

Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)
15 November 2017

Present		Organisation
Alan Ferrier		NRS
Andrew Waugh		NRS
Angela Adams		Clydeplan
Archie Clark		Edinburgh South West Communities Forum
Cliff Beevers		Edinburgh South West Communities Forum
Denise Patrick		NRS
Eleni Boukouvala		NRS
Esta Clark		NRS
Esther Roughsedge		NRS
Fiona Tweedie		Church of Scotland
Heather Smith		Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Ian McClory		NRS
Jan Freeke		Glasgow City Council
Jill Morton		NRS
Julie Ramsay		NRS
Kirsty MacLachlan	Chair	NRS
Mike Atkinson		Highland Council
Nancy Burns	Minutes	NRS
Nick Cassidy		Improvement Services
Dr Peadar Morgan		Bord na Gàidhlig
Sandy Taylor		NRS
Sarah Nodwell		Scottish Water
Tina Fu		NHS ISD
William Howes		NRS
William Langdon		Argyll and Bute Council

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - 1.1. Kirsty MacLachlan thanked Jan Freeke for 27 years of contributions to the PAMS committee and presented a cake, card and gift to celebrate his retirement.
 - 1.2. Everybody present introduced themselves around the table.
 - 1.3. Apologies were received from Marina Curran, Jay Lindop, Sara Townsend-Cartwright, Chris Carr, and Alistair Harvey.
 - 1.4. Minutes of previous meeting (PAMS (17) 9): The minutes were approved with no comment.
 - 1.5. Action Points from previous meetings (PAMS (17) 10)

Action point 2015.15: Esta Clark to invite Phil Rees and colleagues to give a presentation in Scotland about their population projections by ethnic group.
>> Denise Patrick attended a BSPS seminar in Leeds where ethnic population projections were discussed. She will investigate whether the presentation slides can be shared with PAMS. Closed – slides from the BSPS seminar were circulated with the meeting papers.

Action point 2017.01 PAMS members and Local Authority contacts to fill in the online topic consultation survey, which will be available online until Friday 30 June. Closed – Jill thanked PAMS members for their responses during her topics and questions update. The team are considering how to develop questions which meet users' needs and questions are currently being tested with the testing programme running up to March 2018 after which they will be in a position to propose questions.

Action point 2017.02 PAMS members are invited to flag if they have any concerns with the proposed change to report life expectancy estimates by SIMD quintiles. Closed - No concerns raised. Denise discussed the change to quintiles during her branch update.

Action point 2017.03 Alan to investigate the possibility of accommodation in student halls for the duration of the POPGROUP course. Closed – the course was in August

Action point 2017.04 Angela to check with Siobhan Couttie at Falkirk Council to confirm whether the computer lab in Falkirk is appropriate and available for the POPGROUP course Closed (the lab was too small)

Action point 2017.05 John McCoskry to provide a link to the datasheet with information on the latest mid-year estimates Closed – link circulated with the meeting papers

Action point 2017.06 Denise to give an update on discussions relating to European geographies. Closed – covered during branch update

2. NRS – Changes in Structure (PAMS (17) 11)

Kirsty MacLachlan introduced the NRS's updated strategy and vision in the temple diagram. The new vision has a focus on increasing our reach and impact, improving customer service, and enhancing digital services. Kirsty also explained the new structure of five directorates. The main area of interest for PAMS is the Statistics and Registration Services Directorate. This directorate will contain four programmes – Census, Statistical Engagement and Promotion, Demographic Statistics and Vital Events, and Registration Services.

Kirsty and Esther Roughsedge are leading the new area of Statistics Engagement & Promotion. Demographic Statistics and Vital Events remain unchanged, but responsibility for the NHS Central Register comes back to this branch. Alan Ferrier will be the new head of Demographic Statistics and Vital Events, and will chair PAMS committee meetings in future.

In her new role as head Kirsty invited suggestions for how NRS can promote new statistical outputs, through roadshows, seminars, one-to-one meetings.

Mike Atkinson suggested that having a single point of access to data would be the best way to get more people using data. A core website signposting to where data is available, with a “duffers’ guide” to accessing data would be a starting point.

More suggestions for activities to promote engagement with NRS’ data and statistical outputs are welcome by email to Kirsty - Kirsty.Maclachlan@nrscotland.gov.uk.

