

A woman with her hair in braids, wearing glasses and a blue and white striped shirt, is sitting at a desk. She is looking down at a notebook in her left hand while her right hand is on a computer keyboard. The desk also has a mouse and some papers. The background is a softly lit office space.

# WISERD

## NEWS

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

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**Civil society**

**International links**

**Changing world of work**

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## Welcome from the WISERD director

*Featuring a variety of news from across the WISERD partner institutions and some of the latest additions to the WISERD blog, I hope this edition of WISERD News demonstrates our ongoing contribution to social science research and the ways in which we are influencing policy in Wales.*

Against a background of industrial unrest and post-pandemic changes to the workplace, our research on the evolving world of work has become even more pertinent, and several articles on this subject are featured in this edition. I'm pleased to report there is more to come on this too. Professor Alan Felstead has secured over £2m of funding, mainly from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), to carry out the latest round of the Skills and Employment Survey. Previous survey results have influenced UK government policy thinking on the subject, so it is vital that this work continues.

We're also influencing policy and practice with the findings from our WISERD Education Multi-Cohort Study, which celebrates its 10-year anniversary this year. We recently gave evidence to the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee on curriculum reform, based on the results from this year's survey of young people. You can read more about the latest findings on page 27 and download the findings postcards from our website: [wiserd.ac.uk](http://wiserd.ac.uk).

It was great to see so many members of the public visit our 'Head / Heart: Framing Future Wales' photography exhibition (see page 18). Held at Aberystwyth Bandstand earlier this year, it was formally launched by Elin Jones, Ceredigion MS, the Senedd's Presiding Officer. Led by Dr Anwen Elias and Dr Elin Royles from the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society at Aberystwyth University, the project uses photography to understand how people think about independence in Wales, Scotland and Catalonia, and has been described as a 'world first' in terms of its approach.

Our innovative methods also allow our research to evolve to better address the issues we're tackling. Our Understanding Welsh Places website has recently been updated to include new maps showing the extent of places you can reach within 30 minutes when travelling by different modes of transport (see page 14). Also, our study on access to sporting facilities based on private travel has recently developed to include alternative modes of transport, which helps to provide a much more detailed picture of accessibility patterns and could be used by sports organisations to plan provision (see page 10).

Finally, following a successful event at Swansea University's Bay Campus last year (see page 12), we're delighted to once again be hosting an in-person WISERD Annual Conference, this time at Bangor University. This year's theme is 'Civil society and governance in an age of crisis'. We look forward to welcoming our keynote speakers, Professor Paul Spicker, Emeritus Professor at Robert Gordon University and Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

I hope you enjoy this issue of WISERD News.

**Professor Ian Rees Jones**  
WISERD director

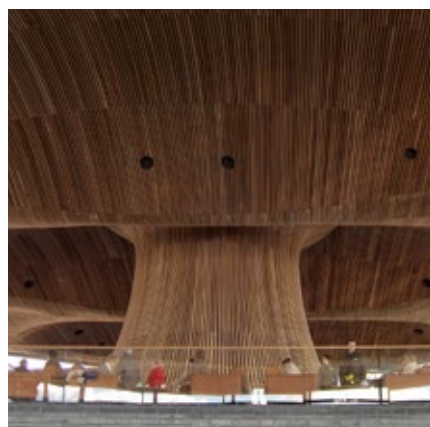
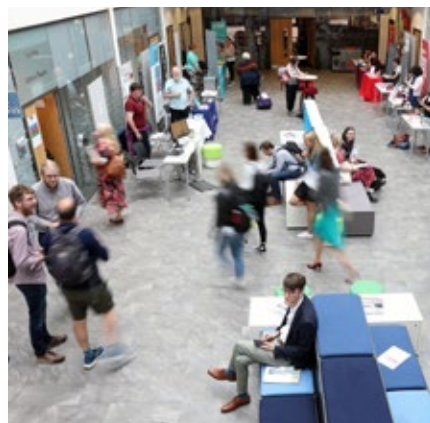
### COMING SOON

*Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our new WISERD videos. These will be available to watch soon, keep an eye on our website ([wiserd.ac.uk](http://wiserd.ac.uk)) and Twitter channel (@WISERDNews) for more information.*

WISERD Annual Conference 2022



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## Awards and recognition



**Professor Alan Felstead**, WISERD Co-Director at Cardiff University has secured £2.1 million of funding, mainly from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), to carry out the latest round of the Skills and Employment Survey, which also involves researchers at UCL, the Universities of Oxford and Surrey and the National Centre for Social Research.



**Professor Rhys Jones**, Professor of Human Geography at Aberystwyth University has been appointed to the board of Natural Resources Wales by the Climate Change Minister. Natural Resources Wales is the statutory body responsible for the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources. Rhys was also elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences earlier this year.



**Professor Mitchel Langford**, WISERD Co-Director at the University of South Wales has been successful in the latest Higher Academic Awards appointments and has been conferred the title of Professor in Spatial Analysis and Geo-informatics at the University of South Wales.



**Dr Amy Sanders**, Post-Doctoral Research Associate at Aberystwyth University was awarded the Campbell Adamson Memorial Prize for the Best Paper at the Voluntary Sector and Voluntary Research (VSVR) Annual Conference. Amy was also 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 2022.



**Dr Annie Tubadji**, Assistant Professor in Economics at Swansea University has been elected as a Board of Directors Member of the International Society of Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS). Annie is an established contributor to the association and was elected on the merit of her longstanding contribution to the scholarly quality of the society's annual meetings.



**Professor Michael Woods**, WISERD Co-Director at Aberystwyth University has secured funding of nearly €2.5 million from the European Research Council (ERC) for the project entitled 'Rural Discontent, Spatial Justice and Disruptive Politics in the Twenty-first Century' (Rural-Spatial-Justice). He has also been successful in securing UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) investment in the Rural Wales Local Policy Innovation Partnership (LPIP) programme.

## WISERD researchers present findings on teachers' job quality

*Dr Katy Huxley, Professor Alan Felstead (WISERD) and Professor Francis Green (UCL) presented the first results of their research on the changing job quality of teachers to a fringe event at the National Education Union (NEU) annual conference in Harrogate on 3 April 2023. The evidence is based on a research project carried out by WISERD at Cardiff University and UCL.*

The results are based on two sets of complementary data: (1) a job quality quiz taken by over 100,000 working people either side of the pandemic; and (2) a survey of NEU's members which elicited 15,500 responses.

### The findings show that:

- The quality of teachers' jobs has barely changed either side of the pandemic. However, other professionals have experienced improvements. The gap between the two groups has widened. While the proportion of teachers reporting frequently working at very high speed or to very tight deadlines has remained relatively high and has barely changed, other professionals have experienced a significant drop in these measures of work intensity.
- Similarly, the gap has widened between teachers and other professionals in terms of the control over working time. It has become easier for other professionals to decide when to start and stop work or to take time off for emergencies, but for teachers there has been little change.
- Teachers' job quality is worse in schools where teachers have a high expectation that the school will be inspected within the year. As a result, a higher proportion of teachers who thought that an inspection was very likely to take place within the year reported that they always felt exhausted at the end of the working day, compared to teachers who thought that an inspection was less likely.
- Similarly, greater proportions of teachers working in schools with a high percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals reported coming home from work exhausted.

The full findings of the research will be presented in a forthcoming report.



National Education Union (NEU) annual conference

# Comparing the changing fortunes of trade unions across Great Britain

*WISERD's free interactive mapping tool, UnionMaps, shows the complex patterns in trade union membership that exist across Great Britain and how these have changed over recent decades. Analysis reveals that the overall downward trend in union density that is observed across Great Britain as a whole masks very different local fortunes for the trade union movement. Here, we explore some case study areas using detailed geographical data for union membership that is available for over 400 areas from UnionMaps.*

## **The Cumbrian Coastal Plain – the most unionised area of Britain**

Copeland is the most unionised place in Great Britain. Located on the West Cumbrian coastal plain, the Sellafield nuclear processing facility (pictured) has provided an important source of employment for a highly unionised workforce since the 1950s. Between 2000/10 and 2011/21, union density in Copeland fell by less than 1 percentage point from 54% to 53%.

## **The North East – freefalling**

Nowhere in Great Britain has the decline in union membership been starker than in North East England, where union density has declined from 40% to 29% between 2000/2 and 2019/21. The largest declines have been witnessed within Northumberland.

