

# W/SERD NEWS

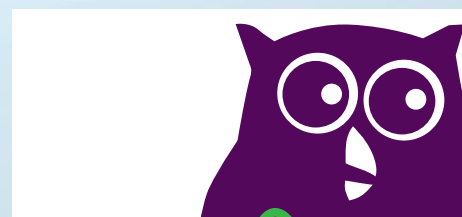
Wales Institute of Social & Economic  
Research, Data & Methods



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# An Introduction

## by the WISERD Director

The past few months have been an exceptionally busy time for WISERD. Professor Ian Rees Jones, the Cardiff Co-Director, has been leading the preparation of a major bid for WISERD to become a designated ESRC Research Centre, focussing on how structural changes (economic, demographic and political) are impacting on civil society, especially at the local and regional levels.

We are still at a very early stage in the process; and competition will be exceptionally stringent. However, if our bid were successful, it would provide very substantial funding over a five year period. Irrespective of the final outcome, the process of preparation has been extremely valuable, involving not only extensive discussion between academic colleagues across the WISERD network, but also with researchers in other settings and with potential research-users in the public,

private and third sectors. Certainly, this has further strengthened WISERD's commitment to both research-capacity building activities and knowledge exchange and transfer.

In the latter context, WISERD has also been heavily involved in the preparation of – what has just been announced to be – a successful proposal to run the Welsh Government's Public Policy Institute for Wales. Originally flagged in the Labour Party manifesto for the last National Assembly elections,

this has the potential to be a major new initiative in the development of evidence-informed policy; and to provide a new focus for social science researchers to engage with the policy-making process.

It comes at a time when the synthesis and application of research is receiving renewed attention, not least through the establishment of the What Works Centres, jointly funded by the UK Government and the ESRC. It remains to be seen, however, in what ways these Centres will relate to the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and, of course, Wales.

The continuing importance to WISERD of research that has direct relationships with the development of policy in Wales (and more widely) is well illustrated in the contents of this issue of WISERD News. Our educational research is especially highlighted in what follows; and this has received a major boost through the funding (by the HEFCW) of the WISERD Education programme. What is significant here is that this work provides an important input to policy development not only within Wales, but also more widely across the UK and internationally (especially in other parts of the European Union). It is also crucial that this research enables important methodological developments, as well as contributing to wider theoretical and analytical debates across the social sciences.



Professor Gareth Rees  
WISERD Director



# New Research on Subjective Wellbeing in Wales

The Welsh Government has recently published a report which it commissioned from WISERD in Swansea relating to the analysis of Subjective Wellbeing (SWB) in Wales using data from the Annual Population Survey (APS) for April to September 2011. The release of these data forms an important part of the Office for National Statistics (ONS)' Measuring National Wellbeing Programme, which was launched in November 2010 and aims to develop an accepted set of statistics that measure Wellbeing in the UK.

The report begins with a description of the data used in the empirical analysis: the Annual Population Survey (APS) and a brief review of the factors that have been found to be associated with SWB. The APS contains four different measures of SWB:

- the respondent's overall satisfaction with life (*Life Satisfaction*),
- whether the things they do in life are worthwhile (*Worthwhile*),
- how happy they felt yesterday (*Happiness*) and
- how anxious they felt yesterday (*Anxiety*).

Responses to each of the questions are requested on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents 'not at all' and 10 represents completely. Although mean levels of SWB are included in the report, the main focus is on the distribution of responses across different socio-economic groups. This particularly relates to geographic areas and demographic groups where a low level of SWB is reported. The report focuses on comparisons between variations in SWB across countries of the UK and areas within Wales, as well as how SWB varies by demographic sub-groups within Wales. In particular, it identifies groups of individuals and areas within Wales where low levels of SWB are observed.

## Some of the key findings in the report are:

- SWB does not differ greatly across the UK, although there are some variations. For example, Wales has the highest proportion reporting very low levels of SWB of all four of the home nations for *Life Satisfaction* and *Happiness* but is ranked second amongst the four countries for high levels of SWB for all of the measures.
- Self-reported health appears to be the most important influence on SWB, with

those in very bad health reporting by far the lowest levels of SWB. This is particularly noticeable for individuals with mental health problems.

- Unemployment is strongly linked with lower levels of SWB. The duration of unemployment is also important as the long-term unemployed are far more likely to report a low level of SWB.
- The influence of personal and household characteristics appears to be very similar in Wales to other parts of the UK. This is likely to explain the relatively small variation in SWB across the regions of the UK. There are however some differences between socio-economic characteristics including that:
  - females report slightly higher levels of SWB on some measures;
  - there is generally a U-shaped relationship between age and SWB;
  - students and those in employment tend to report the highest levels of SWB;
  - SWB is lowest for people with no qualifications, divorcees, social housing tenants and some ethnic minority groups.
- Although SWB varies across areas within Wales, such as between unitary authorities, localities with different levels of deprivation and rurality, spatial factors are far less important than individual characteristics. As a result differences due to geography seem to be largely explained by differences in the characteristics of people living in different areas. However, unitary authorities located in the South Wales Valleys tend to feature at the bottom of the SWB rankings, while SWB tends to be higher in rural areas. Furthermore, splitting areas up into quartiles based on a deprivation index, reveals that those living in the most deprived parts of Wales are most

likely to report very low levels of SWB.

