

Scottish Postcode Directory 2024/2

August 2024

Introduction

The Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) bulletin contains specific information about each release of the Postcode Index and accompanying spatial data.

The Postcode Index links live and deleted postcodes to administrative, health, statistical and other areas. It also contains the Gridlink® one metre grid reference or National Records of Scotland (NRS) assigned grid references. The SPD is produced by NRS Geography, who provides geographic support to the Scottish Government (SG) and its associated agencies, as well as other organisations.

The Postcode Index uses the Government Statistical Service (GSS) standard 9-character codes for statistical geographies.

- The SG maintains the 'Standard Geographic Codes Register – Scotland' and is responsible for assigning new geographies with a 9-character code for Scotland.
- The register is available on the ['Small Area Statistics – Reference Material'](#) section of the Scottish Government website.

Code ranges for other geographies are those used by the organisation responsible for the geographies where a code range already exists, such as ITL; are historic geographies that pre-date the introduction of the GSS code structure, such as Output Area 1991, or are geographies that don't meet the criteria for GSS code structure, such as Island.

Users are encouraged to adopt these standard names and codes, as they are the recognised standard to be used for National Statistics publications. More information on National Statistics can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website.

Latest Statistics

The data is based on the July 2024 release of Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) and contains:

	All postcodes	Live postcodes	Deleted postcodes
All postcodes	245,697	161,278	84,419
Small User	195,171	156,024	39,147
Large User	50,526	5,254	45,272
<i>Small User Linked¹</i>	<i>19,264</i>	<i>3,530</i>	<i>15,734</i>
<i>PO Boxes</i>	<i>31,262</i>	<i>1,724</i>	<i>29,538</i>
The number of live, digitised small user postcodes ² is 154,825.			

¹ Small User Linked: The Small User postcode that contains the grid reference of the Large User postcode.

² Live digitised small user postcodes: There are 1,199 live, undigitised small user postcodes. These postcodes were planned for 'administrative' purposes; and cannot be digitised as they have no distinctive geographical position.

1. Updates since 2024/1

1.1 Postcode Index Geographies

We have introduced 3 new geographies and 2 new counts fields following the release of 2022 Census data on 21 May 2024. The new fields are:

- OutputArea2022Code,
- Locality2022Code,
- Settlement2022Code,
- CensusHouseholdCount2022, and
- CensusPopulationCount2022.

We have also changed 1 geography on the Postcode Index following the general election on 4 July 2024:

- UKParliamentaryConstituency2024Code, this replaces the UKParliamentaryConstituency2005Code.

1.2 Boundaries

Our continuous postcode improvement work using the latest Scottish Address Directory data is ongoing.

We aim to ensure that the postcode boundary encompasses all addresses that belong to the postcode, and can be distinguished as being either urban or rural. In urban postcodes, we follow the minimum sensible boundary, which is the area necessary to ensure all address content is contained while following features (road center lines, back garden fences, and/or natural features such as rivers and streams); whereas for rural postcodes that have scattered housing and farms, the postcode boundary will normally have fields and open land included. If there are any postcode boundaries you would like reviewed please contact the [Geography Customer Services team](#).

We use Ordnance Survey BoundaryLine product's High Water Mark to produce our clipped boundaries. If you notice any anomalies at the coastline when working with the postcode boundaries please let us know and we can investigate and feed information back to Ordnance Survey.

1.3 Island map and lookup – Gaelic names

Thank you to the Scottish Government Gaelic and Scots Team who have provided us with Gaelic translations for Islands within Na h-Eileanan Siar to ensure that they are correct and also have appropriate English translations. The Island map and lookup will now show the Gaelic name for Islands within Na h-Eileanan Siar, with any English translation shown as an alternate name.

2. Known Errors

Corrections and identified omissions to the data content of the SPD Index and/or Spatial data are included on the subsequent SPD release.

2.1 Island map and lookup – name correction

We have been made aware of an incorrect name of an island on our Island map.

Island code 177
Fraoch-eilean
Corrected – Seana Bhaile

This error is in previous versions of the island map. As the previous versions of the island map are 'archived' we will not be updating them retrospectively.

