



Sefydliad Ymchwil Cymdeithasol
ac Economaidd a Data Cymru
Wales Institute of Social and
Economic Research and Data

INSIGHT

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



WISERD hosts the UK-wide WISERD Civil Society Research Centre, a major investment by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).



The Wales Institute of **Social and Economic Research and Data (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.

We are a collaborative venture between the universities of **Aberystwyth, Bangor, Cardiff, South Wales** and **Swansea** – working together to improve the quality and quantity of social science research in Wales and beyond.

Our research effects change by influencing the development of policy and practice across a range of sectors.

At **Aberystwyth University**, WISERD includes the **Centre for Welsh Politics and Society**.

WISERD also hosts **ADR Wales (Administrative Data Research Wales)** – a collaboration between **Welsh Government, Swansea University Medical School** and **WISERD at Cardiff University**. **ADR Wales** is part of the **ESRC funded ADR UK** (Administrative Data Research UK).

WISERD publications data on pages 10 provided by Elsevier: www.elsevier.com.



Director's report

2020 has been an enormously difficult year for everyone. WISERD has faced many challenges as it has had to change its ways of working and reorient its programme of research to address the many crises that have arisen from the coronavirus pandemic. In these pages, we show how WISERD has overcome these challenges and strengthened its position as an important national research centre with an increasingly global reach.

At the beginning of 2020, we began our new partnership with the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) as it started a new, [five-year phase of work to increase research methods capability in the social sciences and beyond](#). WISERD Co-Director Professor Gary Higgs, from the University of South Wales, has been appointed as an NCRM Senior Fellow and is leading a programme of WISERD training events as part of this collaboration.

Also in January, we became partners in the newly established [ProPEL Hub](#) (Productivity Outcomes of workplace Practice, Engagement and Learning). ProPEL is a major new initiative designed to support improvements in productivity through enhanced workplace practice and employee engagement.

In February, shortly before the pandemic made these kinds of events impossible, we launched the new ESRC-funded Civil Society Centre at the Senedd in Cardiff Bay with the stakeholder event, [Celebrating Civil Society Research: A New Chapter](#). We're grateful to Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales and Professor Alison Park, Director of Research at the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for speaking at the event. This launched a new five-year programme of work and through the year we have welcomed new researchers who have joined us to carry out research on a raft of new projects.

We formally launched the new Civil Society Centre at Bangor University later in the year, but had to do so virtually. Just before lockdown, Mark Drakeford also delivered the WISERD Centre for Welsh Politics and Society's Annual Lecture: [After Brexit – what next for Wales?](#) at Aberystwyth University.

As the pandemic began to take hold, WISERD's portfolio of events and dissemination moved online, including WISERD's weekly seminar series, which allowed us to open up these events to a much wider audience. We were able

to hear from our own researchers and invited speakers from the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), the Bevan Foundation and Carers Trust Wales.

In July, we were delighted to welcome Professor Jonathan Portes who delivered an online lecture, [Covid-19 and Brexit: where next for the UK economy?](#) Jonathan was due to be the keynote speaker at our annual conference, which sadly had to be cancelled. We were delighted that we were still able to welcome him to WISERD and that a larger number of people were able to hear him speak.

“WISERD's success is testament to its collaborative approach with universities and charities across Wales, Europe, and the world. Facts have never been more important, and having a world-class knowledge hub helping us in government to make the right decisions, will help us build a better Wales for us, and for our future generations.”

Mark Drakeford,
First Minister of Wales, speaking at Celebrating Civil Society Research: A New Chapter (pictured below)



WISERD colleagues also spoke at other online events. Professor Jean Jenkins (Cardiff University) presented [the preliminary findings](#) from the project 'Operationalising Labour Rights' (OLR) to the German Sustainable Textile Partnership in April 2020. Professor Scott Orford (also Cardiff), presented the [Understanding Welsh Places](#) website at the Understanding Welsh Places Festival where he also ran a planning and data clinic. Professor Michael Woods (Aberystwyth University) gave a keynote presentation on 'Upland Communities in Wales: beyond Brexit, Covid-19 and facing Climate Change' at the Environment Platform Wales online conference 'Environmental Evidence 2020: Resilience in the Welsh Uplands'. In December, Swansea colleagues (Dr Samuel Mann, Dr Nigel O'Leary and Professor David Blackaby) presented findings on 'Sexual Identity, Industrial Segregation, and Earnings' at the American Economic Association's Committee on the Status of LGBTQ+ Individuals in the Economics Profession.

