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Statistics Development Plan

For the Wales National Travel Survey



TRAFNIDIAETH CYMRU
TRANSPORT FOR WALES



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Introduction

This document outlines the statistical development plan for the Wales National Travel Survey (WNTS). It details how we are developing the survey, and when users should expect the development and evaluation to be complete.

The WNTS was launched in March 2025 to fill a long-standing gap in Welsh transport statistics. The statistics produced from the WNTS (first published in April 2026) are a new data series. As such, they are currently labelled as “Official Statistics in Development” to highlight the improvement and evaluation work that is being undertaken.

Overview of the WNTS

What is the WNTS?

The WNTS is a large, annual, random-sample survey designed to collect data on travel attitudes and behaviours from people across Wales. It includes questions for users and non-users of different transport modes, as well as a two-day travel diary.

The survey runs continuously throughout the year, with a new batch of respondents invited to take part each week. In total, 14,900 households will be invited to take part in the 2025/26 survey year.

As outlined in the [Llwybr Newydd: The Wales transport strategy 2021](#), the WNTS will provide TfW and Welsh Government with reliable, robust data to track progress towards Welsh Government’s transport targets and commitments.

Methods and data collection

The WNTS is primarily a web-first survey, with telephone and face-to-face interview completion options also available. Up to two adults per household can complete the survey online. Only one adult per household can participate via telephone or face-to-face interview. Households are selected at random and invites are sent by post. Respondents must be aged over 16. Proxy completions are not permitted.

Data are collected throughout the survey year: a new batch of households is invited to take part every week.

Addresses were sampled randomly from the Royal Mail’s Postcode Address File (PAF). The PAF is a list of all UK private addresses (excluding institutional and communal accommodation, such as residential care homes). Only addresses for Wales were used.

The WNTS consists of two core elements: a questionnaire and a travel diary, presented in a single survey.

The questionnaire collects information on respondents' attitudes towards different transport modes. This includes:

- Satisfaction across a range of mode-specific elements
- Feelings of safety and welcomeness
- Transport noise
- Affordability of public transport
- Accessibility of public transport
- Ability for people to use the Welsh language when travelling

Travel behaviour is recorded in a travel diary covering the two days before they complete the survey. Data collected include:

- Locations visited
- Journey purposes
- Modes of transport used
- Fuel type of the car used
- Price of their public transport journey
- Modes of transport used to and from the bus stop or train station

Only journeys that start and/or end in Wales are used for analysis. Journeys that take place entirely outside of Wales have been removed.

Respondents who complete the survey via the web or face-to-face interviews use an interactive map tool to record their journeys. Utilising the Ordnance Survey Maps application programming interface (API), respondents can select their destinations on a map. Alternatively, they may search for a location or area using the search bar. By indicating specific points as their destination, we combine information origin, destination and transport mode to calculate the distance travelled using the [TravelTime Routes API](#).

The interactive map requires a stable internet connection to complete. Where this is unavailable for face-to-face interviews, respondents can complete the survey using an offline paper travel diary.

Data quality

It is essential that outputs from the WNTS are high quality. Full details of the data quality can be found in the [WNTS Quality Report](#).

Development work

Overview of the development process

Several pieces of work have been identified to develop the statistics and processes involved in the WNTS.

Refinement of the weighting process

The WNTS data (published in April 2026) are preliminary statistics, based on batches covering the first six months of data collection (10 March to 22 October 2025). This period covers the school summer holidays and has more hours of sunlight and typically better weather than other times of the year. These factors may impact individual travel behaviour. Data are weighted based on the collection from this period and are, therefore, not necessarily representative of travel behaviour across a full year.

The weights will be refined and recalculated following the completion of the 2025/26 survey year. This will cover a full calendar year, with data published in autumn 2026.

Refinement of the weighting process will continue during of the 2026/27 survey year. We expect this development to be complete by summer 2027, implemented alongside the delivery of the annual dataset for the 2026/27 survey year.

Improving survey accessibility

The WNTS is a multimodal survey, offering web, face-to-face or telephone completion modes. This allows respondents to complete the survey in a way that best suits their needs and preferences.

We have assessed the online version of the survey against the Web Content Accessibility Guidance (WCAG) 2.2, with details included in the published [Accessibility Statement](#).

The online survey design fails several WCAG 2.2 criteria. We are continuing to develop the web survey experience to ensure it is accessible to all. We expect this work to be complete by summer 2027.

Evaluation of survey consistency

The WNTS is a new survey. The statistics published in April 2026 are preliminary outputs based on six months of data collection. Though the responses are highly consistent within this six-month period, we understand that we may observe and record seasonal differences in travel behaviour. There may also be year-on-year differences that cannot be attributed to changes in respondent behaviour.

We will evaluate the within-year survey consistency in autumn 2026 alongside the publication of the annual dataset for the 2025/26 survey year. Year-on-year consistency will be reviewed in autumn 2027 following the delivery of the 2026/27 survey data.

Free-text locations improvements

In the travel diary, respondents are able provide free text entry if they are unable to find their location on the map. These responses vary in the level of detail they contain. Two techniques are employed to determine if the location is within Wales. First, our delivery partners complete a

“Named Entity Recognition” search to extract potential address information. From this, a local large language model, using generative artificial intelligence, is used to infer postcodes and other address information.

We will continue to develop this system and incorporate additional data to determine whether a location is within Wales. This will improve the data volume and precision.

We expect this development work to be complete by autumn 2026.

Stakeholder engagement

Following publication of the preliminary WNTS data, we want to understand how stakeholders are using our data. We also want to understand what topic areas users find most valuable and what areas we should prioritise for our annual publications.

We have completed stakeholder engagement sessions in the development stage of the WNTS. Future engagement will also be essential to ensure our outputs are relevant and valuable to users.

We will seek feedback from stakeholders to better understand how they have used the data, as well as promoting the WNTS to a broad range of stakeholders in presentations, email contact and social media.

We aim to understand the responses and incorporate these into our analysis ahead of publishing the data for the full 2025/26 survey year in autumn 2026.