## **Wales – diverging urban and rural trends**

While the South Wales Valleys have also exhibited reductions in rates of union membership, their decline has been more moderate than that witnessed within the old industrial areas of North East England. The South Wales Valleys remain among the most highly unionised places

in Great Britain, although their rank positions have fallen marginally. One exception to this is Blaenau Gwent which has experienced a decline comparable to those observed in the North East, falling from 44% during 2000/10 to 33% in 2011/21.

More remarkable however has been the increase in union membership that has occurred across rural areas. Union density has increased in Denbighshire from 32% to 35%, in Ceredigion from 32% to 34%, in Conwy from 29% to 30% and in Carmarthenshire from 37 to 38%. Union membership in Pembrokeshire has also remained unchanged at 33% and has fallen only marginally within the Vale of Glamorgan from 34% to 33%.

## **The South Downs – on the up**

South East England is characterised by low levels of union density, falling from 22% in 2000/10 to 19% in 2011/21. However, across the South Coast there is a large cluster of areas that have each exhibited either an increase or relative stability in their rates of union membership. Although these increases are not large and union membership in these areas was low to start with, many

other areas in London and the South East with comparable levels of union density have exhibited far greater declines.

Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that union membership remains higher in areas that were once characterised by traditional unionised sectors, variations in local trends demonstrate the need for detailed place-based analysis in order to understand the changing fortunes of trade unions across different parts of Great Britain and point to potential importance of place-based approaches to supporting the revitalization of the labour movement.

### **THIS BLOG POST WAS WRITTEN BY:**

**Alex Bryson**, Professor of Quantitative Social Science, UCL

**Rhys Davies**, WISERD Co-Director, Associate Director of ADR-Wales, Cardiff University

**Samuel Jones**, Research Data Manager, Cardiff University

Why not visit [UnionMaps \(wiserd.ac.uk/unionmaps\)](https://unionmaps.wiserd.ac.uk) to find out how high union membership is where you are?



# Counteracting the rise of the robots

*In recent years, media headlines such as: 'Robots are coming for your job: and faster than you think' have become increasingly prominent. Such coverage derives from research on the future of work and the impact of new technologies and automation.*

It is often assumed that some forms of manual employment and low-skilled, poorly educated young people will bear the hardest impact from future work changes, especially young men. In response to this potential impact, UK and Welsh Government policy often focuses on providing opportunities for lifelong learning.

Yet, this raises the question of how you upskill those with a negative or disaffected association with education? If we fail to address this issue, some young men may find themselves unemployable. Therefore, the UK government's aim of levelling up and the Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act goal of creating a prosperous Wales will be unachievable.

My research, situated in a former coalfield community in the South Wales valleys, seeks to contribute to the understanding of such issues. It focuses on the educational experiences, employment aspirations and masculine identity of a group of marginalised working-class young men and considers the impact of predicted future employment changes.

This subgroup of young men has become synonymous with macho, 'hard' or 'laddish' identities, and is often associated with anti-learning and manual employment aspirations.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

"My research has included a study of a group of working-class men aged 21-37 who had rejected school and education more broadly based on its perceived irrelevance, exploring their employment experiences and relationships using

qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and visual techniques."

The findings identified some continuity with the current understanding of marginalised working-class men and indicated that community traditions and masculinity influenced the participants' attraction to manual employment. The appeal of manual jobs was attributed to their physical nature, perceived health-related benefits and participants' awareness of personal well-being.

The concern for personal health deviates, to some extent, from the health-averse and 'unhealthy' practices often associated with certain traditional ideas of masculinity and somewhat demonstrates a change in beliefs.

In collaboration with a youth centre, my additional research focused on a younger study sample of marginalised working-class young men aged 12-21, using ethnography and qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and visual techniques. The findings revealed elevated behavioural changes and views. Some of these changes included:

- 1) A pragmatic approach to education instead of anti-learning, whereby the young men selectively identified and partook in a minimal amount of educational topics considered necessary to their employment aspiration.
- 2) Some softer displays of masculinity and social and emotional skills anticipated to become in demand with future work changes were also demonstrated.

3) There was also some deviation from manual employment orientation that was the consequence of specific social circumstances and what I refer to as a rupturing process or the destabilisation of masculine beliefs associated with physical industrial labour.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE

The findings allow us to consider the possibility that contemporary marginalised working-class young men's views and behaviours may be somewhat changing. Therefore conducting additional research to contemplate ways in which we can harness and foster the changes is important, with the ultimate goal of working with young men to create programmes and targeted interventions to make them fit for future technological change.



**Dr Richard Gater**

Dr Richard Gater is a post-doctoral research fellow based at Cardiff University. His work focuses on the educational experiences, employment aspirations and masculine identity of marginalised working-class young men in a former coalfield community in the South Wales valleys.

To find out more about Dr Richard Gater's work, visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/people/richard-gater](https://wiserd.ac.uk/people/richard-gater)

## Effect of economic turbulence on the experience of work to be investigated in study

*The experiences of workers will be investigated as part of a major survey led by Professor Alan Felstead, WISERD co-director at Cardiff University, and funded mainly by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).*

The Skills and Employment Survey 2023 (SES2023), which also involves researchers at UCL, the Universities of Oxford and Surrey and the National Centre for Social Research, will help academics assess the impact of an extraordinary period of turbulence for workers which includes the economic downturn, Cost-of-Living Crisis, Covid-19 and Brexit.

People aged 20-65 working in Britain in 2023 will be asked their views for the eighth survey in the series, which has been collecting data periodically for the past 35 years.

Homeworking, brought about by Covid-19, continues to be a huge feature of work. Researchers will investigate the extent to which employee preferences for where they work are being met by employers, as well as the impact the changing location of work is having on productivity, work intensity, skills development and promotion prospects.

The growth of insecure work and the impact of technology on how workers are managed are additional areas that will be focused upon. The relationship between workers' mental health and wellbeing and the social usefulness of the work undertaken will also be examined.

Professor Alan Felstead said: Workers are facing some of the biggest shifts to their working practices for a generation. The Cost-of-Living crisis and current economic turbulence have quickly followed the global pandemic and Brexit.

These have presented huge challenges as well as creating opportunities to develop new ways of working.



“Despite these seismic changes, there is still a lack of robust data to inform employers, policymakers and academics as they look ahead to the future of work. We hope that the Skills and Employment Survey will provide those robust and authoritative insights needed to ensure productivity, as well as employee wellbeing, are at the heart of decision-making on the future direction of work in Britain.

The last Skills and Employment Survey took place in 2017 and these results have influenced UK government policy thinking on the scale of the challenges facing the UK even before the economic turbulence of the last few years.

Subsequent analysis by Professor Felstead, taken at the start of Covid-19, showed nine out of ten employees who had worked at home during lockdown would like to continue doing so in

some capacity. Following this, he was commissioned by the Senedd's Economy, Infrastructure and Skills Committee to compile a report for their inquiry into remote working.

Professor Felstead added:

*“This latest round of the Skills and Employment Survey takes in arguably one of the most unsettled periods workers have faced. It will be interesting to see how these latest statistics compare with the survey we carried out before all of these major changes buffeted the economy.”*

This latest round of research has been made possible thanks to a grant of £2.1 million of funding, secured mainly from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).



# Missed out: the households experiencing multiple deprivation in the least deprived areas in Wales

*The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is used by the government and other organisations to target services to address social disadvantage. However, use of area-based measures of deprivation to target resources aimed at addressing household or individual level disadvantage may be inefficient.*

Not all households experiencing multiple deprivation live in deprived areas; whilst some deprived areas may contain a substantial proportion of households who are less deprived. This blog post reports on the overlap of area-based (WIMD) and household experiences of multiple deprivation using Open Data.

A measure of household level multiple deprivation, created by the Office for National Statistics using Census 2011 data, was linked to the WIMD conducted in 2014. Household multiple deprivation relates to four domains – employment, education, health, housing – and households with two or more deprivation characteristics are referred to here as ‘multiply deprived’. WIMD is treated either as a rank of small areas, from least to most deprived, or grouped into deciles.

Areas that were relatively more deprived in terms of their WIMD rank were found to have a higher proportion of households experiencing multiple deprivation. Of households ranked in the 10% most deprived areas in Wales, 46% were multiply deprived, compared to 15% of households in the 10% least deprived areas. The proportion of households deprived in all four domains, ie, experiencing the most extreme form of household-level multiple deprivation, was higher in more deprived areas—1.2% of households in the 10% most deprived areas compared to 0.1% in the 10% least deprived areas.

Resources are often targeted at the most deprived areas indicated by the WIMD.

Though the definition of ‘most deprived’ varies, it rarely includes areas ranked below the 50% most deprived. As such, 36% of multiply deprived households in Wales, equating to roughly 135,000 households, would be missed from services targeted using the WIMD.