In September, WISERD held a three day series of open, [online events on the Foundational Economy](#). These brought together international scholars, politicians, policy makers and practitioners to discuss key developments in the Foundational Economy and responses to the pandemic that focused on social and economic renewal at local and regional levels.

The Eisteddfod also moved online this summer and WISERD researchers from Aberystwyth University contributed to Eisteddfod AmGen panels on 'National and Regional Political Movements', 'Young People and Welsh Politics' and 'Language and Economic Development'.

As the year progressed, WISERD researchers refocused their research to address the current crisis. Our new [WISERD Education Data Lab](#) explored a range of themes of relevance to policy makers and the wider education sector. It won funding from the Welsh Government Office for Science (Sêr Cymru) and Cardiff University to look at how digital learning was rolled out across Wales in response to the pandemic.

Professor Alan Felstead (Cardiff University) has written [two WISERD reports on homeworking](#) during the pandemic. He has contributed to many blogs as part of the ProPEL project and [his homeworking research](#) has made the headlines both nationally and internationally.

His recent video 'Remote Working: Maintaining Productivity', has featured as part of the [CIPD's Coronavirus webinar series](#) and he has recently been invited to give evidence to a Senedd Inquiry.

In the summer, Dr Jennifer May Hampton (Cardiff University) produced a [series of blogs](#) using survey data from the international study of children's wellbeing, Children's Worlds, and the WISERD Education Data Lab. These explored the impact of the pandemic on both A level and GCSE results; the levels of well-being of school children in Wales; and home learning and educational inequalities. These findings have helped Welsh Government and other stakeholders understand more about how children in Wales have been learning at home, their experience of lockdown and the impact it has had on their education and wellbeing.

2020 also saw the publication of some important WISERD research articles and monographs. For example, following a successful 2019 event in Cardiff City Hall and in collaboration with Dr Victoria Winckler of the Bevan Foundation, we published a report on [The Rise and Fall of Think Tanks in Wales](#). In Spring 2020, a Special Issue of the [Curriculum Journal](#) was published bilingually featuring research papers from WISERD's [Successful Futures for All?](#) programme of research, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and the Welsh Government to highlight issues in the development of Wales' new school curriculum.

In November, we celebrated the **launch of our Civil Society book series with Policy Press**. This new series provides interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives on the rapidly changing nature of civil society at local, regional, national and global scales. The first four books report on research findings from across our previous ESRC Civil Society Research Centre and colleagues are currently working on future volumes.

In response to issues raised by the Black Lives Matter campaign, WISERD produced an overview of our work in this area - [WISERD Research on Race and Ethnicity](#). We hope this report will inform future research on inequalities. In addition to disseminating our research, WISERD colleagues have been working with key stakeholders and policy-makers to increase the impact of work and foster evidence-based policy and practice.



This has involved a series of secondments and placements. For example, Dr Mitchel Langford, from the University of South Wales, completed a Senedd Research Academic Fellowship Scheme project looking at access to banking services in Wales – 'Exploring geographical patterns in the changing landscape of financial services provision in Wales'. Findings from this research will be presented to the Senedd in 2021.

Within our new ESRC Civil Society Centre, Professor Paul Chaney (Cardiff University) has been researching the issues facing third sector adult social care providers before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and has submitted written evidence to the Welsh Parliament's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee.

Colleagues from Aberystwyth, Dr Elin Royle, Dr Huw Lewis and Dr Rhys Jones, organised a research briefing seminar for the Research and Policy Unit in the Office of the Welsh Language Commissioner. This reported on research from our previous ESRC Civil Society Centre and the [Revitalise](#) project.

The European research project, [ROBUST](#), which investigated interactions between rural and urban areas and how they can be more effectively managed, comes to an end in June 2021. As a legacy of this work, Professor Michael Woods, Dr Jesse Heley and Dr Bryonny Goodwin-Hawkins (all Aberystwyth) have been working with

the Welsh Local Government Association Rural Forum to develop a Rural Vision for Wales that will provide a roadmap for post-COVID recovery and post-Brexit rural policy. The vision was launched in January to inform party manifestos in the Senedd elections 2021 and the policies of the new Welsh Government.

