



Sefydliad Ymchwil Cymdeithasol  
ac Economaidd a Data Cymru

Wales Institute of Social and  
Economic Research and Data

# INSIGHT

2023 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 page 10 provided by Elsevier: [www.elsevier.com](http://www.elsevier.com).



## Director's report

Last year, the words 'permacrisis' and 'polycrisis' became part of the lexicon. I am not sure how useful these terms are but the war in Ukraine, inflation and the cost-of-living crisis, environmental disasters, the impact of Brexit, the NHS and social care systems on a knife edge, a chaotic refugee policy and political turmoil in the UK are all contributing to a sense of unease about what is next on the horizon.



While the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns continue to reverberate, it is important, I think, to take a long view and recognise that many of the challenges we face, including the fragility of our welfare systems and the decline in real wages, have long-term antecedents. WISERD research takes such a view, and this is evident in our findings on the educational outcomes and well-being of young people, on the foundational economy, and on the persistent inequality in access to key services in Wales. We will continue to deliver policy-relevant research that describes, explains and evaluates complex societal problems, not least of which has been our focus on civic stratification that examines inequalities in citizen rights and the capacity to make the most of rights.

With this in mind, 2022 has marked the midpoint of our five-year ESRC Civil Society Centre: Civic Stratification and Civil Repair and it has been a pleasure to welcome several new colleagues to support us in continuing to take this work forward. These include two WISERD PhD studentships with an international focus – Christina Galanaki and Asmaa Alfar who are researching anti-migrant vigilantism in Greece and the experiences of Palestinian refugees in the UK.

Professor Alan Felstead has joined the Executive group as a co-director and has also been appointed to a strategic role which aims to facilitate greater capacity for research collaboration. Alan brings expertise in the field of work and labour markets, and an important programme of ESRC-funded research beginning in 2023. In July 2022, he gave expert evidence to the Equality and Social Justice Committee in the Senedd.

It has been great to have Dr Dan Evans back with WISERD after a break of several years, most recently, to work as a frontline support worker with rough sleepers in Cardiff. He joins Rhys Davies, Jean Jenkins and Helen Blakely on the project 'Trade unions, grass roots activism and solidarity', which is being carried out in partnership with UCL.

We also appointed Dr Matt Thompson to work with us on 'Civil society and

placed based strategies for sustainable development'. Following on from our strong progress in developing case studies in Wales, including our work with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Cardiff Capital Region, Matt has spent the last six months conducting a series of European case studies.

Congratulations to Dr Amy Sanders at Aberystwyth University who, this year, was awarded the Campbell Adamson Memorial Prize for the Best Paper at the Voluntary Sector and Voluntary Research (VSVR) Annual Conference.

In addition, Amy was one of the recipients of the Audrey Jones Memorial Award for Research 2022, from the Wales Assembly of Women. Amy presented this work at the Wales Assembly of Women Annual Conference in September.

This year, we held our first in-person **WISERD Annual Conference** since the start of the pandemic, at Swansea University's School of Management on the Bay Campus. We welcomed over 130 delegates and listened to presentations on over 50 papers, not to mention two inspirational keynote speakers – Professor Mererid Hopwood from Aberystwyth University and Dr Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation. At the conference, we also hosted a book launch for the WISERD Civil Society and Social Change Series with Policy Press. Find out more about this series on page 11. In addition to our annual conference, we hosted a varied programme of events in 2022. You can read more about these on page 12.



Congratulations are due to three WISERD professors who were among the 66 new Fellows elected to the Learned Society of Wales in 2022, representing some of the most highly esteemed figures from across academic and civic life in Wales and beyond – Professor Martina Feilzer FLSW from Bangor University, Professor Rhys Jones FLSW from Aberystwyth University and Professor Steve Smith FLSW from the University of South Wales.

Another highlight was welcoming Professor Charles Sabel from Columbia Law School as WISERD international visiting scholar in November. Professor Sabel joined us in sbarc|spark for a week of events and discussions about his work on experimental governance, including a public lecture in the sbarc|spark auditorium on his new book with David Victor entitled *Fixing the Climate: Strategies for an Uncertain World*.