These findings suggest there is some degree of association between multiple deprivation at the area and household-level. However, broadly targeting households based on their area of residence has the potential to further disadvantage the already disadvantaged. And this problem is not alleviated by simply switching the level of measuring multiple deprivation from areas to households.

Accumulating data about individual households to identify and target them for intervention is ethically problematic: it makes manifest public fears around ‘big brother’ and increasing surveillance in society. A measure of household deprivation would therefore have to be aggregated to a higher spatial level so that no one single household could be identified in the data. However, in aggregating data, the risk of excluding households not in deprived areas becomes a problem again.

A potential trade-off may exist between increased accuracy in targeting interventions based on the intensity of deprivations faced by households/people in an area, and the fallacy of assuming that all people in an area share the same level of deprivation.



**Dr Ian Thomas**

Dr Ian Thomas is a research associate based at Cardiff University and co-investigator with Administrative Data Research Wales (ADR Wales). His areas of research interest include homelessness, housing, administrative data collections and data-linkage.

To find out more about Dr Ian Thomas' work, visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/people/ian-thomas](http://wiserd.ac.uk/people/ian-thomas)

## Mode of transport influences access to recreational opportunities

*A new WISERD paper by Andrew Price, Professor Mitchel Langford and Professor Gary Higgs at the University of South Wales has recently been published in the journal, Case Studies on Transport Policy. Using sports facility data from Sport Wales and open-source data on green spaces, the team examine variations in potential access to recreational opportunities by different modes of transport.*

Accessibility issues were highlighted during the pandemic, where poor local neighbourhood access to provision, exacerbated by the temporary closures of pitches and leisure centres, and the withdrawal of some public transport services limited physical activity opportunities.

The techniques developed during this research could be used by national sporting organisations to plan the provision of services in relation to potential demand. Drawing on the findings of the school sport surveys conducted by Sport Wales, for example, and mapping access to existing facilities, resources can be targeted to improve provision.

These techniques could be especially valuable where limited availability and/or poor public transport services impact on participation levels amongst under-represented groups and those living in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country.



## 20th Anniversary of the ESRC Festival of Social Science

To celebrate 20 years of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Festival of Social Science, WISERD hosted two events at this year's Festival, which aimed to highlight one of our ongoing education research projects and a useful data tool that helps us to better understand our towns and local areas.



**THE 2022 FESTIVAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**  
22 October - 13 November



We began with a webinar on the WISERD Education Multi-Cohort Study (WMCS), giving attendees an overview of the project as it reaches its 10th anniversary. Presenting the webinar was Dr Laura Arman, Professor Sally Power, and Dr Rhian Barrance, who introduced the longitudinal study which looks at the changing perceptions of secondary school pupils over the last 10 years.

The team provided an insight into how WMCS researchers work with schools and policymakers, and the potential implications of changes to the Curriculum for Wales. Before its formation in 2013, resources for education researchers in Wales were very limited, making it difficult to collect data. However, since then, the WMCS has provided researchers with a rich data source.

Our next event took place in Cardiff University's Glamorgan Building, hosted by Samuel Jones and Professor Scott

Orford, and also in Bangor University's Main Arts Building, presented by Dr Robin Mann and Professor Martina Feilzer. This interactive, hands-on workshop (pictured below) explored the Understanding Welsh Places (UWP) website, a collaborative project which aims to provide a source of useful data and geographical information about towns and communities in Wales.

Data on the UWP website includes the availability of public transport in your local area, and also the relationship between your town and other nearby places, for example, how much your

town relies on other places for jobs and community services. The website has been developed to enable us to explore this data and help us to better understand the places where we live and work, and to identify opportunities for our local communities.

*This year's ESRC Festival of Social Science ran from 22 October - 13 November and aimed to explore the world of social science, from how society has shaped our local areas to behaviour changes that help fight climate change. Events were held across the UK, both virtually and in person, for all ages.*



Professor Scott Orford presenting at ESRC Festival of Social Science event

## WISERD Annual Conference 2022

*On the 6th and 7th of July 2022, over 140 delegates, presenters and exhibitors from across WISERD's five partner universities and beyond gathered at Swansea University to hold the first WISERD Annual Conference since the start of the pandemic. The theme of the conference was 'Civil society and participation: issues of equality, identity and cohesion in a changing social landscape', attracting over 50 papers.*

We were delighted to welcome two keynote speakers: Professor Mererid Hopwood, Aberystwyth University and Dr Victoria Winckler, Director of the Bevan Foundation, along with Dr Steffan Evans, their Head of Policy. Professor Hopwood's presentation, Listening to our Linguistic Landscape: thinking again about language and languages, was delivered in Welsh with simultaneous translation. "A word has memories that chime" Professor Hopwood said, as she illustrated on the active and living nature of language, and the creative advantage that comes with multilingualism.

Dr Winckler's keynote on day two reminded us of the challenges facing Wales and what you can do about them. Dr Winckler said: "Wales is sicker, poorer, less well educated and more

badly housed than before. The least well off have lost the most." The presentation was shared with Dr Steffan Evans who provided a fascinating insight into the free school meals case study, and how the Bevan Foundation successfully moved this campaign up the political agenda. It highlighted significant evidence gaps, the need for more collaboration in finding solutions, and the importance of effective engagement.

The event took place at the School of Management on the Bay Campus and alongside a packed agenda of keynote presentations, parallel sessions and more, the Atrium was filled with 14 exhibition stands. These included 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.

Over the course of two days, the parallel sessions explored the conference theme through a variety of perspectives, including education, governance, housing, health, social care, language, identity, social justice, global connections, the labour market and more. Co-director and Associate Professor, Steve Smith from the University of South Wales, also hosted a workshop for the recently convened Well-being Network. This explored how academic and political debates about well-being relate to issues of social participation and civil society through the life course.

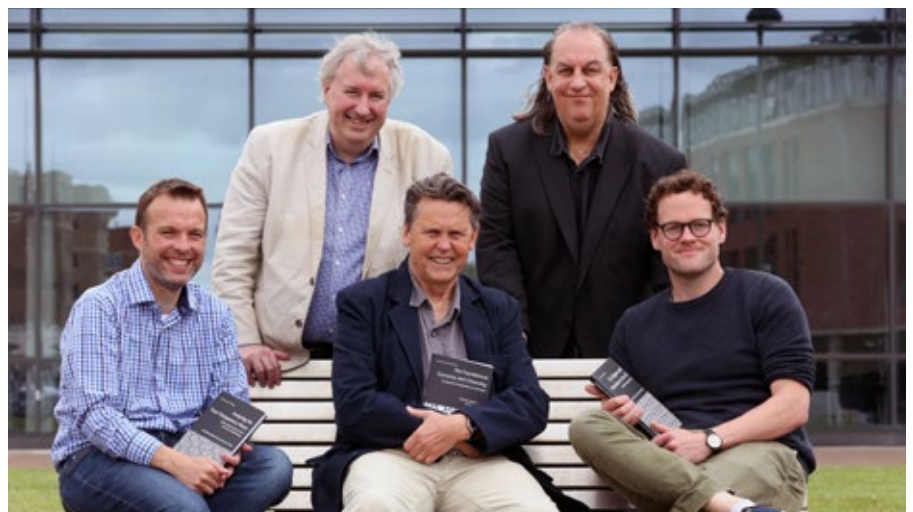
We also hosted a book launch for the WISERD Civil Society and Social Change Series with Policy Press, which saw the publication of three new titles in 2022 and the re-launch of several existing titles into a paperback format. Led by series editors, Professor Paul Chaney, Professor Ian Rees Jones and Professor Mike Woods, the launch event featured talks from the authors who presented research findings from the published volumes.



Dr Steffan Evans, Dr Victoria Winckler, and Professor Ian Rees Jones



Professor Ian Rees Jones and Professor Mererid Hopwood



Dr Ian Stafford, Professor Michael Woods, Professor Ian Rees Jones, Professor Paul Chaney and Dr David Beel

## BUILDING CAPACITY FOR RESEARCH NEWS



School of Management Atrium, Bay Campus, Swansea University

Throughout the course of the event, delegates were invited to view entries to the PhD student poster competition – sponsored by the Learned Society of Wales and ESRC Wales Doctoral Training Partnership. Students presented and discussed their posters with delegates and the reviewing panel. We were delighted to announce the winners on day two of the conference – 1st prize was awarded to Melda Lois Griffiths (Public Health Wales), 2nd prize went to John Poole (Cardiff University) and 3rd prize was received by Jami Abramson (Swansea University).