In December, WISERD launched a toolkit for school governors in Wales – the [School Governor Reflections Resource](#). Supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales and Cardiff University, this resource could help school governors perform their role more effectively. Professor David Blackaby (Swansea University) was asked to join the Wales Productivity Forum as part of the ESRC funded UKRI Productivity Institute and has been commissioned by the Office of Manpower Economics to undertake research on the ethnic pay gap in the public sector, the findings of which will directly inform the public sector Pay Review Bodies.

I hope this report provides an insight into how our research and activity has responded to the many changes in our society during 2020 and that you'll continue to follow and engage with our work over the coming year - which we hope will be less stressful.

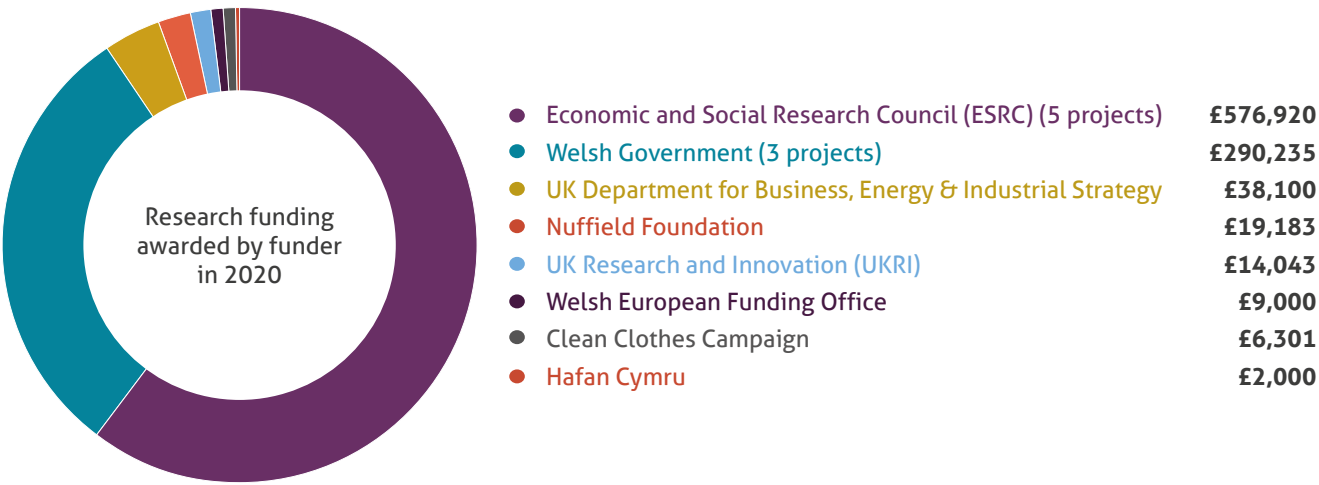
Sally Power
WISERD Director

Research funding Data

During 2020 WISERD applied for **37 research grants** across all five partner universities and was involved in research bids including those led by other organisations to the value of **£33.3M**.

WISERD’s total research grant capture amount for 2020 was **£955K**.

