

Distribution Sub-Group (2020) Paper 21 – Dataset collections impacted by Covid-19 update

This discussion paper has been written by officials of the Welsh Government. Ministers have not had an opportunity to comment on the contents. Exemplifications of changes are provided simply to inform discussion by DSG members. They are not Welsh Government proposals or statements of Government policy for or against changes.

Impact of COVID-19 on settlement datasets

Summary

1. This paper revisits the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on settlement datasets. This paper is to advise which data collections have been able to go ahead, as well as a now updated list of those impacted by the pandemic.

Views sought

2. Members are asked to consider how to treat the indicators in the 2021-22 settlement, where they are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The decisions required by the group are set out in the *analysis* section of this paper.

Recent related papers

- *DSG (2020) Paper 12: Treatment of datasets within the 2021-22 settlement and beyond*
- *DSG (2019) Paper 21: Homelessness Indicator*
- *DSG (2019) Paper 20: The impact of universal credit on Housing Benefits Recipients data*
- *DSG (2019) Paper 19: Options paper to remove or reduce the impact of universal credit on the eligible for free school meals distribution indicator*
- *DSG (2019) Paper 18: Assessing the impact of universal credit on the Dependent Children in Out of Work Families data*
- *DSG (2019) Paper 16: Assessing the impact of universal credit on the PLASC FSM data*
- *DSG (2020) Paper 17: Impact of COVID-19 on settlement datasets*

Background

3. There are a number of datasets used in the settlement for which the collection of data which is due to be used in the 2021-22 settlement will, or could, be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. In addition to this, there are a number of datasets where the data itself will, or could be, impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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5. A previous paper set out the issues impacting certain indicators which was presented at the July DSG meeting, a decision was made to update datasets when possible to do so, including setting up the non-PWLB and street lights data collections.
6. This paper provides an update on which datasets have been successfully collected so far, as well as any that have been impacted by the pandemic.

Analysis

7. Table 1, below, lists the datasets used in the local government settlement and gives the current status where the collection of this data and/or the data itself may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic for the 2021-22 settlement.

Table 1: Settlement datasets and the potential impact of COVID-19:

Need indicator	Data period for 2021-22 settlement	Current status of dataset collection for 2021-22 settlement
1 Population	Dependent on DSG decision	Paper to discuss at this meeting
2 Coastline	1 April 2020	In progress
3 Dwellings	31 March 2020	Data published September 2020
4 Farms	June 2019	Collected
5 Disabled Facilities Grants	2018-19 financial year	Collected
6 PWLB Debt	31 March 2020	See paragraph 10
7 Land area	May 2020	Collected
8 Benefit Claimants	May 2017 to February 2020	Collected
9 Deaths	2019 calendar year	Collected
10 Planning applications	April 2017 to March 2020	See paragraph 8
11 Traffic flow	2019 calendar year	Data published September 2020
12 Ships arriving at ports	2019 calendar year	Collected
13 Food and trading premises	April 2020	Collected
14 CT1	2021-22	In progress
15 PLASC pupils	January 2020	Collected
16 PLASC FSM	January 2020	Collected
17 National park levies	2021-22 financial year	In progress
18 Council Tax Reduction Schemes	2019-20 financial year	Collected
19 RO	2019-20	In progress
20 Land drainage levies	2020-21 financial year	Collected
21 Dep. children in out of work families	Dependent on DSG decision	Data publication paused
22 Road length	April 2020	Data publication paused
23 Homelessness	Dependent on DSG decision	Data frozen
24 Tourism	2019 calendar year	See paragraph 9
25 EOTAS Pupils	January 2020	Data publication paused
26 EOTAS FSM	January 2020	Data publication paused
27 Private sector dwelling stock	31 March 2020	Data published September 2020
28 Street lighting units	1 April 2020	Collected
29 Non-PWLB Debt	31 March 2020	Collected
30 RA	2020-21	Paper to discuss at this meeting

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Planning applications

8. One local authority has not submitted an entry for one quarter of the planning applications data. If the data is not rectified, we can either use an average of the previous quarters' data as an estimated value or else treat it as a blank entry,

Views sought: If the data is not submitted, members' views are sought whether to use the published data as it is, or use an average of the previous three quarters.

Tourism

9. The tourism data is likely to be available to us in mid to late September. When the data is received it is likely to have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and or could be incomplete.
10. The SSA unit for the enhanced population indicator was £58.48 in 2020-21 and the tourism part of this indicator accounted for the distribution of over £27 million of SSA, so there is potential for significant re-distribution, if this data were to be skewed in any way.

Views sought: Members' views are sought whether to freeze the data set if the data received is not considered to be robust enough.

PWLB data

11. In calculating the pool rate we collect several data sources from the PWLB, including average rate of advances, borrowing figures and Wales's residual data. In previous years the PWLB provided us with the average rate of advances, and residual data not including HRA loans. Since last year they have moved to a new trading system with new reporting methods and are likely to no longer be able to provide us with the data excluding the HRA loans (this is unrelated to the COVID-19 pandemic).
12. The residual data is available online, but including HRA debt. Analysis on the effect of using this data for 2019 would have reduced the pool rate in 2020-21 from 6.7% to 5.8%.

Views sought: Members' views are sought on whether to use the PWLB data available (including the HRA loans) and, if the average rate of advances data is unavailable, to freeze this at last years' value.

Conclusion

13. DSG members are asked to provide their recommendations, on the datasets considered. Further papers will be produced in the future, looking at the impact of covid-19 on data for settlements beyond 2021-22.