In other international news, we have been delighted to follow the work of Dr Igor Calzada (Principal Research Fellow at WISERD), as he successfully undertook his Fulbright Commission Scholar-in-Residence at California State University, Bakersfield for the 2022-2023 academic year. We look forward to building upon the links he has made, which will hopefully provide further exciting opportunities for cultural and intellectual exchange.

2022 also marked the 10th year of the 'WISERD Education Multi-Cohort Study (WMCS)' – As part of this year's ESRC Festival of Social Science, Dr Laura Arman presented a webinar on this unique, longitudinal study. We continue to liaise with the Welsh Government over the focus of this study and our other education work, such as that of the WISERD Education Data Lab and our Excluded Lives project with the University of Oxford.

Over the summer, it was great to see Cardiff University researcher, Dr Nick Hacking, along with members of the Barry citizen science group, welcome the installation of a high-quality air pollution monitor from Think Air Ltd, which marked a new stage in the group's investigations of local air quality.

After six years, we saw the IMAJINE (Integrative mechanisms for addressing spatial justice and territorial inequalities in Europe) project formally finish on 30th June. This has been a major project for WISERD, funded as part of the EU Horizon 2020 Programme and based at the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society at Aberystwyth University. Managed by Professor Mike Woods, it comprised 11 work packages and involved 16 partners across 13 countries. This impressive body of work has produced new critical insights into the conceptualisation of spatial justice and its application in research, which will be discussed in a forthcoming, open access book, *In Search of Spatial Justice: Addressing Regional Inequalities in Europe*, due to be published in 2023 by Edward Elgar Publishing.

Another project that came to fruition this year was 'Borders, boundary mechanisms and migration', which culminated in a fantastic event at Bangor University, exploring Roma, Gypsy and Traveller experiences and challenges in Europe today. The event brought together civil society organisations, academics, policymakers and community members, including Dr Adrian Marsh, researcher in Romani Studies at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul who leads the International Romani Studies Network.

Our colleagues at Bangor University also continue their important work on the criminal justice system, with Wales

Innovation Network (WIN) funding secured for the coming year to carry out an 'All Wales data sharing project'. Professor Martina Feilzer has joined a Probation Development Group, which is set to advise the Welsh Government on establishing a Welsh Probation Service. Martina is also engaged in negotiations with the North Wales Police on a project exploring the impact of equality and diversity reforms on organisational culture in North Wales Police and gave evidence to the House of Commons' Justice Committee on the public's understanding of sentencing in December.

Jointly with colleagues in Aberystwyth University, Martina has organised the second Aberystwyth and Bangor Research Leadership programme, open to researchers from all disciplines, including WISERD colleagues.

In Cardiff, Co-Director, Professor Jean Jenkins' work continues as the lead for the Wales Trades Union Congress Commission on Standards of Work and Devolution. The commission published their interim report over the summer. Jean was also part of a panel of speakers from the devolved nations about standards of work and devolution at the British Universities Industrial Relations Annual Conference, which took place in June at Manchester University.

Further afield, 2022 marked 10 years since the horrific Ali Enterprises fire that killed over 250 garment workers in Pakistan. Jean and the rest of the team at WISERD saw the release of an important report based on our research with the Clean Clothes Campaign and their partners in Pakistan, which revealed the urgent need for expansion of the International Accord in Pakistan, a legally binding safety agreement to protect workers.



Professor Sabel giving public lecture in the sbarc|spark auditorium

At the beginning of the year, WISERD Cardiff staff officially moved into their new home in sbarc|spark – part of Cardiff University's Innovation Campus. We are now working alongside some of our key partners and it's been great to see relationships grow and develop over the last few months.

One such collaborative project is a new Wales Innovation Network (WIN) project, involving WISERD colleagues at Cardiff University and the University of South Wales (USW), and also the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA), who work alongside us in sbarc|spark. The WIN project builds upon Understanding Welsh Places (UWP) and also the work taking place at USW on bus accessibility and active travel. In October, key stakeholders came together in sbarc|spark to discuss the key challenges facing people with reduced mobility and disabilities in accessing and using public

transport, and to co-produce a series of research questions.