New funding in 2020

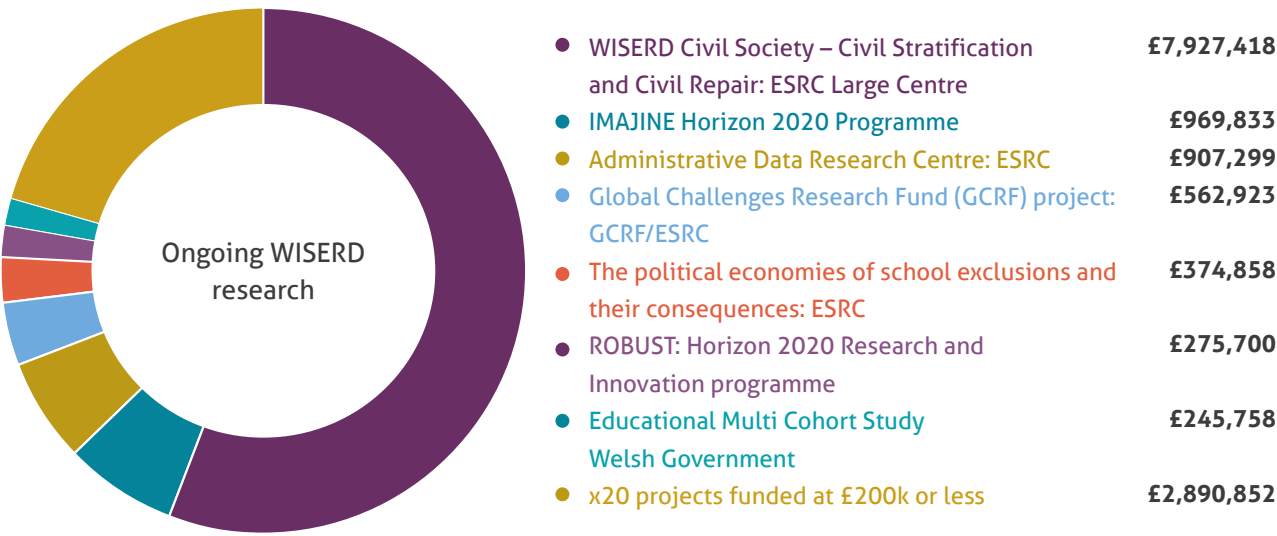


WISERD has an outstanding track record of winning competitive research funding. In 2020 we successfully secured new funding from a wide range of organisations in the public and third sectors.



Current WISERD research

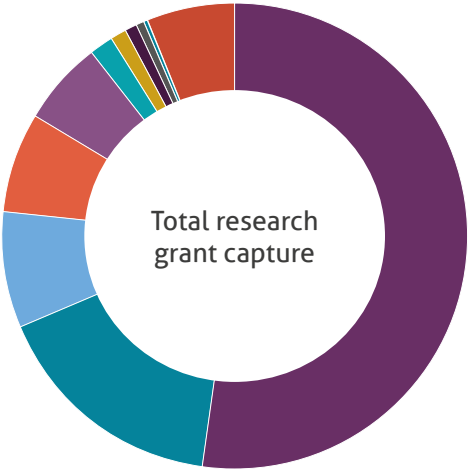
The value of ongoing WISERD research in 2020 was **£14.1m** across **27 research grants**.



Research grant capture 2010-20

Since 2010, WISERD has submitted **301 research funding bids** across the WISERD partner universities, with a success **rate of 56%**. WISERD’s total research grant capture since 2009 is **£38m**.

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)	£19,904,518
European Commission	£6,239,175
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)	£2,995,638
Welsh Government	£2,644,839
European Research Council	£2,300,000
Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO)	£595,890
National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)	£416,136
Cardiff University Research Fund	£299,436
Wellcome Trust	£285,386
Alzheimer’s Society	£63,965
Other funders	£2,235,636



International links

WISERD is proud to have established many international links, through fieldwork, collaborative research and events, hosting visiting academics and attending conferences abroad. Some of these are highlighted below.

Ireland

In collaboration with the National University of Ireland Galway, WISERD gained ESRC funding for a new network 'Civil Society in Turbulent Times: Exploring Connections, Comparison and Capacity-Building in Ireland and Wales'.

Wales

WISERD researchers carried out a survey of children's wellbeing in Wales. This is the first time Wales has been involved in Children's Worlds, an international study of children's well-being which surveyed 128,000 children across 35 countries between 2016 and 2019.

India

Professor Jean Jenkins' ESRC Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) project – 'Operationalising Labour Rights: Access to Remedy at the Workplace' has delivered capacity building training with colleagues in India.

USA

Dr Robin Mann initiated a collaboration with Michigan Tech University to develop joint research on post-industrial communities and heritage, with a focus on slate industries.

Bangladesh

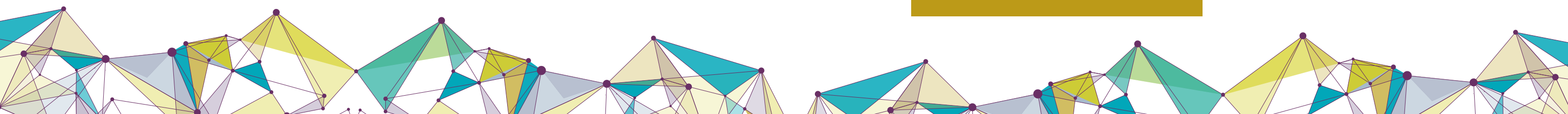
New research by WISERD Co-Director, Professor Paul Chaney, Dr Sarbeswar Sahoo (Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi) and Dr Seuty Sabur (BRAC University, Dhaka) analyses civil society organisations' perspectives on the contemporary situation facing LGBT+ people in Bangladesh.