- Multivariate regression analysis is undertaken to control for individual and area characteristics, in order to produce a more accurate picture of precisely which characteristics are associated with lower levels of SWB. The results from the descriptive analysis largely hold and indicate that the strongest influence on SWB is self-reported health. Unemployment also remains a very important influence on SWB even after other factors have been netted out.
- The report also discusses how research on SWB in Wales could be further developed. In particular, it is also necessary to examine panel data to obtain a more complete understanding of the dynamics of SWB in Wales because of the influence of certain factors such as the adaption to particular circumstances.

## To download the report:

*An Analysis of Subjective Wellbeing in Wales: Evidence from the Annual Population Survey* by Professor David Blackaby, Dr Stephen Drinkwater, Dr Melanie Jones, Professor Phil Murphy, Dr Mamata Parhi and Dr Kate Robinson, please go to [wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/wellbeing](http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/wellbeing)





# Working in Wales:

## First Findings from the Skills and Employment Survey 2012

Every five or six years a survey is carried out which collects data on the employment experiences of British workers. In 2012 the sixth of these surveys was carried out by an interdisciplinary team headed by Professor Alan Felstead of Cardiff University, in collaboration with Duncan Gallie and Hande Inanc (both Nuffield College, University of Oxford) and Francis Green (Institute of Education, London). Like its predecessors, The Skills and Employment Survey 2012 (SES2012) is a national study of people aged 20-65 who are in paid work. The overarching aim of the survey is to collect data on skills and employment experiences of those working in Britain in 2012, making it a key and distinctive resource for research on contemporary working life. In addition to funding for British-wide polls, funds to boost the Welsh sample were successfully sought in 2006 and 2012. In 2006, the Future Wales Skills Partnership funded the boost, while in 2012 boost funds came from WISERD.

Two events, sponsored by the Economic and Social Research Council and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, took place in London during April and May to support the launch of national reports outlining the first findings from the SES 2012. The first event covered the themes of job skills, training and job control in Britain, whilst the second provided an overview of findings in relation to work intensification, fear at work and job-related well-being in Britain. Key findings from the national reports point to the resumption of work intensification in Britain since 2006, reductions in job related well-being, continued increases in qualification requirements and a sharp increase in fear of job loss.

**In July, WISERD in partnership with the Bevan Foundation, will host a launch event to accompany the launch of a Welsh report based on findings drawn from the 2006 and 2012 studies.**

The report, authored by Professor Alan Felstead in collaboration with Rhys Davies and Sam Jones (both of WISERD at Cardiff University) provides hitherto the most detailed picture of work skills and quality

of jobs in Wales. In contrast to the national reports, the Welsh study is unique in providing geographical comparisons of results derived from the survey, with results for Wales being compared to other parts of Britain. The main report of the Welsh analysis is being accompanied by

the publication to 2 theme based short reports. Following analysis by the research team, the data will be deposited with the UK Data Archive during 2014 (data-archive.ac.uk).

For further information on the Skills and Employment Survey, including copies of reports available free for download, please visit the project website: [cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/ses2012](http://cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/ses2012)

Copies of the Welsh reports and supporting data resources will be available following the Welsh launch event on Monday 8th July 2013.

### To book your place for the launch event:

Work, Skills and Well-being in Wales: First Findings from the Skills and Employment Survey 2012 on Monday 8th July please visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/work-skills-well-being](http://wiserd.ac.uk/work-skills-well-being) or email [WISERD.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:WISERD.events@cardiff.ac.uk).



# Relationships between the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma and Higher Education

**T**he development and successful implementation of the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification (WBQ) represents one of the principal ways in which, following parliamentary devolution in 1999, Wales has developed its response to UK and international debates about the most effective ways of preparing young people for higher education. The WBQ was introduced in September 2003 as a pilot scheme and has since been rolled out across a significant number of schools and FE colleges. The WBQ involves a distinctive approach to the organisation of the curriculum (and associated assessment), combining significant elements of general and/or vocational education (the Options, comprising existing qualifications) with the development of key skills, research/analysis through the Individual Investigation, knowledge of Wales' culture and its place in Europe and the wider world and wider social and work related competences (the Core, comprising bespoke provision for the WBQ).

In June 2012 WISERD was awarded the contract to undertake a research project in to the relationship between the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma and Higher Education for the Welsh Government. This project was concerned with one key aspect of the WBQ: namely, its effectiveness in preparing young people for higher education (HE). Therefore, it was concerned only with the WBQ Advanced Diploma (for which the Options are defined in terms of A-levels or equivalent qualifications).

The main aim of the evaluation was, therefore: To examine the relationship between the Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced Diploma and performance in HE, using robust social research techniques.