3. Changing Geographies

3.1 UK Parliament constituencies

– change between final recommendation and operative boundaries

Under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 2020 the four UK Boundary Commissions submit their recommendations for UK Parliament constituency boundaries to the UK Parliament for final approval, and Ordnance Survey make these freely available in their Boundary-Line product. As part of this process Ordnance Survey align these boundaries with the latest elected administrations, mapped ground or cartography features to correct any minor errors as a result of administrative change due to electoral reviews, or geographical changes such as to the coastline or riverbanks.

In the case of the Boundary Commission for Scotland's (BCS) 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies, confirmed by Parliament in November 2023, Ordnance Survey have made minor changes to the BCS recommended constituency boundaries including some constituencies where the BCS had previously recommended no change to the existing constituency boundary. Five of the Scottish UK Parliamentary Constituencies were recoded in May 2024 due to the minor changes applied. The new codes have been applied to the June 2024 OS BoundaryLine release.

Original code	New code	Name
S14000006	S14000107	Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock
S14000008	S14000108	Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk
S14000010	S14000109	Central Ayrshire
S14000040	S14000110	Kilmarnock and Loudoun
S14000058	S14000111	West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine

2023/2 and 2024/1 postcode lookups were produced based on the Final Recommendation maps provided by the Boundary Commission for Scotland.

Apart from the postcodes in the areas that have had code changes (see table above) there were four differences due to the update to the boundaries since the BCS Final Recommendations.

The changes are all related to deleted postcodes, as shown below.

Postcode	AB3 8TA	EH11 2BE	EH11 2BE	EH6 7RL
UserType	SU	LU	LU	LU
Linked Small User Postcode		EH11 2BD	NO LINKP	EH6 7LU
Date Of Introduction	01/08/1973	01/08/1973	01/10/1994	01/09/1984
Date Of Deletion	01/08/1990	01/07/1992	18/12/1996	15/12/1998
Grid Reference Easting	344639	324024	324024	328730
Grid Reference Northing	815240	673149	673149	675763
BCS Final Recommendation	S14000091	S14000081	S14000081	S14000078
OS BoundaryLine (June 2024)	S14000111	S14000082	S14000082	S14000079

Any queries regarding changes to the boundaries and GSS codes between the BCS Final Recommendations and OS BoundaryLine (June 2024) should be directed to the following:

- BCS - bcs@scottishboundaries.gov.uk
- OS – Live chat, phone, or online query form on the OS website [Contact us | General enquiries | OS \(ordnancesurvey.co.uk\)](#)

3.2 Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries
Boundaries Scotland started their Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries on 1 September 2022. They plan to consult on proposals for regions later in 2024. Following this, Boundaries Scotland plan to submit a report to Scottish Ministers by 1 May 2025. If subsequently approved by the Scottish Parliament, the new boundaries will be effective at the next Scottish Parliament election, expected in May 2026.

Further information is available on the Boundaries Scotland [Reviews in Progress page](#).

3.3 National Parks
NatureScot was asked by the Scottish Government to work with them in establishing at least one new National Park by 2026. Five areas - in the [Scottish Borders](#), [Galloway](#), [Lochaber](#), [Loch Awe](#) and [Tay Forest](#) - were in the running to be Scotland's next National Park.

On 22 July, Galloway was confirmed as the proposed location for Scotland's next National Park. NatureScot is required to consider the [proposal](#) for a new National Park and to produce a report. NatureScot is expected to provide its advice to Ministers by 28 April 2025.

Further background on this work can be found on NatureScot [National Park page](#) and the Scottish Government [Landscape and Outdoor access: National Parks page](#).

3.4 International Territorial Levels (ITL) Consultation
The Office for National Statistics (ONS) are currently reviewing existing ITL boundaries. ITL were created by ONS to produce regional statistics within the UK, and to allow international comparisons.

The Scottish Government is running a [consultation](#) as part of this review to seek user feedback on proposed changes to the Scottish ITL2 and ITL3 regions. The consultation runs from 9 July to 1 October 2024.

Once new ITL boundaries are agreed with ONS, they will be implemented from 1 January 2025.

