a challenge that extends well beyond electoral turnout – it relates to the way we address inequalities and promote trust and participation in public policy-making and public service delivery. In short: citizen engagement remains one of the most pressing challenges of devolved governance.

Young people's engagement in Wales' democracy is key to the future political vibrancy of the nation. Yet the gap between the proportion of younger people voting versus the older population appears to be widening. In addition, there are major implications stemming from the UK's decision to leave the European Union. This has produced

a social cleavage between 'leave' and 'remain' voters, one that has a strong generational dimension – as well as major political and constitutional implications.

Crucially, the 'engagement challenge' extends beyond formal representative processes and encompasses overcoming social divisions and community cohesion. The decline of social capital is problematic in relation to political engagement because trust, a key component of social capital, shapes citizens' propensity to engage with the institutions of the state. Yet in recent years there has been a widespread decline in trust in the representative institutions of liberal democracies.

A further challenge is that engagement needs to be fostered in the context of austerity and unprecedented demands on public services. This has seen renewed emphasis on 'partnership working' between the state and the voluntary sector, which presents challenges, but also opportunities to re-design welfare services and involve citizens in their delivery.

Our research

The ESRC Civil Society centre has given WISERD researchers the opportunity to explore many aspects of citizens' engagement, from women's representation and gender equality to opportunities for engagement provided by city regions, a new form of governance. Researchers have also explored:

- > Issues of citizen trust in Wales' new political institutions;
- > Migrants' engagement with civil society;
- > Trade union membership and the unions' engagement with young people;
- > Young people's political engagement and Brexit;
- > Changing patterns and practices of local civil society activity and the links to community cohesion and identity;
- > Citizen engagement in new forms of social welfare.

Case studies

The impact of Welsh devolution on Brexit: young people and political engagement

Wales was no exception to the overwhelming support amongst young people for remaining in the EU. WISERD research has explored the voting intentions and voting behaviour of young people before and after the 2016 EU referendum, a political event that saw the highest level of youth engagement and participation for decades. Research has also examined the 'youthquake' of the general election of 2017.

WISERD's 'Young People and Brexit' research used interviews, film and engagement events to examine young people's views on political participation and on Brexit. Young people expressed concerns about the declining opportunity to work, study and travel freely around the EU. The research informed the National Assembly for Wales' decision to create a youth parliament and to lower the voting age to 16.

Building trust via transparency? Institutions and interactions of multi-level governance in the UK, Germany and France

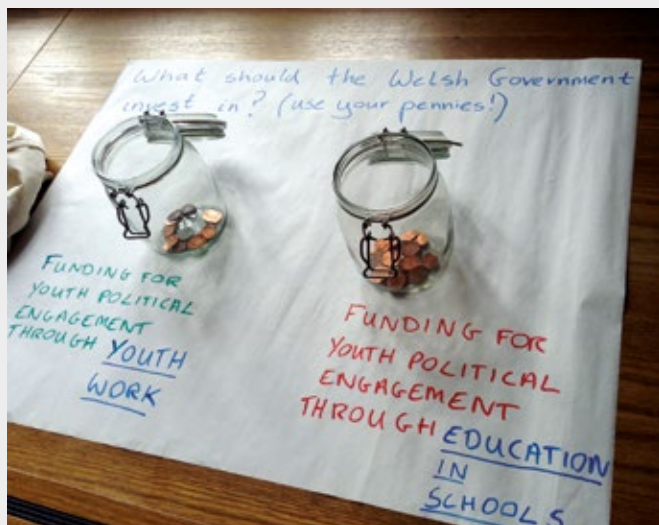
WISERD research has explored the rising levels of mistrust at the root of the democratic disconnect in western European politics. Transparency is sometimes offered as a remedy to tackle this lack of trust.

WISERD researchers are exploring whether there has been a shift across European states towards greater transparency and examining if contemporary trust requires transparency. The research compares regional and city-level dynamics in six territories in three EU states – the UK, France and Germany. By comparing the role of transparency and trust in these different contexts we can inform the development of more effective governance at different levels of government.