The evaluation used a mixed methods design, incorporating a quantitative element based on existing large-scale datasets and a qualitative element that provides more detailed insights from 25

school students undertaking the WBQ in three school sixth-forms from across south Wales, 37 university students who achieved the WBQ and are now studying at three different types of universities in Wales, the WBQ coordinators from the three school sixth-form case study settings, and 12 staff members (admissions tutors, course directors, admissions managers) from the three university case study settings.

The final report presented three sets of findings:

- university participation;
- progress and outcomes in University; and
- the experiences of the WBQ amongst university staff and managers.

The evaluation reported two key findings, which demonstrated that the WBQ and access to and progress at university are inextricably linked. The first key conclusion was that there is strong evidence to suggest that the WBQ is enormously valuable in helping students to enter higher education. This benefit would appear to be largely due to the weighting given to the Core component of the WBQ as the equivalent of an additional A-level qualification (at grade A) for (some) university admissions.

However, the second main finding was that there was also evidence to suggest that

students with the WBQ Core find they are less likely to achieve a 'good' degree result than equivalent students without the WBQ Core, once they are at university.

However, the report also suggests that these relationships differ somewhat, depending on the nature of the students. Critically, low-achieving students appear to have the most to gain from having the WBQ in terms of university participation. Although overall levels of HE participation for relatively high-achieving students do not appear to be affected by having the WBQ, it does confer some advantage in terms of entry to Russell Group universities.

Despite these mixed results, the project found general support amongst staff and students in schools and universities for the WBQ and its main aims. But equally, it was acknowledged that there need to be improvements in the content and delivery of the WBQ for these benefits to be fully realised. The report identified three main areas in which the WBQ could be improved:

- the way in which the WBQ is promoted and delivered within centres;
- making the WBQ more challenging, in terms of skills and knowledge; and
- greater tailoring of the WBQ Core components to the particular needs of students.

This summary of the research project is taken from the Executive Summary published by the Welsh Government. The final report and complete Executive Summary can be accessed from the following website:

[wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/relationships-between-welsh-baccalaureate-advanced-diploma-higher-education/](http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/relationships-between-welsh-baccalaureate-advanced-diploma-higher-education/)

For more information about this project please contact Professor Chris Taylor: [TaylorCM@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:TaylorCM@cardiff.ac.uk).



# Surveying

## the Leavers of ESF Funded Training Programmes



**Commencing in 2009, a research team led by Rhys Davies of WISERD based at Cardiff University has been commissioned by the Welsh European Funding Office to undertake three successive surveys of leavers from training programmes supported by the European Social Fund; referred to as the ESF Leaver's Surveys. Other members of the research team include Professors Max Munday and Gerry Makepeace (also of Cardiff University) and Gareth Williams of Old Bell 3 Ltd. Fieldwork for the surveys is undertaken by IFF Research Limited.**

These surveys provide a detailed investigation of the experiences of people who participated in training programmes in Wales and a unique insight in to the effectiveness of such labour market interventions. The team has recently been commissioned to undertake a fourth survey; the 2012 ESF Leaver's Survey. Fieldwork for the 2012 survey is being undertaken this summer, with the analysis of the survey being completed during the autumn. This article provides an overview of what has become an important area of WISERD's work over the last four years.

### European Social Fund in Wales

The two ESF Operational Programmes (referred to as the Convergence and Competitiveness Programmes) that are benefiting Wales for the Programming period 2007 – 2013 are together providing a little over £1.2 billion of investment. The interventions that are supported by the Programmes are wide-ranging, though all relate to investment in human capital. It is forecasted that approved projects will reach almost 600,000 participants by the end of this programming period. The interventions covered by the ESF survey fall under two broad categories; those aimed at improving participation in the labour market which primarily support those not in work (Convergence Priority 2; Competitiveness Priority 1) and those aimed at improving progression in employment which primarily support those in work (Convergence Priority 3; Competitiveness Priority 2).





## Overview of the Surveys

Given the scale of the investment, it is clearly essential to evaluate the impact of measures supported by the Programmes, above all in increasing access to employment for those currently unemployed or economically inactive, in raising skills levels, and in increasing the capacity of those in work to add value to their economic contribution. The aim of the ESF Leavers Surveys is to assist in assessing the effectiveness of labour market interventions delivered under the ESF Convergence and Competitiveness Programmes. The over-arching objective of the survey is to understand the characteristics, experiences and outcomes of those participating in ESF projects.

The three Leavers Surveys led by WISERD to date have varied in terms of their design, target sample size to be achieved and their coverage of Priority Areas. For the 2011 survey, interviews were achieved with approximately 6000 ESF participants from 34 different projects. The surveys each collect information on: the pre-entry characteristics of ESF participants; their motivations for participating in an ESF project; the skills acquired as a result of the intervention and details of the careers of respondents since completing the project. Employment outcomes, 'softer' benefits from learning (such as increased confidence) and entry into further learning were also identified. The interviews included questions to explore participants' levels of satisfaction with their courses and their perceptions of the benefits that they had experienced as a result of participating in an ESF project.