4. Scotland's Census

4.1 Scotland's Census 2022

The [outputs release schedule page](#) is where we share our plans for publishing census outputs. This includes details on the timing for publications and what will be included in each release.

4.2 Census 2022 Geographies

The 2022 Census boundaries and GSS codes were released on 21 May 2024.

- Downloadable digital boundaries, indexes, lookups, and background information is available via the [2022 Census Geography](#) page of the NRS website.
- Statistical data is available via the [Scotland's Census](#) website.

4.2.1 Revisions to Census 2022 Geography Products

Since publication on 21 May, there have been a few small changes regarding the following:

- Clarification of Population counts within products:

[2022 Census Spatial Datasets File Specification](#) (PDF) – Updated to clarify population counts are for household population only for the following datasets: Census 2022 Output Areas, Census 2022 Output Areas Part Removed, Census 2022 Output Areas Population Weighted Centroids, Census 2022 Frozen Postcode, and Census 2022 Frozen Postcode Grid References

[2022 Census Index File Specification](#) (PDF) – Updated to clarify population counts are for household population only in the Postcode to OA table.

[Islands](#) (CSV) - The listing of individual islands to island group has been updated to include usual resident population counts.

- 2022 Census Settlement (boundaries, centroids and lookup)
Thank you to colleagues in the Scottish Government Geographic Information Science & Analysis Team for alerting us to a typographic error in the 2022 Census Settlements. 2022 Census Settlement code S53000011 “Aidrie, Hamilton and Motherwell” has been corrected to “Airdrie, Hamilton and Motherwell”.

4.2.2 New Lookups

2022 Output Area lookups to new geographies (for example 2022 Data Zones) will be provided on the [2022 Census Indexes](#) page of the NRS website.

4.3 2022 Data Zone and Intermediate Zone

The Scottish Government has now drafted the 2022 Data Zone and Intermediate Zone geographies. These have been created using the published 2022 Census Output Areas, and follow the same methodology as in 2011.

The consultation on the 2022 Data Zone and Intermediate Zone geographies is now live. Please see the link below for further details and information on how to respond. The consultation closes on 1 October 2024, but early responses are very welcome, as this will help to minimise the time between the consultation closing and finalised geographies being published.

[Revising small area statistics geographies - data zones and intermediate zones: consultation - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

4.4 Census 2021

The Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency held their Censuses on Sunday 21 March 2021.

You can find out more about their Censuses via the following Census websites:

- [Office for National Statistics](#)
- [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

4.5 Travel to Work Areas and Workplace Zones

The pandemic had a major impact on the recording of labour market data as people were mainly working from home and there were concerns as to how respondents may have responded to census questions related to their workplace.

Currently the Office for National Statistics recommends the continued use of 2011 Travel to Work Areas and Workplace Zones.

5. Postcode FAQs

5.1 Postcode recoding

Wherever possible Royal Mail try not to change addresses and postcodes. Changes are however sometimes necessary to ensure that mail is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible. It is also possible for a council to prompt change by re-numbering buildings or re-naming roads.

Further information on the process for postcode re-coding is available in the [PAF Code of Practice](#) on the Royal Mail website.

Updates on [recodes](#) are available on the Powered by PAF website.

5.2 Postcode re-use

Royal Mail deletes postcodes for various reasons but most commonly, it is due to the demolition/re-development of buildings or to postcode re-use. Deleted postcodes are occasionally re-used by Royal Mail but not usually before an elapsed period of two or three years. When a postcode is re-introduced, it will not necessarily contain the same addresses or cover the same area as the original postcode.

5.3 Postcodes do not align to administrative and electoral area boundaries

Royal Mail defines postcode areas for sorting mail efficiently; the postcodes have no relationship with administrative or electoral boundaries. Royal Mail requires a stable geography in order to deliver its services, which these areas cannot provide.

NRS split postcodes for statistical reasons when creating postcode boundaries; they are not a feature of Royal Mail. Split postcodes are those with an 'A', 'B', or 'C' suffix and occur when:

- a postcode straddles two or more Council area boundaries. The most populous part of the postcode is identified by suffix A and the smaller parts by suffixes B, C, etc.;
- a postcode straddles the Scottish/English border and the Scottish postcode is allocated a suffix 'A';
- an island and the mainland share a postcode, or a postcode contains property on more than one island.