PhD poster competition winners and judges

## How far can you travel from where you live by different modes of transport? Understanding Welsh Places now shows you

*It probably comes as no surprise to hear that you can travel further in less time when travelling by private transport, such as in a car, than by public transport using a bus or a train. However, have you ever wondered what this difference looks like visually for the place where you live or work?*

WISERD has now launched an updated version of Understanding Welsh Places that can show you.

Understanding Welsh Places is a website that presents information on the economy, demographic make-up and local services of more than 300 places in Wales with a population of over 1,000 residents. The new version of the website has seen a substantial update to the 'Connectivity' section, which offers an overall sense of the ability to travel from each of Wales' principal places (the 193 places with more than 2,000 residents).

As part of the update, we have released new visualisations that indicate the extent of the area that can be reached

from each place when travelling by private transport (car), train, bus, cycling and walking for between 10 and 90 minutes.

These visualisations can be viewed by different periods of the day (morning, midday, evening and night), different periods of the week (weekday, Saturday and Sunday) and, for rail and bus travel, by whether the service is a direct service or whether it requires a change.

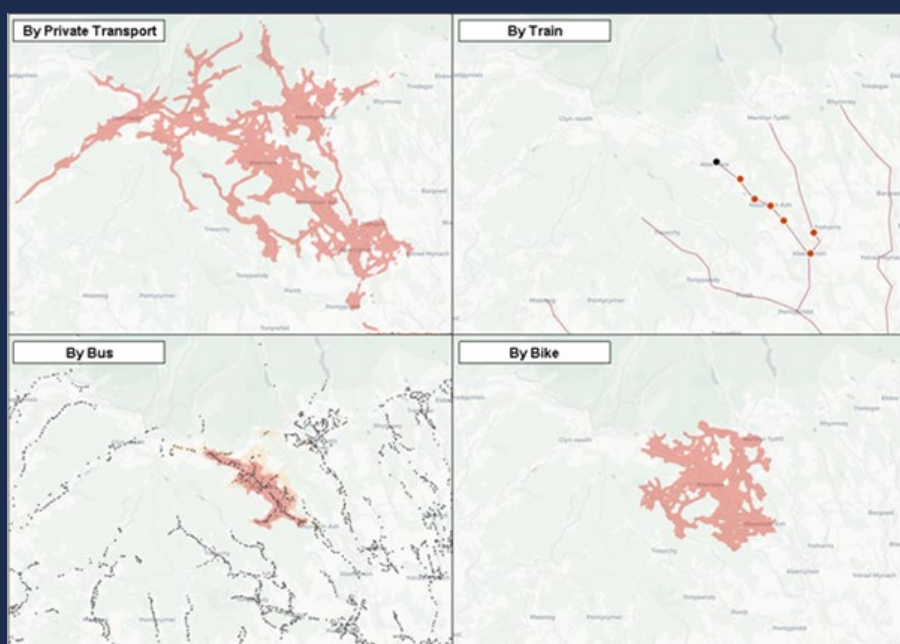
For bus travel, we also include a measure to indicate the frequency of service each area receives during that selected period.

As well as producing these visualisations for each of Wales' principal places, we have also released them for Wales'

railway stations, offering an indication of the area that can be reached from each station in Wales. These can be found in the 'By rail' section for each place on the website.

The below example shows the areas that can be reached within 30 minutes when travelling from Aberdare on a weekday morning on direct services by different modes of transport.

Professor Scott Orford said "The new maps and tools on the Understanding Welsh Places website allows users for the first time to really see how the places where they live and work are connected and to visualise the gaps in public transport provision in their local areas."



### WISERD researchers create new website to examine access to key services in Wales

A prototype website has been developed by WISERD researchers based at the GIS Research Centre at the University of South Wales (USW) which examines access to key services in Wales. This is part of an ongoing research programme investigating geographical access to services in Wales.

## New research examines effectiveness of careers guidance and how it is prioritised

*New research carried out by ADR Wales has examined the effectiveness of careers guidance in supporting participation in post compulsory education and training and how careers guidance is prioritised.*



The work, which was undertaken by ADR Wales researchers Dr Katy Huxley and Rhys Davies, used anonymised Careers Wales data to examine how the provision of careers support to key stage 4 (KS4) pupils varies with respect to their background characteristics and their responses to Careers Wales's 'Career Check' survey.

Careers Wales is the national careers provider, working closely with schools to identify those most in need of support. Schools share information with Careers Wales about the characteristics of pupils (levels of attainment, attendance, FSM eligibility) to identify those pupils who are likely to be most at risk of becoming disengaged and falling outside the education, training or employment system. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to complete Careers Wales's 'Career Check' survey, a diagnostic tool that helps careers advisors identify pupils who are most in need of support.

Using responses from the Career Check survey combined with data from the National Data Collection (NDC, formerly the National Pupil Database, NPD), the researchers examined how the provision of careers support to KS4 pupils varies with respect to their background characteristics and their responses to Career Check.

The research showed that KS4 pupils who have low levels of attainment and who are eligible for free school meals are most likely to receive guidance irrespective of the responses that they provide via Career Check. This highlights the primacy of these indicators for careers advisors in prioritising support for KS4 pupils.

However, among those with higher levels of attainment, Career Check does provide the opportunity to identify those where there is cause for concern regarding their career planning capabilities. These findings demonstrate

the intricacy with which pupils are identified as needing support.

Speaking of their findings, the research team said: "Our analysis based on administrative data provides a more nuanced understanding of how careers guidance is primarily targeted at disadvantaged groups. By providing us with a better understanding of the population at risk, these findings also have important implications in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of careers guidance."

The research team have also explored the influence careers guidance can have on transitions to Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) in Wales. You can read more about this on our website: [wiserd.ac.uk/news/careers-guidance](https://wiserd.ac.uk/news/careers-guidance).

## Wales Housing Research Conference 2022

*On December 19th, the 2022 Wales Housing Research Conference took place at Cardiff University's Glamorgan Building, allowing delegates to come together and share research evidence relating to some of the most pressing Welsh housing issues.*

Co-hosted by WISERD's Wales Housing Research Network, the UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence, and Shelter Cymru, the conference brought together delegates from across Wales and beyond, providing an opportunity to collaborate and share research with others working within the housing sector.

The conference included a diverse range of topics. The event kicked off with two insightful plenary presentations by Katie Dalton of Cymorth Cymru, and Dr Sophus zu Ermgassen from the University of Oxford. Katie's session focused on the severe impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on frontline homelessness and housing support workers in Wales. Katie provided a strong voice on behalf of her members, as she continues to campaign for policy to prevent homelessness in the wider community. Sophus' plenary seminar homed in on the need for 'a home for all within planetary boundaries' by identifying pathways for meeting the UK's housing needs, without

transgressing climate goals and preventing conflict between housing and sustainability objectives.

Following the plenary discussions, our first round of parallel sessions began with three engrossing seminars covering different contemporary housing issues. Professor Peter Mackie (convenor of WISERD's Wales Housing Research Network) presented findings on homelessness during the pandemic and examples of the use of data linkage to provide policy relevant evidence. Various other talks took place at the same time, presenting research on subjects such as housing construction, and LGBTQ+ and youth homelessness.

Our afternoon plenaries featured Professor Flora Samuel of University of Reading, speaking of the importance of 'Community Consultation for Quality of Life'. This project aims to introduce a map-based model of community engagement, allowing people to measure and assess the impact of

changes to their neighbourhoods. Following this, CaCHE director Ken Gibb gave attendees an insight into 'Rent Control' and gave valuable contributions to current policy debates.

To close the day, delegates took part in three more parallel sessions. Jonathan Clode and Jennie Bibbings of Shelter Cymru discussed methods of preventing eviction due to anti-social behaviour, identifying opportunities for effective interventions and more holistic approaches to anti-social behaviour. Other parallel talks included building evidence-based policy and practice change, as well as childhood ontological security in Britain's insecure, deregulated, increasingly unaffordable private rented sector.

WISERD has been supporting the Wales Housing Research Conference since 2010 and we look forward to the next iteration of this collaborative, sector-wide event.



Professor Peter Mackie presenting at the Wales Housing Research Conference 2022



## How blockchain technology can help with social inclusion

*Dr Annie Tubadji, Assistant Professor in Economics at Swansea University, is a cultural economist working in intersections between micro and regional economics and public choice. She is also a co-editor of REGION – the official journal of the European Regional Science Association (ERSA).*



A recent special issue edited by Annie, entitled **CULTURE OF DIGITAL INCLUSIVITY AND INEQUALITY ACROSS SPACE**, featured a paper that deals with a novel idea for delivering social welfare through the use of blockchain technology, by Dr Chloe Tartan, a tech sustainability lead at Accenture.