## Methodological Innovations: Quantifying the Effectiveness of ESF

Any examination of the effectiveness of ESF requires an assessment of what would have otherwise happened to these participants in the absence of ESF. It is necessary to define a control group or sample whose experiences accurately reflect the hypothetical, unobserved outcomes for the treatment group in the absence of the ESF intervention. The report of the 2010 ESF Leavers Survey was the first to contain the results of Counterfactual Impact Evaluation (CIE) techniques, where the labour market experiences of respondents to the ESF survey were compared with the experiences of similar groups of people in the wider labour market. Using Propensity Score Matching (PSM) techniques, respondents to the ESF survey have been matched to respondents to the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The analysis focussed upon transitions into employment made by ESF participants who were not in work prior to their participation in ESF, comparing the incidence of such transitions with those made by otherwise comparable people identified in the LFS.

Whilst CIE techniques have been used in the evaluation of ESF programmes elsewhere in Europe, this is the first time that these techniques have been applied to data derived from a combination of sources. In 2011, members of the research team contributed to an expert hearing in Brussels on the experiences of EU Member States on the use of control groups in ESF evaluations. Continuity in the design of key survey instruments in the ESF surveys means that data from successive surveys can be pooled. This enables the effectiveness of these interventions in improving participation in employment to be assessed for more detailed groups of ESF participants, such as those who undertook particular types of interventions.

## Further Information

The commissioning and management of the ESF Leavers Surveys is led by the Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Branch of WEFO. Queries regarding the monitoring and evaluation of ESF in Wales can be addressed to the RME team at WEFO:

[RME.Mailbox@Wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:RME.Mailbox@Wales.gsi.gov.uk)

Reports of the 2009 and 2010 Surveys are available from the WEFO website at: [wefo.wales.gov.uk/](http://wefo.wales.gov.uk/). Queries regarding the content and analysis within these reports should be addressed to Rhys Davies: [daviesor@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:daviesor@cardiff.ac.uk).

ESF Leavers Surveys			
	2009 <sup>a</sup>	2010	2011
Fieldwork period	Feb/March 2010	June/July 2011	Sept/Nov 2012
Achieved samples (Number of projects covered)	4,058 (7)	7,507 (19)	6016 (34)
Response rates	60%	50%	48%
<sup>a</sup> The 2009 survey was conducted in waves, with respondents to the first wave of interviews being re-contacted approximately 5-6 months later to take part in a shorter follow-up survey. Both the 2010 and the 2011 Surveys were conducted during a single wave.			





# WISERD

# Begins a New Research to Higher Education

Access to higher education (HE) has become a controversial area of policy, as successive UK administrations have sought to balance increasing student fees with ensuring that HE is open to individuals from as wide a range of social backgrounds as possible. Moreover, distinctive approaches have been adopted in the different devolved administrations of the UK. For example, currently, the Welsh Government pays the increased costs to students resident in Wales arising from the abolition of the fees cap. However, the evidence-base for evaluating different approaches to widening access is relatively weak. Accordingly, WISERD, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Welsh Government (WG) are collaborating to develop an innovative research study in this field.

The project is funded by the ESRC (as part of its Secondary Data Analysis Initiative) and the HEFCW. It runs from 1 January 2013 until the end of December 2014. It will be led by Professor Gareth Rees, in collaboration with Professor Chris Taylor, Rhys Davies and Dr. Stephen Drinkwater. Two researchers, Ceryn Evans and Caroline Wright, will work on the project full-time.

## The project will:

- Analyse how individuals who are resident in Wales progress through secondary school, into sixth forms and further education colleges for post-16 education and on to HE; and
- Explore what are the key factors here in determining whether individuals progress through the education system to HE or not.

What are the relative impacts of the social characteristics of individuals, their previous educational attainment and their progression through the education

system? What does this imply for the effects of barriers at the point of entry to HE, such as fees levels, entry processes and so forth? Answers to these questions are known for England, but not for other parts of the UK.

The analysis will be based on the innovative use of three linked sources of information, the data for each of which are collected initially for administrative purposes. These are:

- the National Pupil Database (NPD) for Wales;
- the Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR); and
- Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data.

By linking the data-sets together, it will be possible to trace individual trajectories through the education system to entry to HE. It will also be possible to compare systematically the trajectories of those who do participate in HE with those who do not. Moreover, using appropriate statistical techniques, it will be possible to determine what are the most influential factors in

shaping patterns of HE participation. Results here will be compared with those that have been produced by similar analyses in England.

A second part of the study (funded by additional resources made available by the HEFCW) will investigate the development of distinctive approaches to widening access to HE by successive Welsh administrations since devolution in 1999. Of key significance here will be:

- to establish the rationales that underpin the approaches adopted in Wales; and
- to compare these with those that have informed policy approaches in the other countries of the UK and England, in particular; and
- to examine the ways in which national policies have been implemented by the Welsh universities, paying special attention to the assumptions about the determinants of HE participation that are in play here.



# Project on Access

This part of the study will be based on fieldwork, comprising the analysis of official and semi-official documents and interviews with politicians and senior officials responsible for widening-access policies; and with the professionals inside the universities responsible for implementing these policies.