Our research on bus accessibility featured in an article published by the Senedd Research Service in April. This multi-modal access research was also evidenced in the transcripts of the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee of the Senedd enquiry on the future of public transport in Wales, and a final report was published in October. The WISERD team at USW have also created a new website to examine access to key services in Wales. They welcome feedback on their prototype, so please do get in touch if you would like to assist them with this, visit:

[wiserd.ac.uk/news/key-services](https://wiserd.ac.uk/news/key-services).

In December, ADR Wales unveiled its Planned Programme of Work that will help to provide an insight on the key issues facing Wales and the UK.

Established in 2018, ADR Wales unites research expertise from Swansea University Medical School and WISERD with analysts from within Welsh Government. ADR Wales researchers at WISERD recently took part in a study published by the Welsh Government to highlight the benefits and limitations of enhanced data utilisation to deliver careers services in Wales.

I hope this report has given you a glimpse into our research activities throughout 2022 and that you'll continue to follow and engage with our work over the coming year. If you are interested in finding out more about our research plans or would like to collaborate with us on a project, please don't hesitate to contact us.

**Ian Rees Jones**  
WISERD Director

# Research funding data

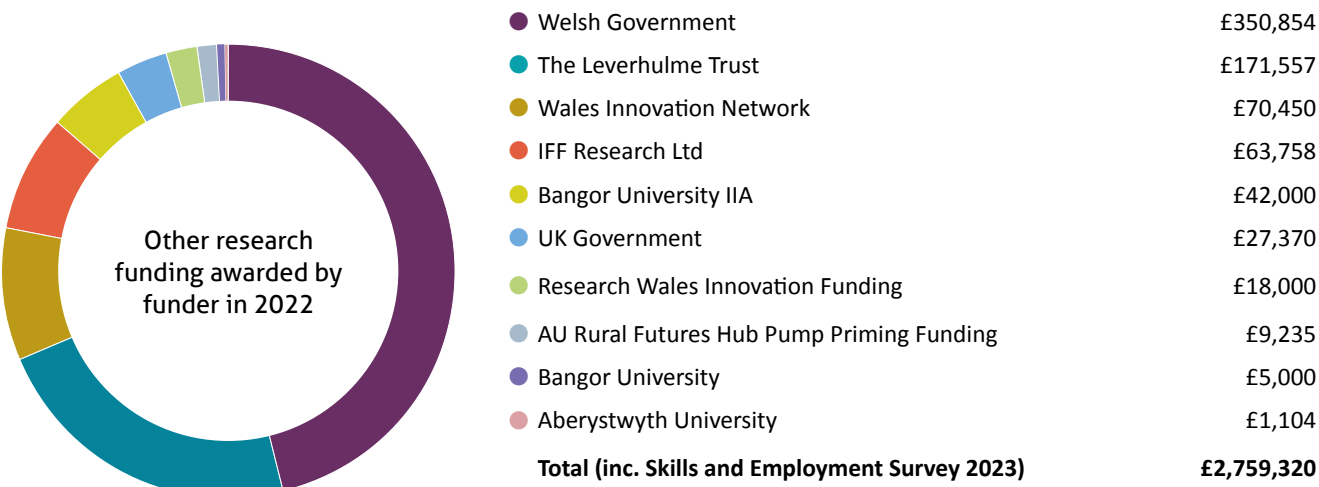
During 2022, WISERD applied for **37 research grants** across all five partner universities and was involved in research bids including those led by other organisations to the value of **£17.9m**.

WISERD's total research grant capture amount for 2022 was **£2.76m**.

## New funding in 2022

Over **£1.8m** of this funding is from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) for the Skills and Employment Survey 2023: Continuity and Change Project which is also funded by the UK Department of Education (**£150k**) and the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) (**£50k**).