Italy

Fabrizio Barca, coordinator of Forum Disuguaglianze e Diversità, spoke in the WISERD Foundational Economy online event series. Fabrizio is a former Italian state minister without portfolio for territorial cohesion.

Australia

WISERD researchers in Swansea collaborated with Ian Li (University of Western Australia) on his research project 'The Relationship between Prejudice towards Sexual Minorities and the Political Participation of Sexual Minorities in Australia'.



Publications

WISERD produces a range of publications for academic, policy and practitioner audiences, including newsletters, reports and blog posts.

In 2020, WISERD published **over 60** academic publications, including:

- Journal articles 39
- Books and book chapters 12
- Reports and briefings 11
- Other 6

In 2020, WISERD published **41** blog posts.

You can read these on our website: www.wiserd.ac.uk/blogs.

Since 2008 WISERD has published **over 750** academic publications, including:

- Journal articles 500+
- Books and book chapters 136
- Reports and briefings 137

Journal articles published in 2020

17.1%

Outputs in top citation percentiles
Publications in top 10% most cited journals worldwide

15.7%

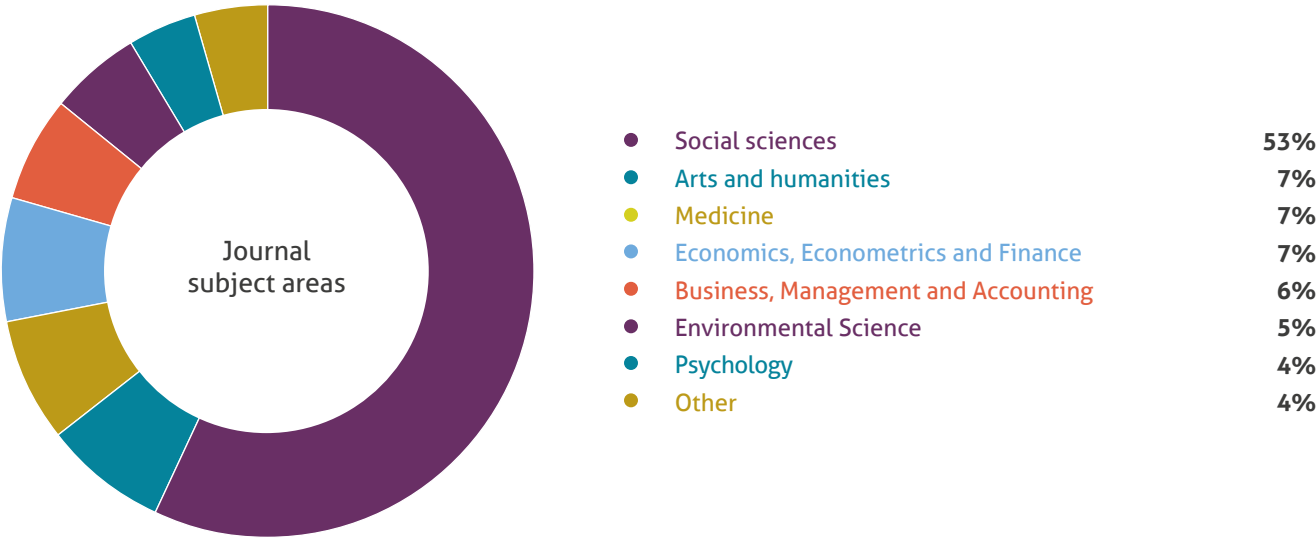
International collaboration
Publications co-authored with institutions in other countries

38.4%

Publications in top journal percentiles
Publications in top 10% journals by CiteScore Percentile

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WISERD journal articles between 2015 and 2020 covered a range of subject areas:



Civil Society and Social Change

A new WISERD book series was launched by Policy Press in October 2020. The Series Editors are Professors Ian Rees Jones and Paul Chaney, Cardiff University and Mike Woods, Aberystwyth University. The series comprises of a core set of edited volumes reporting on research findings from across the ESRC-funded WISERD Civil Society Research Centre which ran from 2014-2019. Selected titles in the series will be available open access.