The project is unusual in that the results of the research will be fed directly into the deliberations of the WG and the HEFCW on the future development of policies on widening access to HE, which will be especially intensive over the next few years. Moreover, they will also provide the basis for working with the professionals in the universities with responsibility for implementing widening-access policies, to integrate the use of analyses of administrative data more firmly into their day-to-day practices.



# Booktrust

**a bilingual reading intervention designed to raise educational outcomes for young children by increasing the quality and quantity of adult-child interactions around reading in the home learning environment (HLE).**

**Dr Kate Moles (WISERD/ School of Social Sciences) is working with Dr Alex Morgan (School of Social Sciences) on a three year evaluation of Pori Drwy Stori, a bilingual reading intervention designed to raise educational outcomes for young children by increasing the quality and quantity of adult-child interactions around reading in the home learning environment (HLE). This reading intervention is focused directly upon current national policy imperatives to improve the outcomes for all children and to narrow the gap between those who do well in education and those who do not.**

The Pori Drwy Stori initiative is both appropriate and timely in addressing current national policy imperatives to improve the outcomes for all children and to narrow the gap between those who do well in education and those who do not. There is good reason to do so. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests are designed to measure if students at the end of secondary school are well equipped academically to cope with the requirements they are likely to encounter in the future. In the 2009 PISA tests Wales did not do well, ranking 38th for reading, 40th for mathematics and 30th for science of the 67 countries that took part; and all below England.

A recent report (Estyn, 2011) highlighted that in a 'significant minority of schools, there is not enough direct teaching of reading, and appropriate opportunities for children to practise and use their reading skills are not always provided'. It was also mentioned that 'children's written work in many schools is often limited because writing tasks are formulaic and undemanding'. Estyn has also recently

indicated concern that 20% of pupils reach secondary school with a reading age below nine years and six months, which is considered to be the basic level of functional literacy. Clearly children struggling to learn to read will have great difficulty when required to read to learn and so this will impact negatively on their future educational progress.

This evaluation will explore how the Pori Drwy Stori resources and support materials are adopted by parents and practitioners, and the extent to which they are increasing or improving:

- the quality time that families spend together
- attitudes by parents/carers to reading and books (for themselves and their child)
- the number of rhymes known by parents /carers and their children
- parental confidence around sharing books, stories and rhymes and in being a partner in their child's learning over time.

It will document and critically appraise the experience of children, parents and practitioners in the first three years of its operation in the light of its aims and objectives. The evaluation will use a range of mixed methods; online surveys with parents and teachers following their receipt of each set of materials and ethnographic research in the classroom and homes of participants.

**To listen to Dr Moles and Dr Morgan talk more about this project please visit WISERD's podcasting page:**



The link between socio-economic deprivation and educational attainment is well established, both in Wales and elsewhere (Egan, 2013). Alleviating the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes, and in closing the associated achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged learners, has been a priority in Wales since devolution (The Learning Country, 2001). In 2012 a new national plan was introduced in Wales to raise standards in 3 to 16 education; Improving Schools (2012a) identified three priorities for improving educational outcomes for learners in Wales: to improve literacy; to improve numeracy; and to reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes. The overall success of this plan will be measured against the proportion of 15-year-olds who leave school with Level 2 including English/Welsh and mathematics.

The policy response to these priorities has been extensive, and includes the introduction of the School Effectiveness Framework, reconfiguration of the way education services are delivered by local authorities (regional consortia), the introduction of school banding (currently for secondary schools), additional funding for schools in the lowest two bands, the introduction of a new early years educational programme for 3-7 year olds (the Foundation Phase), a fully-funded Masters in Educational Practice (MEP) for newly qualified teachers, ambitious GCSE and PISA targets, and more recently the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programme. Central to many of these initiatives has been the provision of funding for targeted activities designed to raise educational standards, such as the School Effectiveness Grant and additional funding for secondary schools in the two lowest bands of performance. The introduction of the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) in 2012-13 is designed to further support these aims, and to direct schools and local authorities to place greater emphasis on mitigating the effects of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage on educational attainment. The PDG has similar aims to the Pupil Premium in England.

# Evaluation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant

In its first year, 2012-13, the PDG was worth £32.4 million, and was increased to £36.8 million in 2013-14. The PDG is delegated in its entirety to schools such that, currently, individual schools receive an additional £450 per pupil eligible for free school meals through the grant. Approximately 1,600 primary and secondary schools across Wales (just under 60% of all schools) are eligible to receive the PDG, although this ranges from £450 to £200,000 per school. Schools are encouraged to work in Clusters (feeder primary and secondary schools) to ensure greater effectiveness and value for money. Access to the PDG is conditional and on the basis of approved Spending Plan Forms – a costed annual programme of activities that are expected to be in line with local authority and/or regional consortia strategies. Any underspend of the PDG is meant to be returned to local authorities.