Other new funding is from the following funders:

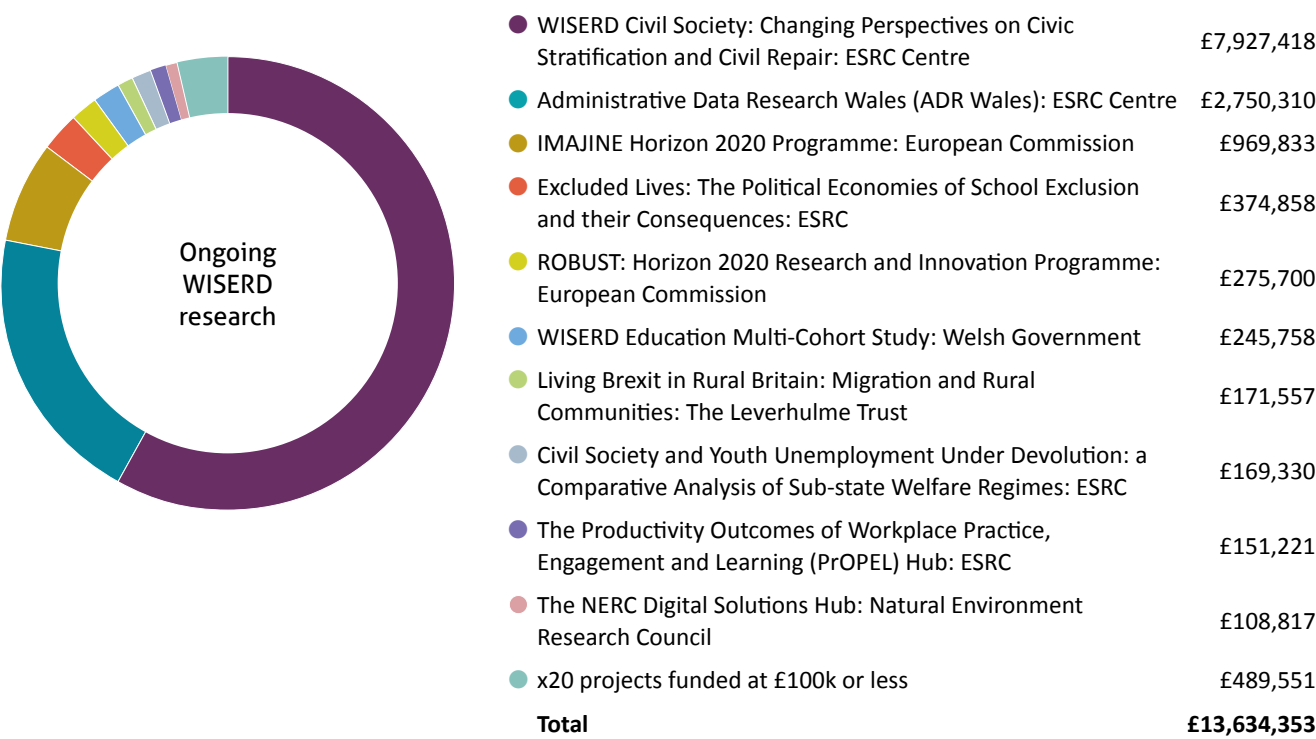


WISERD has an outstanding track record of winning competitive research funding. In 2022 we successfully secured new funding from organisations in the public and third sectors:



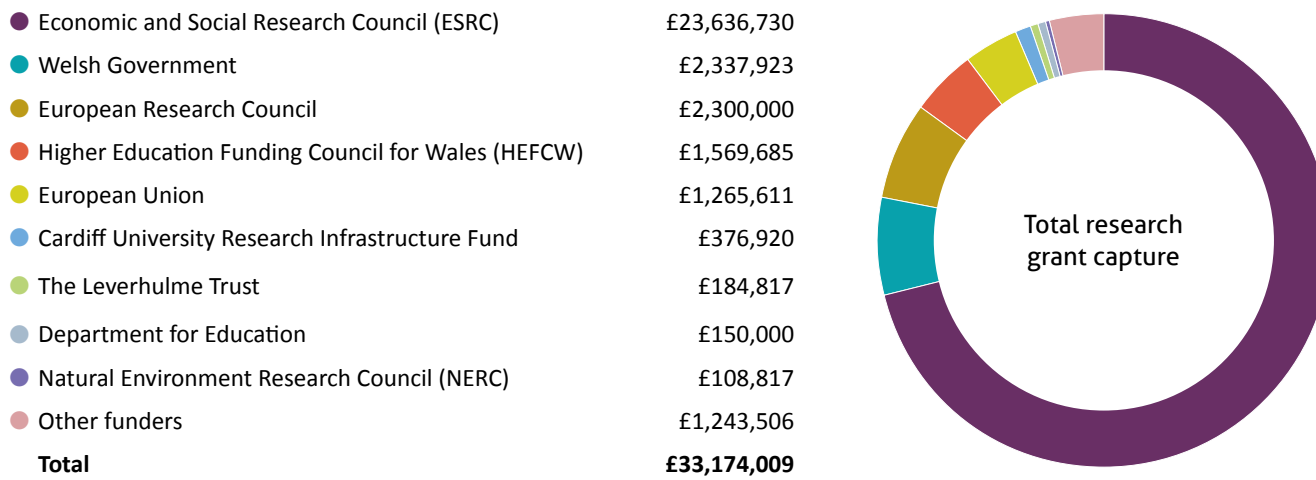
# Current WISERD research (under management in 2022)