The following titles are now available:

The Foundational Economy and Citizenship
Edited by Ian Rees Jones and Filippo Barbera

Putting Civil Society in Its Place
Edited by Esther Muddiman, Sally Power and Chris Taylor

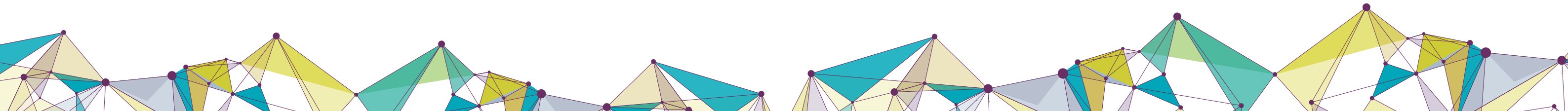
Civil Society and the Family
Edited by Bob Jessop

Civil Society through the Lifecourse
Edited by Sally Power

Researchers are currently working on forthcoming titles, which include:

- **City Regions and Devolution in the UK: The Politics of Representation**
Authors: David Beel, Martin Jones and Ian Rees Jones
- **Understanding Local Civil Society: Participation, Place and Social Change**
Authors: Professor Howard Davis, Dr Robin Mann, Dr David Dallimore, Dr Marta Eichsteller, Dr Graham Day
- **Labour, love and welfare: the politics, practices and performances of eligibility**
Author: Dr Helen Blakely
- **Trust, Transparency and Multi-Level Governance**
Authors: Professor Alistair Cole and Dr Ian Stafford

See more publications on our website: www.wiserd.ac.uk/publications.



Events and engagement 2020

Due to working remotely, in 2020 we have delivered more online events than ever before. Our events have attracted international audiences, raised our profile and expanded the reach of our blogs, news stories and social media posts. Many of our blogs and news stories feature findings from our research on the impact the pandemic has had on society.

Foundational Economy online event series, September 2020:

[A three day series of public, online events on the Foundational Economy](#). These events brought together international scholars, politicians, policy makers and practitioners to discuss key developments in the Foundational Economy. They explored responses to the pandemic which focused on social and economic renewal at local and regional levels. Discussions ranged from the role of the Foundational Economy in building socio-ecological sustainability to its potential contribution to social justice and well-being. The series attracted over 150 people from the UK, Austria, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Norway and the USA.

“The series has developed further networks across Europe and widened the focus of foundational thinking on different sectors of the economy and social life.” – Professor Ian Rees Jones

The WISERD lunchtime seminars

Since April, [WISERD lunchtime seminar series](#) has moved online. We have invited 19 speakers from WISERD and from various external organisations to cover a wide variety of subjects. Recordings are available on the [WISERD website](#).

Civil Society book series launch

The first four books of the [Civil Society and Social Change](#) series published by Policy Press launched in November. See page 11 for more information.

A Conversation on Wales' Future, September 2020

[The joint event hosted by WISERD and the Wales Centre for Public Policy](#) was attended by 250 people in which Carwyn Jones MS (former First Minister of Wales), Auriol Miller (Director of the Institute of Welsh Affairs), and Dr Rachel Minto (Wales Governance Centre, Cardiff University) analysed the trajectories and priorities that will characterise Welsh politics and policy over the next decade.

Training and capacity building

We have delivered [5 sessions](#) in 2020:

- Data visualisation and infographic design x 2
- What does the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 measure and how can it be used?
- Mixing Methods: Paradigms, principles, and practicalities
- Qualitative Interviewing

Media coverage

UK productivity could be improved by a permanent shift towards remote working, research shows. This research from the ProPEL project made the headlines nationally and internationally, including in BBC World News, Mail Online, The Guardian, Forbes and Reuters.

Children's Worlds research

The Wales country data from this international survey on children's wellbeing was covered by the Western Mail, South Wales Echo, Nation Cymru, GOLWG magazine, Play Wales and Wales news online in August and September 2020.

Qualifications and assessment

WISERD Education Data Lab research on how young people are assessed featured in the Welsh agenda (IWA), BBC News Wales and Wales Online.

Attainment gap

Experts warn of 'long term damage' to education due to school closures". Director of WISERD Education, Sally Power, was interviewed and quoted on ITV Wales News about the long term effects that COVID-19 measures in schools might have on pupils.