WISERD, in partnership with Ipsos-MORI, has been awarded the contract to undertake an evaluation of the PDG. The evaluation has six main aims:

1. Assess the extent to which the overall aims and objectives of PDG have been met;
2. Determine the impact of the PDG on improving the educational outcomes of pupils receiving support through PDG funded provision. This will entail assessing its contribution to improvements in standards of education and any long-term capacity building in improving the educational attainment of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils;
3. Identify how effective LAs, regional consortia and clusters have been in ensuring that the grant is used effectively;
4. Identify the key strengths of PDG and any constraints/issues that may have impeded its effectiveness;

5. Assess the value for money of the grant;
6. Provide recommendations as to how the Welsh Government, local authorities and schools can best build upon the PDG in meeting the Minister for Education and Skills' priority to reduce the impact of deprivation on academic attainment.

Following an initial scoping study the evaluation is expected to last two years. The evaluation will have five main phases using a mix of primary and secondary sources and analysing qualitative and quantitative data.

## Key features of the evaluation are:

- Evaluating the implementation of PDG, including official records of spending (e.g. from Spending Plan Forms) as well as how this works in practice via a school survey (if necessary) and school level case study research.
- Evaluating the impact of the PDG on hard attainment and attendance outcomes through modelling pupil-level data from the National Pupil Database (using a difference-in-

difference approach); furthermore, this analysis will be linked to data captured about the activities the PDG is funding so that we can understand the impact of different types of PDG spend, as well as the PDG programme as a whole.

- Evaluating the impact of the PDG on softer outcomes, principally pupil well-being, and inclusion, etc. We may use the HBSC survey in Wales as a baseline measure of these soft outcomes in schools with varying proportions of FSM pupils, and running an ad hoc follow-up survey early in 2015 to measure change over time. Furthermore, this may involve conducting a large number of case studies towards the mid-point and end of the evaluation, so they capture evidence of both impact and implementation.

For more information about the evaluation please contact Professor Chris Taylor in WISERD: [TaylorCM@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:TaylorCM@cardiff.ac.uk).



# WISERDE/ON

## a progress update

Since its launch at the end of 2012, WISERDEducation has been making great progress. The most important factor in this has been the appointment of three researchers to the team:



**Kimberley Horton,**  
*Research Assistant*

After finishing a BSc in Education at Cardiff University, Kimberley was a support worker working

with adults with learning disabilities in the community. Kimberley then acquired funding from the ESRC to study for an MSc in Social Science Research Methods and a PhD at Cardiff University.



**Dr Kathryn Sharp,**  
*Research Associate*

Kathryn completed a Psychology degree at Bangor University in 2007 and then secured a 1 + 3

ESRC scholarship at the ESRC on Bilingualism. For the past four years she worked on a project assessing the acquisition of gender in Welsh in bilingual Welsh-English speaking children. Kathryn completed her PhD at Bangor University.



**Dr Kevin Smith,**  
*Research Associate*

Prior to joining WISERD, Kevin worked in Nuku'alofa, Tonga as the Fellow in Curriculum at

the Institute of Education with the University of the South Pacific. Kevin also worked for six years as a secondary school teacher in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA. During this time, he completed a research and teaching fellowship with the University of Wales Trinity St David in Camarthen, Wales conducting ethnographic research and delivering lectures on social inclusion and cultural studies. Kevin completed his PhD at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, USA.

Over the last two months, the team has been busy identifying which secondary and primary schools will be best placed to participate in the cohort studies. So far we have twelve excellent secondary schools helping us with the research and have begun to collect the baseline data from our cohorts of Year 8 and Year 10 students.

Over the next few weeks we will be working with the feeder primary schools to identify and survey the two youngest cohorts of Year 1 and Year 6 students. With all but the youngest pupils, we have decided to use android tablets to undertake the surveys. Although we have had a few teething problems, we believe these tablets provide a really effective way of motivating students to participate and are more efficient for data entry than the conventional pen and paper surveys usually used in schools. Next year we will be interested in exploring the potential of the tablets to collect a broader range of quantitative and qualitative data from our young participants.

Once the baseline data have been collected, we hope we will have a really good platform from which to undertake further

research and draw in the enthusiasm and expertise of education staff across Welsh universities. We have now visited every department of education in Wales to outline the opportunities that WISERDEducation affords. In the coming weeks, we will be having face-to-face meetings with interested individuals to draw up plans of action and to explore how we can increase their involvement with the programme of research and capacity building. **We will take these discussions further at a WISERDEducation roundtable which will take place during lunchtime on 26th June - the second day of the annual WISERD Conference at the University of South Wales, Treforest Campus. We hope that you can join us there.**

If you have any queries please contact Professor Sally Power ([powers3@cf.ac.uk](mailto:powers3@cf.ac.uk)) or Professor Chris Taylor ([taylorcm@cf.ac.uk](mailto:taylorcm@cf.ac.uk)).