5.4 PO Box postcodes

PO Box addresses do not have a specific geographic location; instead, the mail is sent to a local delivery office, from where it can be forwarded to the real address or collected by the addressee.

Grid references for PO Box postcodes are assigned to the local Royal Mail sorting/delivery office and are deemed low quality. While the Gridlink® RPC is showing as 1 (which is high quality), this is purely because the address is being matched to the local Royal Mail sorting/delivery office.

6. Differences between data sources

There are known differences in Scottish data between the Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) Postcode Index and the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory (ONSPD).

6.1 Postcode Updates

Due to differing update regimes existing between ONS and NRS, the dates for introduction and deletion can differ. The SPD Postcode Index contains quarterly PAF updates, whereas the ONSPD contains monthly PAF updates.

6.2 Postcode Boundaries

NRS create their own postcode boundary polygons within GIS, which are used in the production of the SPD. This is important as where a Gridlink® postcode centroid grid reference is supplied, if it falls outside the polygon an NRS grid reference is used. This scenario is likely to account for small differences in postcode centroid grid references between the two postcode directories.

6.3 Postcode History

The SPD Postcode Index provides full postcode history; the ONSPD provides the most current version of the postcode only (as shown below).

SPD Postcode Index:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	01-Aug-73	01-May-95
G31 4QD	20-Apr-12	06-Jul-12
G31 4QD	17-Apr-13	07-Aug-13
G31 4QD	16-Jan-14	

ONSPD:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	201310	

6.3 Split postcodes

Unlike the SPD Postcode Index the ONSPD does not recognise split postcodes. Instead the ONSPD holds the postcode as a whole record.

7. Supply arrangements

7.1 Data Formats

The 'Cut Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory is available for free download from the [Scottish Postcode Directory](#) page of the National Records of Scotland website.

- Index files CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access compatible format
- Lookup files CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access compatible format
- Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PSGA) members only can access the 'Cut Version' of the boundary files which are supplied in ESRI shapefile format.

7.2 Full Version

The 'Full Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory can be supplied for a charge (a royalty payment to Royal Mail), please contact the [Geography Customer Services team](#).

8. Licence and Copyright Statements

8.1 Postcode Boundaries and Grid References
Available to PSGA members only.

This dataset is being made available for your personal, non-commercial use under the terms of the [INSPIRE End User Licence](#) because it includes Ordnance Survey (OS) Licensed data.

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For more information, PSGA members should look at the [public sector licensing guidance](#) or contact Ordnance Survey via their [Contact Us](#) page.

8.2 Postcode District and Sector Boundaries and Grid References

You may use this information (not logos) free of charge in any format or medium under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#) (National Archives website).

8.3 Scottish Postcode Directory - Postcode Index

The following attribution statement must be acknowledged or displayed on any product using NRS data:

'Contains NRS data © Crown copyright and database right [year].'

8.4 Further information of licensing can be found in the geography [licensing](#) page of the NRS website.

9. Open Data

Geographic data is becoming increasingly available as open data throughout the world. This means that it is free to access, use, and share.

9.1 [SpatialData.gov.scot](#)

SpatialData.gov.scot Metadata Portal is Scotland's catalogue of spatial data. The spatial data is covered under EU Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE) regulations.

The Scottish Government Geographical Information Science and Analysis team (GI-SAT) manage the portal, which contains INSPIRE data, metadata, and web services from the Scottish Government and other Scottish public sector organisations.

9.2 [Data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk)

Data.gov.uk is the UK's data and metadata portal. Unlike SpatialData.gov.scot, it includes non-spatial datasets as well as spatial data.

9.3 [Ordnance Survey Open Data](https://data.gov.uk)

Ordnance Survey publish free open datasets under their OpenData program, which can be downloaded from their website. Ordnance Survey simply ask that you acknowledge the copyright and source of the data by including the following attribution statement: 'Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (year)'.

10. Enquiries

Please contact our Geography Customer Services team if you need any further information.

E-mail: geographycustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

All postal enquiries should be directed to the main office, the address is:

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2 Princes Street
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