# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Office for National Statistics’ consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in Wales and England** |
| **DATE**  | **Thursday 26 October 2023** |
| **BY** | **Rebecca Evans MS, Minister for Finance and Local Government** |

I have today written to the National Statistician regarding the Office for National Statistics (ONS) consultation on the future of population and migration statistics in Wales and in England. The consultation sets out proposals on how administrative data could be at the core of population statistics, potentially replacing the current reliance on a census every ten years.

The Welsh Government has submitted a response to this consultation, outlining the many crucial uses it makes of ONS population and migration statistics. Our consultation response notes that the ONS’s proposals partly meet our needs and that further research is required in some areas to provide assurance that a statistics system with administrative data at its core can fully meet our needs.

Some of the key uses of these statistics include the allocation of funding, including the use of population estimates in the Barnett formula, for example, and the use of ONS population and census data in the annual financial settlement to local authorities in Wales.

Detailed census data on population characteristics, including about protected characteristics and the Welsh language, are widely used across the Welsh Government and beyond to understand the outcomes of different groups of the population at small areas, so that services can be targeted where they are most needed. It is critical, therefore, that the statistical system continues to be inclusive so that it provides us with robust, accurate and detailed evidence that can be used to help achieve a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, and a thriving Welsh language.

My letter to the National Statistician, Sir Ian Diamond, outlines these key uses and the importance of ONS population and migration statistics in Wales. It will be vital that any future population and migration statistics system for Wales is able to meet these needs and can produce high-quality, accurate statistics for Wales which are of equal quality and comparability with estimates in all other parts of the UK.

I welcome the continued engagement with the Welsh Government as the UK Statistics Authority develops its recommendation about the future of population and migration statistics in Wales and in England.