For more information on WISERD Education please scan here:





# UPDATE ON THE

# WISERD DATAPORTAL

**The WISERD Dataportal is an exciting and innovative web-based software application, which enhances a researcher's ability to discover socio-economic research data related to Wales. A working prototype (called the WISERD GeoPortal) was created as part of the Data Integration strand of WISERD phase 1.**

The prototype has since been developed into a fully functioning data search and discovery tool allowing researchers to access rich meta-data on a whole range of socio-economic data sets such as the 2011 Census, Labour Force Survey, Welsh Health Survey, British Crime Survey, etc as well as the qualitative interviews undertaken during the WISERD phase 1 Localities Programme. The meta-data complies with national and international standards such as Dublin Core, INSPIRE (Gemini 2) and DDI3. It allows researchers

to quickly ascertain the usefulness of a survey in terms of questions asked, response categories, sample sizes and the geographies at which the data are available (e.g. Wales only, Welsh Local Authorities, Census areas, etc). The meta-data will also provide details of how to access the source data, whether from StatsWales, the ONS or via the UK Data Service (UKDS).

Current development work on the Dataportal is investigating ways of accessing some of the source data automatically using data feeds. In these instances, the organisation which manages the source data makes the data available as an API (Application Programming Interface) that the Dataportal can access and retrieve seamlessly. We are currently working with 2011 Census data which is accessible via an API from NOMIS and ONS.

By searching through the 2011 Census meta-data held in the Dataportal, researchers will be able to select data related to a question (or questions) and these data will be brought into the Dataportal and displayed both in table and map formats. Researchers will be able to export the meta-data and source data for their own use

if they wish. As more source data are made available via data feeds (e.g. StatsWales), the meta-data/source data linkages made possible by the Dataportal will allow for easier discovery and access to these data.

WISERD recently gained funding through the ESRC's Knowledge Exchange Funding Scheme to develop and disseminate the WISERD Dataportal further. As part of this project, the Institute will be establishing a series of user, technical and steering groups. The aim of these groups is to inform the further development of the portal and to facilitate dissemination to the wider user community. If you would like to be a member of one of these groups, or find out more about the WISERD Dataportal, please contact Dr Scott Orford: [orfordsc@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:orfordsc@cardiff.ac.uk).

For regular updates on the Dataportal please visit our blog and Twitter feed:

[dataportal-development.blogspot.co.uk](http://dataportal-development.blogspot.co.uk)



[@WISERD\\_data](https://twitter.com/@WISERD_data)



For further information and a link to the Dataportal visit:  
[wiserd.ac.uk/resources/wiserd-dataportal](http://wiserd.ac.uk/resources/wiserd-dataportal)

**WISERD DATA PORTAL**

The WISERD social science data discovery tool





# 'Understanding Wales' Seminar Series

**A recent presentation by Professor Gareth Rees marked the end of the Understanding Wales seminar series. Jointly hosted by WISERD@Aber and the Institute of Welsh Politics (IWP), the programme brought leading academics to Aberystwyth University to discuss a series of key social and political processes at work in contemporary Wales, and in an international context.**

The first of these sessions was led by Professor Michael Keating (University of Aberdeen) on the subject of Rescaling Europe: The Rise of the Meso Level. Focusing on political restructuring in European States, comparisons were made between the politics of devolution in Wales, Italy and Spain, and the various drivers of change in these differing territorial contexts.

The subsequent seminar was given by Professor Jonathan Bradbury (Swansea University) on the subject of Electoral Innovation and Devolution in Wales: the best of both worlds?, with key themes including proportional representation and the politics of coalition. As expected, this paper provided the basis for a considerable discussion on the prospect of electoral reform in Wales, with questions being asked in regard to the demand for greater proportionality, and the relationship between regional and constituency seats.

Professor John Curtice (Strathclyde University) presented the third paper of the series; with the title Is Scotland Set to Separate? Considering the wider debates around Scottish independence, Professor Curtice used evidence obtained by the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey as a basis for discussing the public outlook on devolution in Scotland, with particular reference to the perceived benefits of the union and the upcoming 2014 referendum on Scottish independence.

The final seminar in the series was delivered by the Director of WISERD, Professor Gareth Rees, on the subject of Universities, Civil Society and Citizenship. Focusing on development of the higher education system in Wales, key themes included university provision in Wales and the role of Welsh universities in educating students from across the UK more broadly. In particular, this session invited debate and discussion regarding the 'massification' of higher education in post-War Britain, and the potential long term implications of top-up fees for the higher education system in Wales.

On reflection, each of the sessions provided an up-to-date take on issues of current concern in Wales. This was reflected in the audiences, which included academic staff, students and a wider cross section of the public, and in the lively debate which followed each presentation.