Gender equality

WISERD's international research on gender equality has explored women's representation in civil society. We have looked at international progress against the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Declaration on women's empowerment in India, Nepal, the Middle East, and Africa.

Research has examined the implications for women of new policies in post-conflict countries, including Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Rwanda. In Wales, our research has studied the representation of women following devolution and influenced policy on gender equality, such as the First Minister's review of gender equality in Wales.





Wales in the world

The social, economic and political challenges facing Wales are not necessarily unique but reflect our nation's position in the world and its embeddedness within international networks.

We are affected by global economic turbulence, including the reverberations of the 2008 financial crisis and market dynamics, which impact on the prices received by Welsh hill farmers or future sustainability of the Port Talbot steelworks.

Wales has welcomed its share of international migrants. Workers from Eastern Europe are establishing communities in cities and towns from Llanelli to Wrexham, joining longer-standing communities such as Somalis in Cardiff. Cultural globalisation presents both challenges and opportunities for the Welsh language and culture, while

global climate change has far-reaching implications for how we live and work in Wales, and how we use our landscape and natural resources.

The prospect of Britain leaving the European Union will further reconfigure Wales' relationship with the rest of the world. Patterns of immigration to Wales may change, and the status of migrants currently living in Wales could be brought into question. New trade deals may present export opportunities but also more competition for Welsh farmers and manufacturers, while access to existing EU markets could be limited. The Welsh Government and civil society will need to negotiate the impact of these changes in Wales and beyond – maintaining or forging new bilateral relationships and partnerships in Europe and internationally.



Our research

Throughout the last decade, we have investigated social and economic change in Wales in an international context. Early research explored the impacts of economic restructuring in the Heads of the Valleys and Mid and North Wales. Researchers led innovative work on urban research methods with multi-cultural communities in Cardiff, as well as analysis of public attitudes towards immigration. Along with exploring the future of the Anglesey Aluminium site in Ynys Môn, our research has engaged with the effects of globalisation, identifying issues of social and political marginalisation long before the EU referendum. Through WISERD's ESRC Civil Society centre, researchers have examined the participation of EU migrants in civil society in Wales. We have also investigated the mobilisation of local civil society in Wales in response to global issues, including the Syrian refugee crisis.

The prospect of Britain leaving the European Union will further reconfigure Wales' relationship with the rest of the world.



WISERD research extends internationally, following connections and making comparisons. The European Research Council's Advanced Grant, GLOBAL-RURAL, includes case studies in 15 countries looking at rural areas and globalisation. The recently started IMAJINE and ROBUST research programmes, supported by European Horizon 2020 funding, will compare territorial inequalities and rural-urban relations in Wales with other regions in Europe. Other WISERD studies have compared young people's involvement with language planning in Wales with Scotland, Brittany and Canada; analysed multi-level governance across Britain, France and Germany; and interrogated civil society and human rights in Asia and Africa.

Case studies

Immigration

Our research has explored public sentiments toward immigrants and minorities, responses to immigration and the engagement of minorities and migrants in civil society.

In 2011, researchers investigated public sentiments in Wales towards immigrants and minorities. The research used secondary data from the *European Social Survey* and the *Citizenship Survey* to analyse how sentiments towards immigration in Wales compare to other nations and regions of the UK. Analysis revealed that people in Wales have more negative views on the impact of immigration and are more supportive of reducing the levels of immigration; similar to the views of people in Northern England and the Midlands. Conversely, people in Scotland, London and Northern Ireland reflected more favourable attitudes towards the impact of immigration.

WISERD research on migrants and civil society looks at the estimated 30,000 immigrants in Wales from those states in central Europe that joined the EU after 2004. While many other studies focus on economic aspects, this research looks at formal and informal participation in civil society. In particular, the study explores voices that are often overlooked, such as those of the Roma people.

Research found that many migrants became involved with civil society to give the benefit of their experiences to others who were settling in and to provide a positive impression of an immigrant, or specific nationality, to their community. It also identified that many organisations play roles in signposting towards services and broader support. The research highlighted the importance of virtual civil society for information sharing and fostering a sense of community through online groups centred around particular places. Findings from the research will help policy-makers to improve their understanding of the experiences of immigrants and increase the recognition of the role of migrants in contributing to a range of civil society activities.