The value of ongoing WISERD research in 2022 was **£13.6m** across **30 research grants**.



## Research grant capture 2012-2022

Since 2012, WISERD has submitted **261 research funding bids** across the WISERD partner universities, with a **success rate of 58%**. WISERD's total research grant capture since 2012 is **£33.1m**.





# International links

WISERD is proud to have continued to establish many international links. Collaborative research projects and events have taken place and some examples of these are highlighted below.

## New York

In November 2022, we were delighted to welcome Professor Charles Sabel from Columbia Law School as a WISERD international visiting scholar. Professor Sabel joined us in sbarc|spark for a week of events and discussions about his work on experimental governance, including a public lecture in the sbarc|spark auditorium on his new book with David Victor entitled *Fixing the Climate: Strategies for an Uncertain World*.

## California

Dr Igor Calzada (Principal Research Fellow at WISERD) completed a Fulbright Commission Scholar-in-Residence at California State University, Bakersfield for the 2022-2023 academic year. Dr Calzada continued his research on digital citizenship, has been involved in the launch of a new Institute for Basque Studies, and building links between Wales, the Basque Country and California.

## Warsaw

At the end of June, the IMAJINE (Integrative mechanisms for addressing spatial justice and territorial inequalities in Europe) project reached completion. This has been a major project for WISERD, funded as part of the EU Horizon 2020 Programme and based at the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society at Aberystwyth University. The final IMAJINE project conference 'Spatial justice and territorial inequalities in uncertain times' took place in Warsaw, Poland in May.

## Istanbul

Dr Adrian Marsh, researcher in Romani Studies at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul who leads the International Romani Studies Network joined us as a keynote speaker for our event at Bangor University in September 2022, which explored Roma, Gypsy and Traveller experiences and challenges in Europe today. Dr Marsh also led a workshop at the event on '*Romani research, Travellers' Tales – an academic's practical field guide to working with Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities in contemporary social science, health and humanities research*'.

## Pakistan

2022 saw the release of an important report based on our research with the Clean Clothes Campaign and their partners in Pakistan, which reveals the urgent need for expansion of the International Accord in Pakistan, a legally binding safety agreement to protect workers. The research involved the systematic collection of data relating to workers' experience of workplace occupational health and safety, including Covid-19 related issues, in three urban centres in Pakistan (Lahore, Faisalabad and Karachi). The report contributed to the Clean Clothes Campaign's evidential basis for lobbying and advocacy for policy change, and the extension of the International Accord to Pakistan. This objective has now been achieved. In December 2022, a new workplace safety programme was established in Pakistan for an initial term of three years, starting in 2023. The resulting agreement is called the 'Pakistan Accord on Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry (Pakistan Accord)'. Visit: [internationalaccord.org/countries/pakistan](https://internationalaccord.org/countries/pakistan).

## Turin

As part of the International FE Network, WISERD held the 'Fifth Foundational Economy Conference: Foundational Economy, Social Innovation and Public Action' in Italy, in September 2022, and welcomed keynotes from Professor Charles Sabel (Columbia Law School) and Fabrizio Barca (Forum Inequality and Diversity). The conference questioned: '*What is distinctive about the foundational approach to innovation and experiment; and what can we and others learn from considering and comparing different approaches?*'



# Publications

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

In 2022, WISERD published over **84** academic publications, including:

Journal articles	<b>39</b>
Books and book chapters	<b>24</b>
Reports and briefings	<b>17</b>
Other	<b>4</b>

In 2022, WISERD published **22** blog posts.