# Update on Knowledge Exchange

**WISERD's work on knowledge exchange and engagement has continued to develop during the Institute's second phase. In 2012, WISERD published its Knowledge Exchange Strategy which set out seven key priorities for the programme, these are as follows:**

- To deliver a programme of research that delivers relevant and useful evidence in support of Welsh policy and practice
- To provide a sustainable infrastructure for research and knowledge exchange
- To support researchers to engage effectively in knowledge exchange
- To create opportunities for a genuine dialogue and shared understanding with research users
- To improve our communication of research/evidence
- To develop strategic alliances with key stakeholders
- To evaluate the effectiveness of WISERD's KE strategy and activities

To take forward the strategy, WISERD is currently engaged in a series of activities and projects, these include:

## **WISERD / Welsh Government Evidence Symposia**

WISERD, in partnership with the Welsh Government, was successful in gaining funding from the ESRC to support the organisation of a series of four evidence symposia, focused on key policy themes relevant to Wales. Symposia events bring together academic researchers with policy, public, private and third sector organisations and individuals, to discuss topics of key policy relevance to Wales. Previous events have included:

- Understanding Behaviour Change, September 2010
- Measuring Wellbeing, March 2011 & June 2012
- The Best Start in Life: What do we know about the impact of early interventions on children's life chances? February 2013

Upcoming symposia include:

- Health Inequalities in Wales, September 2013
- Social Mobility in Wales, October 2013
- Social Care in Wales, February 2013

**For further information on the Symposia, visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/research/current-projects/welsh-government-evidence-symposia](http://wiserd.ac.uk/research/current-projects/welsh-government-evidence-symposia)**

## **Unequal Wales Seminar Series**

October 2012 – July 2013

Organised in collaboration with the Wales Governance Centre (WGC) these seminars explore patterns of economic and social inequalities in contemporary Wales.

Previous events have included:

- Homelessness, legislation and social justice in Wales
- Inequalities in access to higher education
- Welsh speakers and the labour market
- Class, lifestyles, and health inequalities

**Further information on the series and future events can be found at: [wiserd.ac.uk/research/knowledge-exchange/unequal-wales-seminarseries](http://wiserd.ac.uk/research/knowledge-exchange/unequal-wales-seminarseries)**

**For further information on the programme, please visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/research/knowledge-exchange](http://wiserd.ac.uk/research/knowledge-exchange)**

**If you wish to express an interest in becoming involved, please contact the WISERD Director of Operations, Victoria Macfarlane:: email: [macfarlanev@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:macfarlanev@cardiff.ac.uk); tel: 029 2087 9710**



# Events

## July 2013 – September 2013



Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research,  
Data & Methods

### Wednesday 3rd July 2013

Unequal Wales Seminar:  
Migrant workers in Wales

**Dr Stephen Drinkwater,**  
**Swansea University**  
**Dr Andrew Thompson,**  
**University of South Wales**

**Venue:**

Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay  
5.45pm – 7.30pm

### Friday 5th July 2013

ASCC Seminar: The Role of  
Common Knowledge in  
Achieving Collaboration Across  
Practices

**Professor Ann Edwards,**  
**Oxford University**

**Venue:**

Cardiff University 1.00pm – 3.00pm

### Monday 8th July 2013

Work, Skills and Well-being in  
Wales: First Findings from the  
Skills and Employment Survey  
2012

**Professor Alan Felstead,**  
**Cardiff University**

**Venue:**

Glamorgan Building, Cardiff University  
12.30pm – 3.30pm

### Friday 12th July 2013

NOVELLA Workshop: Energy  
Biographies and Family Lives  
and the Environment

**Venue:**

Cardiff University 10.00am – 4.00pm

### Monday 22nd July 2013

ASCC Seminar: Talking Points –  
A Personal Outcomes Approach

**Dr Ailsa Cook,**  
**Edinburgh University**  
**& Dr Emma Miller,**  
**University of Strathclyde**

**Venue:**

Cardiff University 2.00pm-4.00pm

### Thursday 19th September 2013

From Guidelines to Mindlines:  
Developing Evidence Enriched  
Practice in Wales

**Professor John Gabbay & Professor**  
**Andrée Le May, University of**  
**Southampton, Professor Jo**  
**Rycroft-Malone, Bangor University**  
**and Alison Petch, IRISS**

**Venue:**

Swansea University 9.30am-4.30pm

### Thursday 26th September 2013

ASCC Seminar: The Enriched  
Opportunities Programme:  
Developing Evidence Enriched  
Practice to Support People Living  
with Dementia in Extra Care

**Professor Dawn Brooker,**  
**University of Worcester**

**Venue:**

Swansea University 11.30am-3.30pm

For more  
information on  
WISERD events  
please scan here:



## Introducing the new WISERD website

WISERD now has a new website!  
Providing easier navigation and a more  
vibrant user experience. We will be  
introducing more  
digital and social  
media over the  
coming months  
including a WISERD  
blog, podcasts and  
video. **Scan here to  
see the latest  
developments:**



## NESET launch a new online resource library

NESET has launched a new online  
Resource Library for policy makers,  
practitioners and researchers interested  
in promoting equity and inclusion in  
Education and Training. NESET  
(Network of Experts on Social Aspects of  
Education and Training) is a network of  
Academics across Europe and the rest of  
the world working on social aspects of  
education and training. **For more  
information scan here:**



Full details of all courses and events are available on the  
WISERD website: [wiserd.ac.uk](http://wiserd.ac.uk).

To enquire about WISERD events, please email  
[wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:wiserd.events@cardiff.ac.uk) or call 029 2087 6318



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