The global countryside: rural change and development in globalisation

Globalisation has a pervasive influence in transforming rural economies and societies. GLOBAL-RURAL is a major research programme, funded by the European Research Council, which explores the workings and impact of globalisation in rural regions in 15 countries.

In comparison to studies of the global city, relatively little research has focused on the 'global countryside'. GLOBAL-RURAL is developing an integrated perspective, focusing on the mechanics by which rural localities are 're-made' through engagement with globalisation processes, examining the mediating effect of national and regional context, and the opportunity for local interventions. Researchers have contributed to policy discussions about rural development and agriculture, including those concerning rural policy in Wales post-Brexit.



Ageing Wales

A key feature of life in the twenty-first century is that we expect to live longer. For many people these added years will be in good health, while for others their extended lives will be accompanied by long-term illness and disability. While the consequences for individuals are profound, at a societal level our population is also undergoing a dramatic shift in its demographic structure.

In one sense this is a success, stemming from many material advances of modern life, and in another, it represents one of our greatest challenges. In Wales, we have a higher percentage of people in the oldest age groups of our population than the rest of the UK, with 9% currently aged over 75. This is predicted to rise rapidly to nearly 15% by 2040. In that same year, it is estimated that out of a population of just over 3 million, one third, over a million, will be aged sixty and over.

Two factors are driving these dramatic changes – increasing life-expectancy and falling fertility. This generational shift is profound as we move from older people surviving in predominantly younger national populations, to older people growing old within older populations. Some have viewed these changes in catastrophic terms, giving rise to the now familiar rhetoric of an ageing time bomb, of generational conflict and descriptions of older people as dependent and selfish. Others are more sanguine, pointing to the potential of a healthy 'third age' and of older people as a productive and valuable part of society.

So what might these changes mean for a small, ageing country, like Wales? Older people are now a significant part of the workforce, they may have particular housing needs,

require care or support and are at high risk of financial exclusion and geographical isolation.

Changes in the number of self-employed and part-time workers, for example, are related to the ageing work force. Soon, in Wales, almost one in three working people will be aged over 50.

Wales' ageing housing stock and a large proportion of older owner occupiers raises questions about the appropriateness of the housing stock for older people, a growing proportion of whom live alone. Family structures have also changed dramatically with consequences to the risks and responsibilities for care in old age and for levels of family poverty. In such a context, intergenerational relations and transmission of wealth between and across generations become key issues.

Perhaps most profound are the implications of an ageing population for health and social care. A healthy later life is becoming possible for many, but there are also significant proportions of older people living with long-term illness and disability.

In addition, inequalities in old age and levels of social exclusion are high in Wales, which has both lower levels of life-expectancy compared with England and higher levels of ill-health and disability among older groups. Older people in Wales are at high risk of financial exclusion given the comparatively lower levels of wealth and income compared to the rest of the UK. Wales is a country with many rural areas and the experience of old age in these communities presents important challenges in terms of mobility and social connectivity in later life.

Case studies



Self-portrait print produced by an IDEAL participant for a local dementia café

By 2040 it is estimated that one third of our population will be aged sixty and over.

Our research

WISERD's research has explored both the physical and social aspects of ageing. From our involvement in an innovative longitudinal study on dementia to our work on how social care can be delivered to better meet people's needs, rather than the profit motive. Our ESRC Civil Society centre has explored older people's participation in volunteering and their fear of crime. Lastly, our education research has given us a new understanding of the role of grandparents in twenty-first century Wales.

Living well with dementia

WISERD, in partnership with the University of Exeter, is carrying out a study that asks what it means to live well with dementia and how this can best be supported. The 'Improving the experience of dementia and enhancing active life' (IDEAL) study is the largest UK study of its kind. By doing structured annual interviews with 1,500 people living with dementia in England, Wales and Scotland for three years, the study aims to identify what social and psychological factors influence people with dementia and their families' ability to live well with dementia.