Dr Owen Vaughan, Chief Science Officer at the global blockchain technology company, nChain, recently interviewed the author of the paper and Annie Tubadji about the paper. In the interview, Annie and Chloe discuss why this idea makes sense from both an economics and technological perspective. You can watch the recorded interview, **Blockchain is Changing – Digital Inclusion**, on YouTube.

Dr Tubadji said: "Above all, I am concerned with how I can apply my value-free analysis (safe from cultural prejudice and discrimination) and allow for a re-evaluation of a new technological idea. I am interested to discover if we can re-invent the identity of blockchain technology by demonstrating its usefulness to society."

## Head / Heart: Framing Future Wales

*Exhibition held at the Bandstand, Aberystwyth (13–15 April 2023)*

This exhibition was the first related to our ongoing project that uses photography to understand how people think about independence in Wales, Scotland and Catalonia. For these nations, becoming independent would mean leaving the state which they are currently a part of (the UK and Spain) and becoming a state in their own right.

Previous work has focused on how people's characteristics (such as age, gender and class) affected their views about independence. This project takes a different approach by exploring people's thoughts and feelings about independence. And how their experiences shape their views.

We worked with photography clubs and students to explore this question. Participants were asked to take images about independence. They discussed the images and took part in interviews. Aberystwyth Camera Club took the photographs for this exhibition that attracted over 600 people over the three days of the exhibition. We're grateful for their contribution.

Club Chair, Neil McGuff, whose photography was shown in this first collection, urged others to get involved: "Myself and other members of the photography club really enjoyed taking part in this research. Using our creativity to explore the idea of independence has led to some fascinating conversations among the group and opened my eyes to the way each of us can approach a divisive topic.

"I would highly recommend any photography club or class to get involved as it offers a wonderful opportunity to pursue your creativity and to potentially have your final photography exhibited in a location such as Barcelona."



Visitors viewing the exhibition

The project is non-partisan and does not promote a particular position on independence. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, as part of the ESRC/WISERD Civil Society Research Centre.

For more information about this project, visit the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society website: [cwps.aber.ac.uk](http://cwps.aber.ac.uk).

### The Centre for Welsh Politics and Society

The Centre for Welsh Politics and Society is an interdisciplinary research centre at Aberystwyth University aimed at developing our understanding of contemporary politics and society in Wales in the context of an inter-connected world, supporting and delivering world-class research in the social sciences, and contributing to public knowledge and debates and policy development in Wales. The Centre for Welsh Politics and Society also functions as the Aberystwyth arm of WISERD.



## Commissioner supports innovative dialogue approach to tackling polarisation in our communities

*WISERD academics based at the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society (CWPS) at Aberystwyth University jointly hosted a symposium with partners from the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) on Wednesday 24 May at the National Library of Wales.*

Facilitated by Dr Amy Sanders, with support from Aberystwyth University's Dialogue Centre and adopting an innovative dialogue approach, this event brought community and voluntary practitioners together in the spirit of overcoming the polarisation between academic expertise and the wider community. As Jurgen Grotz, VSSN, explained: "This discussion is relevant in all the four nations of the UK which is something as a network we wish to pursue."

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, Derek Walker, demonstrated how the 2015 Well-Being of Future Generations Act and 'The Five Ways of Working' can be put into practice by appealing for conversation during his keynote speech and then staying right to the end to participate in the varied dialogue activities alongside community members, voluntary organisations and academics.

Ali Goldsworthy, de-polarisation expert and co-author of *Poles Apart: Why people turn against each other and how to bring them together* joined the event virtually to discuss the next steps in bringing future opportunities to address community polarisation in Wales.

Professor Marjorie Mayo, who led the discussion on 'Community development and popular education in populist times', highlighted the role of increasing poverty and economic insecurity in fuelling polarisation and populism in communities.



Derek Walker, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

Professor Mayo said: "This was such a timely event, bringing academics together with voluntary and community sector activists to explore the challenges of increasing polarisation and the growth of the Far Right. How to develop inclusive strategies in response, enabling different voices to be heard? The conference was ever so well organised, enabling us all to share our experiences and ideas about ways of moving forward."

Amanda Morris from the Muslim Council of Britain also emphasised the need to educate and empower communities to challenge problematic media representations of Muslims and Islam. Muslims make up 6.5% of the population of England and Wales, yet 59% of 10,931 media articles associated Muslims with negative behaviours. Such stereotypes must be challenged if we are to combat polarisation in local communities.

Cardiff University's Anthony Ince spoke about the far-right voluntarism and Ali Abdi of the Grange Pavilion shared an insight into the dynamics of community organising, with a focus on lived experiences in Grangetown and partnering with the Jo Cox Foundation. Lively contributions about changes to democracy were made by young people from Planed and Aberystwyth's Doing Democracy Differently project.

Practical steps were offered for promoting inclusive Welsh communities with a focus on refugees by Aberaid and language by the British Red Cross.

Jen Wolowic from the Dialogue Centre at Aberystwyth University, said:

*"As someone who has recently moved from North America to Aberystwyth, polarisation is a personal experience for me. I've seen how easily it becomes contagious and destructive. Dialogue emphasises that we all have pieces of the solutions and we need to create bridges between our silos. Today put research, lived experience, third sector and policy into conversation with each other and that dialogue is so important for transformative change. I really appreciated how the organisers created these opportunities through their conference design and engaged those in the room and those attending virtually."*

## New research examines impact of devolution on social policymaking in Wales

*A new book features research by WISERD co-director, Professor Paul Chaney on the impact of devolution on social policymaking in Wales.*

'Social policy' here refers to government policy interventions to improve social well-being. It includes most of the policy areas devolved to Wales under successive devolution Acts since 1998, including health, housing, education, youth justice, social services, and arts and culture – as well as aspects of many other fields, including the environment, transport and economic development.

In addition to discussing the significance of key policies, as the following outlines, the new research also underlines the impact of Welsh devolution on the way that social policies are made (sometimes referred to as the 'national policy style' in academic literature).

This new analysis is part of 'Trust, human rights and civil society within mixed economies of welfare' a work-package in WISERD's civil society research programme. It reveals how, from a social policy perspective, a key difference that devolution has introduced to the Welsh policy style is the territorialisation of justiciable (ie, legally enforceable) social welfare rights and entitlements. This is because, since 1999, a series of statutes place duties on Welsh government ministers and devolved public bodies to apply particular principles and uphold the interests of specified social groups (eg, the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015).

There are three main reasons why these laws are important. The first, is their breadth. The second is their ongoing impact. They are overarching and designed to shape all future social policymaking and service delivery across the breadth of devolved functions (health, housing, education etc.). Third, they convey justiciable rights to named groups (eg, older people, children and so on).

Effectively, they also change the nature of political citizenship in Wales because the legal duties on ministers mean that people living here can expect particular principles to be applied – and the needs of specified groups to be taken into



## New book from WISERD on civil society in an age of uncertainty

*A new book edited by Professor Paul Chaney and Professor Ian Rees Jones presents original findings and brings together core strands of theory to highlight some of the pressing challenges facing civil society.*

account in policymaking and public services. If the state fails in this regard, they can seek legal redress (or exercise their rights) through the courts. This may contrast with practice elsewhere; hence their 'territorialising' effect of conveying differing rights compared to other UK nations.

As this new study reveals, since 1999 devolution in Wales has undergone rapid and significant changes. Distinctive social policies continue to be driven by territorial party politics. They are shaped by socialist and civic nationalist principles that are collectivist, interventionist, and Welsh-focused.

In the face of strongly contrasting public and political constitutional preferences the implications for the future of social policymaking are unclear. If the pace of change seen in the first two decades of devolution is anything to go by, the next 20 years will be fascinating to observe – with potentially profound implications for social welfare and the constitutional status of Wales.

You can read the full research findings in this new book:

**Chaney, P. (2022)** Social Policy in Wales, Chapter 25 (pp. 166-171) in Pete Alcock, Margaret May, Tina Haux and Vikki McCall (eds)

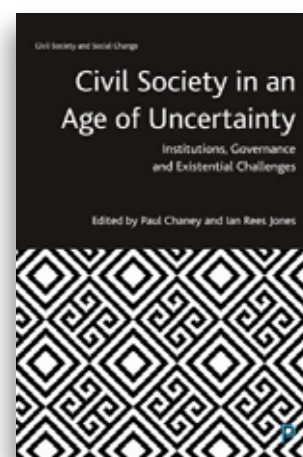
**The Student's Companion to Social Policy** 6th edition, London, Wiley-Blackwell, ISBN: 978-1-119-74487-0

It is the latest edited volume to be published as part of the Civil Society and Social Change book series with Policy Press and highlights transferable lessons that will inform policy and practice in today's age of uncertainty. The multi-disciplinary research that is featured comes from WISERD's civil society research programme.