You can read these on our website:  
[wiserd.ac.uk/blog](https://wiserd.ac.uk/blog).

Since 2008, WISERD has published over **800** academic publications, including:

Journal articles	<b>590+</b>
Books and book chapters	<b>160</b>
Reports and briefings	<b>154</b>

## Journal articles published since 2017

**15.9%**

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

**21.2%**

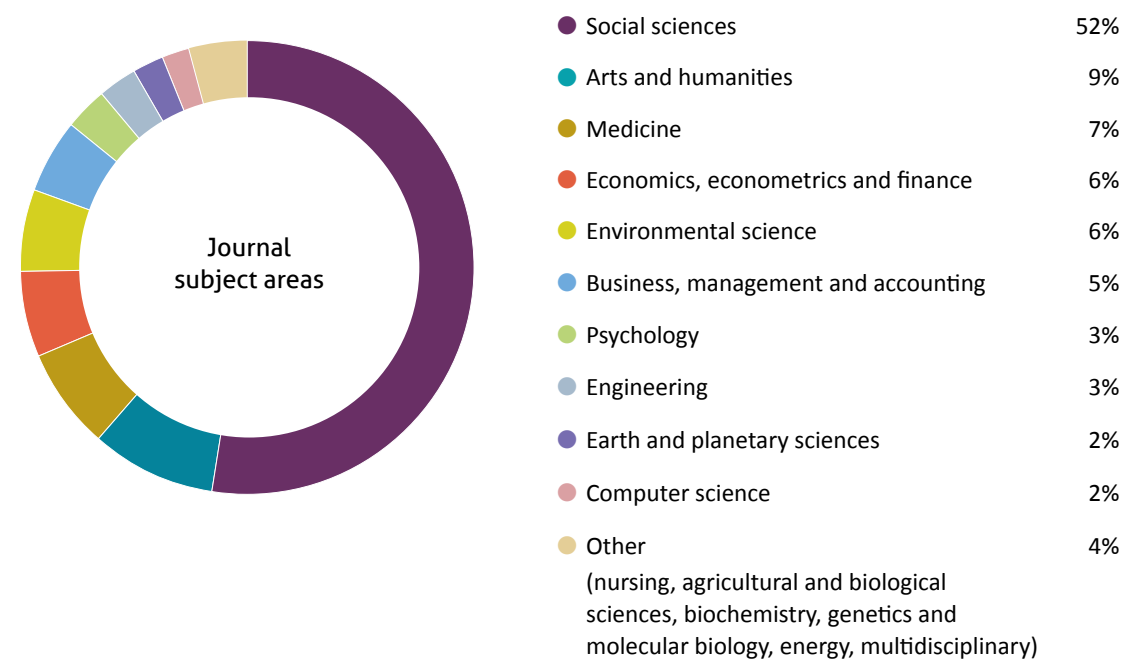
International collaboration  
**Publications co-authored with institutions in other countries**

**40%**

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

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WISERD journal articles between 2017 and 2022 covered a range of subject areas:



## WISERD Civil Society and Social Change book series

The WISERD Civil Society and Social Change book series launched in October 2020 and provides interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives on the rapidly changing nature of civil society at local, regional, national and global scales. The series comprises a core set of edited volumes reporting on research findings from across the ESRC-funded WISERD Civil Society Research Centre. Selected titles in the series are available open access.

To mark the release of the 2022 titles and the re-launch of several existing titles into a paperback format, we hosted a book launch in collaboration with Policy Press at our 2022 WISERD Annual Conference. Led by series editors, Professor Paul Chaney, Professor Ian Rees Jones and Professor Mike Woods, the launch event featured talks from the authors who presented research findings from the published volumes.