The IDEAL study will provide a much-needed evidence base from which we can identify what changes could be made at individual and community levels to improve the chances of living well with dementia. This will inform recommendations for social and health care purchasers, providers and planners, and provide more informed guidance for people living with dementia, and those who support them.

Social care for older people

WISERD has contributed to researching changes to the delivery of social care procurement and provision for older people and how marketisation has contributed to the crisis in social care funding across the UK.

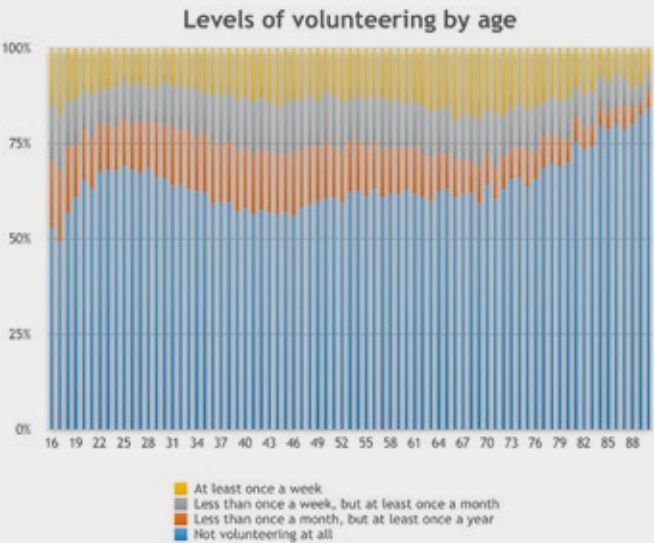
Research has explored the foundational economy, those goods, services and infrastructure that enable citizens to flourish. With researchers from across Europe we have examined how local procurement of key services, such as social care, can strengthen communities and generate social value.

Older people and civil society

Social and cultural participation is an important aspect of later life. Through our ESRC Civil Society centre we have examined differences in patterns of volunteering by age in different parts of Europe. In-depth studies of Welsh rural communities have explored how older people participate in hobbies and voluntary work, and how this contributes to social cohesion and stronger communities.

Our research on volunteering has analysed levels of volunteering at different ages and the factors affecting the social participation of older people within their communities. Our analysis showed that between the ages of 55 and 75 the proportion of people who volunteer at least once a week is higher than at any other age. WISERD research found that the main explanation for this trend was a desire to give something back to future generations, which was stronger in that age group than in any other.

ESRC Civil Society centre research has also looked at the fear of crime in older people. Researchers found that not only are there higher levels of fear of crime among older people, but that this fear also has a significantly stronger negative impact on levels of participation among this age group.



Future generations

The importance of fostering the wellbeing of future generations is crucial for Wales. Wales has the highest levels of child poverty and lowest levels of adult literacy of any of the nations of the UK. Despite this, levels of personal wellbeing are comparable to other parts of the UK. By building on the foundations of a strong civil society and its social democratic traditions, and investing in future generations of young people, Wales aims to generate greater prosperity that is more equally distributed.

Wales was the first country of the UK to adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also put in place a series of policies designed to ensure children and young people have a strong start in life and are not disadvantaged by poverty. These measures include the 2004 policy on *Children and Young People: Rights to Action* and the *Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011*. The *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* is considered to be the first legislation in the world to place a legal duty on public bodies to safeguard the interests and wellbeing of future generations. To oversee the Act a Future Generations Commissioner was appointed to encourage, support and challenge public bodies in meeting their legal duty to protect the wellbeing of future generations.



Our research

WISERD's research priorities and activities over the last ten years have reflected these priorities and challenges. We have sought to:

- > Chart the progress of children and young people growing up in Wales;
- > Evaluate the effectiveness of Welsh Government policies designed to foster young people's achievements and wellbeing;
- > Understand the importance of family for young people's wellbeing and civic engagement.