Editor, Professor Paul Chaney, said: "Our overall argument in this volume is the importance of civil society to individual and collective well-being, as well as the health of democracy. On the one hand, our research shows the resilience of civil society and its adaptability to meet uncertainties, yet on the other, we argue that civil society's ability to prevail in the face of the existential challenges is far from assured. Rather, it requires ongoing vigilance, social self-organisation and criticality. We also underline the threat from political elites' failure to listen and engage diverse interests, as well as civil society organisations' mistrust and lack of capacity to participate.

"In the final chapter, 'Prospects and perils for civil society in the 21st century', we reflect upon the implications of the volume's empirical analysis and summarise the core challenges and lessons emerging from this multi-disciplinary set of studies. We also explore the prospects and perils for civil society organisations in the context of ongoing existential challenges in an age of uncertainty."

**Chaney, P. and Rees Jones, I. (eds) (2022) Civil Society in an Age of Uncertainty: Institutions, Governance and Existential Challenges**, Bristol: Policy Press. ISBN 978-1447353416



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

*On the 28th and 29th September, delegates from civil society organisations attended our event at Bangor University, exploring Roma, Gypsy and Traveller experiences and challenges in Europe today. Over the course of two days, this event brought together civil society organisations, academics, policymakers and community members.*

We were very pleased to welcome two keynote speakers to the event, starting with Dr Adrian Marsh on day one: a researcher of Romani-Traveller origins specialising in Romani Studies, now working in Istanbul and leading the International Romani Studies Network.

We then had the pleasure of introducing several civil society organisations from the UK and across Europe, who were representing Romani people and highlighted the challenges they experience in a roundtable discussion. The participating civil society organisations included: Romodrom (Czech Republic), Community Renewal Trust (Scotland), Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Work Association (Wales), Travelling Ahead (Wales), St James Centre (England), and Slovo 21 (Czech Republic).

Delegates from each organisation discussed their vital work in ensuring that Roma, Gypsy, and Traveller communities are free from discrimination at all levels. Also present at the discussions were policymakers; tasked with supporting Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boater (GTRSB) communities in Wales and taking on board the perceptions and experiences of those within the community.

Day two began with our second keynote speaker, Professor Margaret Greenfields, who introduced the GTRSBintoHE Pledge (Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boaters into Higher Education) aimed at overcoming barriers that



Professor Martina Feilzer

limit higher education participation within these communities. The pledge is a firm commitment by universities, colleges, and educational institutions to undertake steps to support members of the community into higher education, due to only 200 community members on average partaking in higher education across the UK (Greenfields, 2019; Mulcahy et al., 2017). Margaret is a professor in Social Policy at Anglia Ruskin University and has a long history of working collaboratively with Romani Gypsy, Traveller, Showmen and Boater communities at local, UK and international levels.

This was followed by a workshop session led by Dr Adrian Marsh, providing an interesting insight into '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'.

This event was a fantastic opportunity to bring together civil society organisations who contributed to our research with academics, policymakers, and others and to reflect on the experiences and challenges to Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities and the organisations that support them.

WISERD Co-director, Professor Martina Feilzer, based at Bangor University said:

*"This was a great opportunity to hear from civil society organisations supporting Roma, Gypsy and Traveller communities across Europe as well as academic voices. Enabling civil society organisations to come together, share ideas, and renew contact was great and the academic and practical insights and stories shared were inspiring and highly illuminating. We are extremely grateful for everyone's time and input – it was an incredible two days."*

## Child Friendly Cities: progress and prospects

*Dr Rhian Powell, Dr Esther Muddiman, Professor Chris Taylor and Professor Sally Power from Cardiff University, hosted a roundtable event at sbarc|spark in April, which explored the progress and prospects of the UK cities that have embarked on the path of becoming a 'Child Friendly City'.*

Child Friendly Cities are designed to create communities in which children have a say in, and benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces which shape their lives. Cardiff is the first city in Wales to participate in this initiative.

The project team have been conducting research into the implementation of

Child Friendly Cities (CFCs) in different national contexts including Finland, France, Germany, USA, Switzerland and the UK. Several cities in the UK have recently embarked on this journey and this roundtable provided a timely opportunity to share experiences and explore developments in the UK and elsewhere.

The event facilitated discussion with representatives from various CFCs across the UK and participants were invited to share their experiences with one another, including the progress, challenges and opportunities in their particular cities. The research team also drew upon their research findings in other countries.



## New WISERD report on North Wales Growth Deal

*As part of WISERD's ESRC-funded Civil Society Centre research programme, a team of WISERD researchers have published a new report on the process of developing and implementing the North Wales Growth Deal (NWGD), based on observations from a series of interviews with stakeholders between July-December 2021.*



Fifteen remote interviews were conducted by three researchers: Dr David Beel (Manchester Metropolitan University), Professor Ian Rees Jones and Dr Bertie Russell (Cardiff University). A range of potential participants were identified in dialogue with Alwen Williams, the Programme Director of the NWGD, and included lead officers for economy, regeneration and development and local authority leaders.

The report sets out the background to the NWGD and gives an insight into the expectations of what it aims to deliver. It also outlines stakeholders' concerns and the perceived challenges in meeting these. A central focus of the report is a critical dialogue with participants as to the ways in which foundational economic thinking, can find a place within the economic development strategy of North Wales.

The research points towards the benefits of undertaking a strategic refresh of the NWGD and the report observes four opportunities for action at this early stage of implementation:

1. Consider a strategic refresh of the North Wales Growth Deal
2. Develop a revised decision-making matrix for the reallocation of capital funding
3. Reevaluate the existing portfolio of projects that have not yet received Full Business Case approval
4. Explore possibilities to innovate in realising social value, leveraging capital investment so to allow projects to 'touch' unwaged foundational areas

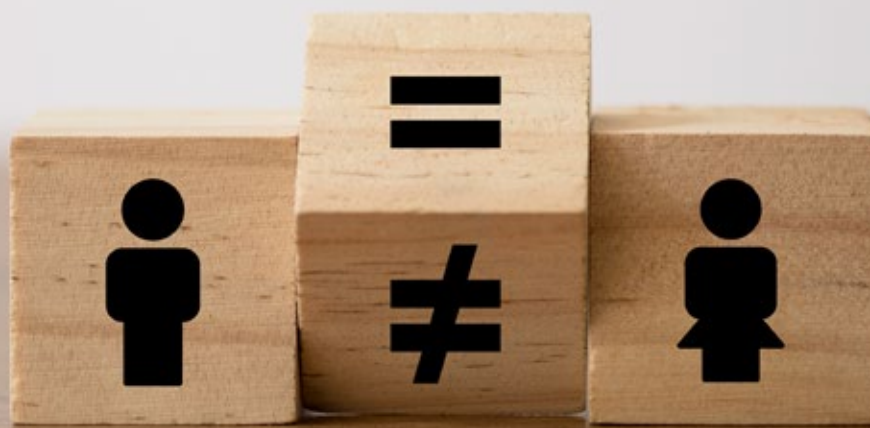
Dr David Beel said: "The report highlights the way in which North Wales, as a predominantly rural region, is wrestling with a variety of progressive development ideas, such as the foundational economy. It shows that integrating such ideas is not an easy or overnight process but one that requires considerable thought, planning and vision. The report therefore highlights the tensions of developing this nascent economic agenda within the context of competing UK and Welsh Government and local policy trajectories."

These interviews were conducted as part of a wider research project focused on the role of regional economic development policy in supporting the strengthening of the Foundational Economy.



## The ongoing impact of gender pay gap transparency legislation

*Since April 2017, UK employers with over 250 employees are required to report their gender pay gap to the public annually. In terms of policy developments aimed at tackling the gender pay gap, the introduction of pay transparency legislation is undoubtedly one of the most significant.*



In the original publication, there were 10,000 organizational gender pay gaps. This attracted widespread media attention, raising the profile of gender pay inequality in the UK. Reports showing differences between men's and women's salaries in large companies have been used in cases relating to unequal treatment, such as when the BBC published the names of those earning £150,000 in July 2017.