Pictured (left to right) Dr Ian Stafford, Professor Michael Woods, Professor Ian Rees Jones, Professor Paul Chaney, Dr David Beel

The following titles were published in 2022:



**Civil Society in an Age of Uncertainty: Institutions, Governance and Existential Challenges**

Edited by Paul Chaney and Ian Rees Jones



**Analysing the Trust-Transparency Nexus**

By Ian Stafford, Alistair Cole and Dominic Heinz

Find out more about the series here:

[policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/civil-society-and-social-change](https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/civil-society-and-social-change).

See more publications on our website:  
[wiserd.ac.uk/publications](https://wiserd.ac.uk/publications).

Previous titles published in 2021 and 2020 were:

**Local Civil Society** By Robin Mann, David Dallimore, Howard Davis, Graham Day and Marta Eichsteller

**City Regions and Devolution in the UK** By David Beel, Martin Jones and Ian Rees Jones

**Civil Society and the Family** By Esther Muddiman, Sally Power and Chris Taylor

**Civil Society through the Lifecourse** Edited by Sally Power

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

**Putting Civil Society in Its Place** By Bob Jessop

Forthcoming titles planned for publication in 2024 are:

**Single Mothers and the Welfare Trap** By Helen Blakely

**Youth Unemployment and Precarity** By Sioned Pearce



# Events and engagement

## WISERD Annual Conference, July 2022

2022 saw the return of the in-person WISERD Annual Conference for the first time since 2019, with over 130 delegates, presenters and exhibitors from across WISERD's five partner universities and beyond gathered at Swansea University. The conference theme was 'Civil society and participation: issues of equality, identity and cohesion in a changing social landscape', attracting over 50 papers.

The conference was also attended by 14 exhibitors from across the third sector, including the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA), the Welsh Centre for International Affairs (WCIA), the Centre for Ageing and Dementia Research (CADR), the British Educational Research Association (BERA) the Learned Society of Wales (LSW) and others, including WISERD colleagues from ADR Wales.



## Roma, Gypsy and Traveller civil society organisations: Exploring experiences and challenges in Europe today, September 2022

This hybrid event brought together over 30 delegates and Roma, Gypsy and Traveller civil society organisations from across Europe with academics, policymakers, and community members to hear about and discuss Roma, Gypsy and Traveller experiences in Europe.

## Launch Conference for Foundational Alliance Wales, December 2022

With over 40 delegates and more presenters and delegates joining online, the hybrid conference launched the Foundational Alliance project of building alliances for change and foundational renewal in Wales. A combination of presentations and workshop discussions highlighted foundational objectives and ways of working which can sustain household liveability and responsible providers within planetary limits.

## Wales Housing Research Conference, December 2022

Co-hosted by WISERD's Wales Housing Research Network, the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence, and Shelter Cymru, the Wales Housing Research Conference brought over 80 delegates together to research evidence relating to some of the most pressing Welsh housing issues.

## Online seminar series

We have delivered 22 online seminars in 2022, covering a wide variety of subjects presented by WISERD researchers and guest speakers.

## Training and capacity-building (TCB) sessions

We have delivered four sessions in 2022:

- Drawing in Research
- Data Visualisation and Infographic Design
- Introduction to Advance Qualitative Methods
- Online Qualitative Interviewing training

## National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM)

We continue to work collaboratively with the NCRM to provide a series of face-to-face and online training courses which address a range of learning needs for researchers, extending from courses on mixed research methods to the use of specific quantitative research applications.

# Media coverage

## Children still missing from classrooms

In March, Professor Chris Taylor, academic director of sbarc|spark at Cardiff University, is quoted in the *South Wales Echo* and *Western Mail* newspapers as saying children and parents may feel school is "optional", especially on Fridays, following two years of pandemic disruption.

## Sunday Supplement

Professor Sally Power reviewed pressing social issues in the day's papers on the *Sunday Supplement* programme on BBC Radio Wales in May and November.

## Access all areas or missing the bus?

In April, Professor Mitchel Langford, Professor Gary Higgs and Dr Andrew Price from the University of South Wales wrote a guest article on the Senedd Research website about how the pandemic has affected bus service levels across Wales.

## The Cardiff Christmas Dinner

In December, Research Associate, Jemma Bridgeman, part of the Excluded Lives team, featured on the ITV *Wales at Six* news programme while preparing for the CASCADE ExChange Wales Christmas dinner for children and young people in care.