Wales is the first country in the UK to adopt the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Case studies



Charting the progress of children and young people growing up in Wales

The WISERD Education Multi Cohort Study (WMCS) is a longitudinal study of over 2,000 young people living in Wales at various stages of their childhood and adolescence. Since 2012, the WMCS has collected data from young people every year, as well as additional information from their parents, their schools and their teachers.

The focus of this study has been purposely broad and has given us insights into many aspects of their lives. In addition to school-related issues, such as their educational aspirations and perspectives on assessment and discipline, we have also asked them about involvement in out-of-school activities, daily routines, friendship patterns, attitudes towards Wales and their future life choices.

Alongside this study we have also been one of the main users of the Millennium Cohort Study in Wales – a major UK-wide birth cohort study of children born in 2000–01. Participants are now aged 18 years old and this has been an invaluable resource to allow us to compare the lives of young people in Wales with other areas of the UK, particularly in terms of their education and their wellbeing.

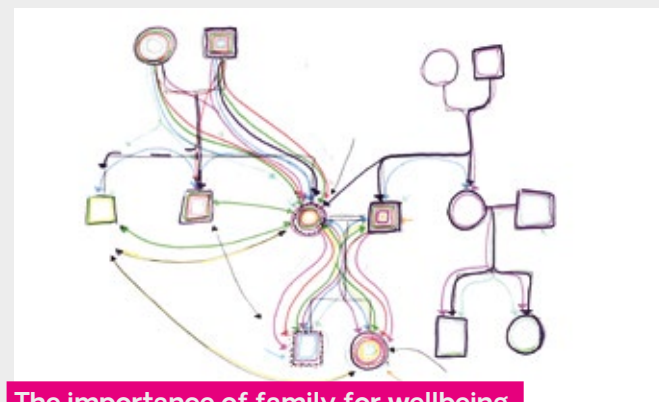


The effectiveness of Welsh Government policies

WISERD has been involved in several major evaluations of policies in Wales to address the wellbeing of the next generation of young people and to mitigate the inequalities in opportunities and outcomes that many groups of young people face. These include:

- > The evaluation of the new early years curriculum in Wales, the Foundation Phase, that placed children's personal and social development and wellbeing at the heart of the new curriculum;
- > The evaluation of the Pupil Development Grant, additional funding for schools to specifically target the educational needs of some of Wales' most disadvantaged children and young people;
- > The evaluation of the Educational Maintenance Allowance, a key financial support for 16 to 18-year-olds in full-time education from low income families;
- > The evaluation of Flying Start, a major intervention for children under four years of age living in disadvantaged areas of Wales;
- > Evaluations of various initiatives designed to assist under-represented groups of young people entering higher education in Wales.

Mapping the transmission of values between generations



The importance of family for wellbeing and civic engagement

Our research on the wellbeing of future generations has studied intergenerational relationships – young people's relationships with their parents and their grandparents – and how their current experiences and expectations for the future are shaped in some way by their older family members. This 'transmission' of values, attitudes and behaviours helps us understand how inequalities and social exclusion are often reproduced, but also how important the new generation of young people are in shaping the values, attitudes and behaviours of the older generations living in Wales. These provide important insights into the challenges society faces in ensuring the wellbeing of future generations.

We have undertaken a major programme of research into young people's lives in civil society. In particular, this research has examined young people's political engagement, their participation in various forms of social action (inside and outside of school), their relationships with charities and other various third sector organisations, their levels of altruism and who young people perceive to be good role models (and villains!) This research has also been important in distinguishing between young people's lives in urban and rural areas, and how language and linguistic ability can shape their involvement in civil society.

About us

The Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD) is a national, interdisciplinary, social science research institute. We have been designated by the Welsh Government as a national research centre. Using innovative approaches, our research spans the fields of economics, sociology, geography and political science.

Website

Find out more about our research, our staff and our publications and read our latest news and blog.

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Events

We run workshops, seminars, training events and the WISERD Annual Conference to share our research and encourage collaboration. Find out about upcoming events:

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Work with us

We work in partnership with a wide range of different organisations. If you'd like to find out more about our research, are interested in working with us on a joint event or would like to co-produce a piece of research please get in touch:

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