Five years have passed since the legislation first came into force, and there was some uncertainty as to how effective the annual reporting on organizational gender pay gaps continued to be. It is an essential point to consider, because of the administrative costs that the legislation imposes on the government and every company involved.

In a new paper published by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics, Professor Melanie Jones, Professor Kerry L. Papps and Dr Ezgi Kaya have evaluated the current impact of transparency around

the gender pay gap, focusing on the temporary postponement and obtained in terms of the legislation due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The full paper notes that annual reporting of wages remains essential, even during a period when the issues of Covid-19 were highly visible in the media and in public discourse. Employers who had reported during this period were found to have 6% lower gender pay gaps a year later, compared to organizations that had not reported. Furthermore, there is no evidence in the report to suggest that those companies that reported their gender pay gap before the year of deferral were therefore systematically different from those that failed to report. Ultimately, this shows the significant year-on-year impact that transparency legislation regarding the gender pay gap has.

An increase in the concentration of women on higher wages in these organizations has helped to trigger the changes in question, as has the general

increase in the proportion of women in the workforce. It is possible that this shows a change in terms of recruitment and retention among companies, and could suggest that current female employees are being offered more opportunities to progress within organisations.

Additional evidence in the paper suggests that pay transparency legislation is particularly effective among organizations that are not under as much pressure to reduce their gender pay gaps.

The findings in this paper support the reinstatement of the obligation to report on annual gender pay gaps, post-Covid-19. Pay transparency legislation has a lasting, consistent effect beyond that point of initial introduction, and evidence shows that it is an essential component of the reform needed to address with the gender pay gap. In addition, such evidence is useful in designing future pay gap reporting schemes on an international scale.

## Welsh teachers lose hundreds of working hours acting as translators

*Hundreds of working hours are wasted due to schoolteachers lacking a centrally shared language resource. Despite recent developments in use of the virtual learning platforms like Hwb (available to Welsh schools for free since 2012), teachers lacking Welsh-language resources for their classroom are unable to access translations of other resources.*

Under the current system, if a teacher wants to use a contemporary textbook or any other resource developed outside of Wales in a Welsh-medium class, they must translate it themselves. This increased workload for Welsh-medium teachers may feed into an already high rate at which people leave teaching as a profession, at a time when the Welsh Government are already introducing additional measures to increase the recruitment of Welsh-medium teachers.

According to qualitative interviews with school leaders conducted as part of the WISERD Education Multi-Cohort Study's annual survey of secondary schools, each school in Wales uses its own bespoke translated resources on an ad hoc basis.

This is due to fewer teaching resources being available in Welsh and due to Welsh being historically a minoritised language – an effect especially felt during the rise of mandatory education. Welsh-medium teachers are being made to compensate for this historical impact.

The frustration is that staff hours are going to translate – a skilled job in itself – which impacts either their wellbeing or potentially distracts from focus on teaching methods and other duties which are central to any teaching role.

The urgency of the translations was also emphasised by two school leaders. Despite new courses and new curricula being planned for years, it seems that translating materials into Welsh is an afterthought in this process. As well as current resources being decades old (a science textbook even making reference



to francs as a currency), Welsh resources are being released a year or two after the English ones for the same new course.

Co-ordinating professional translations of new and interesting resources may have proven unmanageable and highly costly, but co-ordinating an online repository of resources already translated and compensating teachers for their work may be a fair trade-off for working hours already invested. A centrally co-ordinated effort by subject area would ensure equal contribution – or compensation – to each school.

The underlying and fair principle that the workload of teachers should be roughly equal from one school to the next also travels across the border. Teachers aware of the additional burden placed on Welsh-medium teachers choose to take their skills elsewhere, despite having the profile needed in Wales.

Teaching as a profession already struggles to attract and retain staff due to unmanageable workloads and

pressures. Therefore not only does the lack of centrally co-ordinated resource translation have an impact on increasing those hours of work for Welsh-medium teachers and indeed on how quickly new materials will reach pupils, but it also contributes to the difficulties the Welsh Government is having in increasing the number of Welsh-speaking teachers.



Dr Laura Arman

Dr Laura Arman is a research associate on the WISERD Education Multi-Cohort Study and based at Cardiff University. Laura's research is centered on the linguistics of minoritized languages, with a special focus on Welsh.

To find out more about Dr Laura Arman's work, visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/people/laura-arman](https://wiserd.ac.uk/people/laura-arman)

## Growing up in Wales: navigating uncertain times

*The WISERD Multi-Cohort Study has completed its tenth year and to mark this key milestone, the WMCS team will be highlighting key findings at this year's WISERD's Annual Conference on 28 June.*



Over the last decade, the WMCS has made an important contribution to understanding the lives of young people in Wales, conducting an annual survey of around 1,000 young people as they progress through school. The longitudinal nature of this study is key to seeing how young people's views change over time.

We provide annual feedback to the Welsh Government on our findings and recently gave evidence to the Senedd's Children, Young People and Education Committee on curriculum reform, based on the results from this year's survey. This demonstrates how the study is able to inform the latest policy and practice.

Much of the data we've collected is around educational experiences, and schools from across Wales are involved.

The unusual circumstances for schools during Covid and the long-term effects of the pandemic have been a key component of the survey in the last two sweeps. In the latest survey, 19% of pupils said they were absent from school due to anxiety or mental health issues and 1 in 5 pupils felt that their school does not have support for pupils who are very anxious.

Other topical issues such as the cost-of-living crisis have also featured highly. When asked, the majority of our pupils believed that school equipment, breakfast and lunch should be provided by the school, as up to one third are aware of pupils coming to school hungry, not being able to buy school lunch or school uniform, and being unable to go on school trips.

The survey began in 2012, led by Professors Sally Power and Chris Taylor at Cardiff University. Dr Rhian Barrance, an education lecturer at Cardiff University who has been involved in the WMCS for the last six years will now take the survey forward. Dr Barrance said: "The study is unique in Wales in that it enables us to understand children's experiences of growing up in Wales and how these change over time. It is also important because it provides data on young people's perspectives of key social and political issues which they are rarely asked about. The study will provide essential evidence on young people's lives for years to come."

*The team have produced a set of postcards detailing findings of the latest survey, which you can view on our website: [wiserd.ac.uk](https://www.wiserd.ac.uk).*

# International, comparative and action research: triangulating Wales with the Basque Country and California

*International, comparative and action research can be shaped through an unexpected and highly unpredictable rationale when conducting fieldwork research. In 1946, Kurt Lewin defined action research as 'transformative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action that employs a spiral of steps, each consisting of a cycle of planning, action, and fact-finding to assess the outcomes of the action'.*

More recently, Bradbury, Bennett and Brunner, and Argyris argue that action research aims for transformative change through the integrated process of taking action and conducting research, interconnected by critical reflection.

Over the last decade, I have been conducting international, comparative and action research. In January 2021, a Fulbright Award granted by the US-UK Fulbright Commission allowed me to triangulate Wales with the Basque Country and California. I took up a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence (SIR) at California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) between August to December 2022. I investigated emerging digital citizenship regimes in the Basque

diaspora in California by experimenting with the new e-Diaspora platform led by the Basque Government. This was made possible through cutting edge technologies such as blockchain, decentralised autonomous organisations (DAOs) and data cooperatives.

While I was conducting action research, interviewing members of the West Basque-American community in California, Idaho, and Nevada, I always had in mind to triangulate Wales with the Basque Country and California. And gladly, after I arrived from California, I received funding from the Learned Society of Wales to culminate this process and close the triangle. In an online workshop held on 5 May 2023, a

line-up of great speakers from Wales and the Basque Country, elaborated on three main topics: fiscal devolution (Macro), urban transformations (Meso), and grassroots innovation (Micro). The next steps for this research involve consolidating a critical mass of stakeholders around collaborative projects in each territorial level, as discussed in the online workshop.

Long live the small nations that continue to cooperate in socio-economic and socio-political transformation of their communities while conducting international and comparative action research together.



Dr Igor Calzada

Dr Igor Calzada is a principal research fellow at Cardiff University. His research draws on urban, digital, and political transformations affecting citizenship from the critical/radical social innovation perspective.

To find out more about Dr Igor Calzada's work, visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/people/igor-calzada](http://wiserd.ac.uk/people/igor-calzada)

# Welsh children's subjective well-being during the pandemic ranks below average in international survey

*The Children's Worlds project is an international study of children's well-being that polled 23,803 children in 20 countries between 2020 and 2021 and has revealed a decline in subjective well-being during the Covid-19 pandemic. Wales participated in the study in 2018 (Wave 3) and 2021 (Covid-19 wave).*

The team of researchers from WISERD surveyed 691 children from across Wales about their happiness, satisfaction, and psychological well-being, and how their lives were affected by the Covid-19 restrictions.

## WHAT DID WE FIND?

Children in Wales had some of the lowest levels of subjective well-being (SWB) among the nine European countries polled. Overall, the score for Wales was 7.8, on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, with 10 representing the best imaginable well-being. This was lower than the average for all 20 countries polled by the Children's Worlds project (7.96), and it was the second lowest among the nine European countries polled, for which the average was 8.3.

The 2021 survey found an important overall decrease in children's subjective well-being. The average SWB score for the nine European countries surveyed in both waves decreased from 8.8 in 2018 to 8.3 in 2021. There were few differences between girls and boys in most of the surveyed countries, but within Wales, girls had lower SWB scores than boys by 0.7.

## SCREEN TIME DURING THE PANDEMIC

Within Wales, 65% of children surveyed said they spend time on social media every day (60% prior to the pandemic), while 50% said they played online games every day (46% prior to the pandemic). In comparison, only 25% of children reported playing or hanging out outside every day (35% prior to the

pandemic). These differences over time were comparable to those found in the other countries surveyed, indicating that during the Covid-19 pandemic, children's screen time increased due to remote learning and limited opportunities for in-person social interaction.

While screen time provided a source of connection, as well as learning and entertainment, it also had a potentially negative impact by increasing exposure to pandemic news and information. This could have increased stress and anxiety for children and contributed towards lower levels of well-being. The decrease in time spent outside is also concerning for children's physical health, particularly as children in Wales had low levels of physical activity even prior to the pandemic.

## SATISFACTION IN SCHOOL, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

As we found in 2018 (Wave 3), school is the area of life where all children were least satisfied. During the Covid-19 pandemic, children reported lower levels of satisfaction with other parts of their lives too – family and friends. Within Wales, the satisfaction of pupils with what they learnt in school decreased from 7.4 to 5.9, while the overall average decrease was from 8.0 to 6.7 (on a 10-point scale).

Remote learning, social distancing policies, and school closures have disrupted traditional education systems, isolating pupils from their peers and leading to feelings of loneliness, stress,

and anxiety. Indeed, the data seemed to suggest that while remote learning did not successfully replicate classroom learning, it did provide some continuity during a crisis. More research is needed in this area to determine what did and did not work when teachers were required to convert their curricula into an online resource.

## DISCLAIMER

The data used in this publication come from the Children's Worlds Covid-19 Supplement project: An international survey of children's lives and well-being ([www.isciweb.org](http://www.isciweb.org)). The views expressed here are those of the author. They are not necessarily those of ISCWeB.



Dr Alexandra Sandu

Dr Alexandra Sandu is a research assistant at Cardiff University. Her current work at the WISERD Education Data Lab and Administrative Data Research Wales (ADR Wales) involves analysing large datasets to conduct education research in Wales.

To find out more about Dr Alexandra Sandu's work, visit: [wiserd.ac.uk/people/alexandra-sandu](http://wiserd.ac.uk/people/alexandra-sandu)

## WISERD welcomes international visiting scholar, Professor Charles Sabel

*In November 2022, we were delighted to welcome Professor Charles Sabel from Columbia Law School as WISERD international visiting scholar. Professor Sabel joined us in sbarc|spark for a week of events and discussions about his work on experimental governance.*

The visit kicked off with an intensive workshop addressing 'Industrial Policy for Climate Change and Customized Services in Social Welfare – Two crises of learning under uncertainty and the rise of a new form of organization'. Professor Sabel gave an overview of the theoretical underpinnings of experimental governance before setting out its application and relevance to two key areas of policy: climate change and welfare services.

Using case studies from different countries, he brought to life the relationship between experimentalist innovation at the frontier and local forms of place-based experimentalism. The workshop was attended by a broad range of people from the University and policy sectors who participated in a lively and animated discussion of the issues raised and their relevance to developments in devolved settings and across different economic and social policy sectors.

Following this, Professor Sabel gave a public lecture in the sbarc|spark auditorium on his new book with David Victor entitled *Fixing the Climate: Strategies for an Uncertain World*. Speaking to a large audience from a wide range of academic, policy, and third sector organisations, he contrasted successes and failures in the climate policy arena to develop an argument that the radical transformations required to address net zero should be based on experimentalist organization and experimentalist deliberation. In the face of uncertainty, the benefits of such an approach are to be found in (i) peer review that reduces hierarchical structures (ii) a move among experts towards enabling deliberation (iii) virtuous feedback loops that lead to further reform and (iv) front line workers leading and instigating change.

Lastly, Professor Sabel, together with Professor Kevin Morgan and Professor Ian Rees Jones, met with members of



The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales. He was welcomed by the joint chairs, Professor Laura McAllister and the Rt. Revd. and Rt. Hon. Dr Rowan Williams, who led a discussion that focused on Professor Sabel's work on Humble Government. Drawing on his work on educational reforms in Finland, the discussion ranged from electoral reform to policy change in different sectors and the potential for Wales to build a more open and deliberative form of governance based on some of the ideas and practical examples he gave.

The visit proved to be a considerable success and set in train several interesting and stimulating discussions among WISERD and sbarc|spark colleagues. The hope is that the continued connection with Professor Sabel and his programme of research will lead to productive collaborations in the future in the spirit of experimental governance.

### INTERNATIONAL VISITOR, PROFESSOR ETIENNE NEL, ATTENDS WISERD AWAY DAYS



"In June 2023, WISERD supported my visit to Wales as part of my sabbatical leave from the University of Otago in New Zealand. The visit provided the opportunity to discuss comparative research and to compare the rural development experiences of Wales and New Zealand. I was particularly struck by the similarities, but to some degree also by the differences between the nature of the rural challenges and experiences of the two nations

in the rural development space. Both face similar concerns regarding demographic change, market access, environmental challenges and global market pressures. There is clearly much that can be learnt and shared from the differing experiences of the two nations in terms of institutional support, the role of policy, how market forces have shaped contemporary realities and, in particular, how a 'just transition' might look."

## Events

*We have taken advantage of our co-location in sbarc|spark with our academic and third sector partners to deliver a series of collaborative events over the last year.*

### Foundational Economy Alliance

2022 saw the launch of the Foundational Economy Alliance in sbarc|spark. WISERD brought together stakeholders from across Wales with an interest in taking forward work on the foundational economy in Wales. This included representatives from government, local authorities, housing associations and co-ops. The event explored ways of working and provided a platform for social innovators who are putting foundational thinking into practice.



### Lunchtime seminars

Over the last year, our one-hour, weekly lunchtime seminars where research presentations are followed by question-and-answer sessions have continued online. An increasingly wide range of research topics have been covered, from charting the decline of the union pay premium to the masculine identity of marginalised working-class young men.

In addition to WISERD colleagues and members of the wider academic community, the last year has also seen a number of our partners in the third sector attending and delivering seminars. This has included the Institute of Welsh Affairs presenting on impact and public engagement opportunities for researchers, and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs presenting on how Wales can contribute to global wellbeing.

All lunchtime seminars can be found on the events pages of the WISERD website ([wiserd.ac.uk/events](http://wiserd.ac.uk/events)) and anyone who is interested in attending can email [WISERD.events@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:WISERD.events@cardiff.ac.uk).

### Training and capacity building (TCB) courses

We have continued to provide online and face-to-face TCB courses for academics and our partners. The courses address a wide range of learning needs, from research methods such as online qualitative interviewing to more technical-skills-based courses on statistical programming and using QGIS and census data. We have also provided courses on how researchers and policymakers can work together.

We continue to work with the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) to support with the delivery of training and resources. Recent courses have included 'Analysing and Presenting Mixed Methods Research' and 'Quantitative Methods for Qualitative Researchers'.

Further courses will be planned for the coming year, keep an eye on our website for details: [wiserd.ac.uk/events](http://wiserd.ac.uk/events).

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

At Aberystwyth University, WISERD includes the Centre for Welsh Politics and Society, and supports the European Research Council (ERC) funded Rural-Spatial-Justice project. 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).

The news item on page 8 originally appeared on the Cardiff University website: [cardiff.ac.uk](http://cardiff.ac.uk)

The news item on page 15 originally appeared on the ADR Wales website: [adrwales.org](http://adrwales.org)

The news item on page 18 originally appeared on the CWPS website: [cwps.aber.ac.uk](http://cwps.aber.ac.uk)

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