- 2.1. Jan Freeke asked where population estimates from admin data fall in the new structure – Andrew Waugh clarified that the admin data branch are part of the Census programme.

3. Scotland’s Census 2021 update. (PAMS (17) 12)

Esta Clark gave an update on Scotland’s Census 2021 programme. There are a lot of new faces on the programme and recruitment is continuing in some specialist areas. The teams are currently involved in two major procurement exercises, for the Online Collection Instrument (OCI) needed for data capture, coding and other processing; and the Data Collection Operational Management System (DCOMS) needed for managing the data collection process and field force. Question development work is continuing, with question testing currently underway and a range of stakeholder consultation about specific question areas.

- 3.1.1. Jan Freeke asked what can be expected from the new gender question, and highlighted the potential for disclosure issues resulting from a non-binary gender option. Jill Morton answered that there is more work to do on finalising this question, but they are developing a question that meets user needs along the whole of the question journey, including considering the implications for outputs.

3.2. Administrative Data update. (Presentation 03)

Andrew Waugh gave a presentation on his team’s work exploring the use of admin data to enhance Census outputs, improve enumeration and support the delivery of the 2021 Census. Admin data will not replace the Census for enumeration. It is necessary to use multiple different sources of administrative data by linking records, as no source of data has total coverage. Andrew explained that the main value of admin data based population estimates is likely to come just before the actual Census, when the rolled forward mid year estimates are likely to be less accurate than earlier in the Census cycle.

The team are working towards producing Mid-Year Population Estimates and Household estimates starting in 2018. They are focusing on population and household estimates first as a proof of concept, before moving on to other potential uses. Andrew stressed that this work is being done for strictly statistical purposes under the DPA, which means that no decisions affecting individuals should be made on the basis of the analysis.

- 3.2.1. Jan Freeke asked which geographies estimates will be produced for – Andrew answered that they will attempt estimates for all geographies where MYEs are currently produced.
- 3.2.2. Cliff Beevers asked what has been done with admin data elsewhere. Andrew and Esta attended a conference on admin data in Canada and heard how other countries' Census programmes are exploring the use of admin data. There are different challenges for using admin data in different countries. Adjusting for under-coverage is a particular challenge.
- 3.2.3. Archie Clark asked whether same-sex marriages are included in Vital Events marriage records – they are.
- 3.2.4. Jan Freeke noted that HESA and Scottish Funding Council student data could be used to identify student status, as well as addresses for enumeration.
- 3.2.5. Cliff Beevers asked if it is new to assign a reference number to households – no, every address already has a Unique Property Reference Number.
- 3.2.6. Jan Freeke asked if they also adjust for overcounting, i.e. due to emigration. Andrew explained that the Health Activity data contains a flag for people who have left the country; as this is not perfect they can supplement this using the date of last activity, but this is experimental. Andrew noted that NISRA used Health Activity data to support enumeration in the 2011 Census.
- 3.2.7. Julie Ramsay noted that when using marriages data they will need to correct for tourist marriages to make sure these are not included.
- 3.2.8. Nancy Burns asked if there is a risk of over-representing home-owners relative to tenants due to the use of the Register of Residential Property Sales to identify addresses, or if there is an equivalent source of data about private rental addresses. Andrew thought it may be possible to use records from the tenancy deposit protection scheme.
- 3.2.9. Archie Clark asked if we can identify house owners absent from Scotland from the Register of Residential Property Sales. Andrew clarified that the data only show the name of the person or company buying a property – it is not possible to identify foreign ownership or owner-occupancy. NRS don't have access to individual council tax data. There was some discussion about other sources of property data. Esther Roughsedge commented that they do currently use council tax data at postcode level for the Mid-Year Population Estimates, and it has been used to try to estimate tenure, but this is difficult because data availability is patchy.
- 3.2.10. Mike Atkinson commented that for local authorities, finance departments are the main barrier to being able to provide individual council tax data.

3.3. Topics and Questions update. (Presentation 04)

Jill Morton gave a presentation on question development for Scotland's Census 2021. The team are working on development of new potential questions including questions about trans history and ex service personnel, and have been engaging stakeholders and running cognitive testing on these and other questions. A Scotland specific question testing exercise went live on 15 November with 3,500 addresses targeted for an online survey of adults in the household. There is also UK wide testing where relevant.

The team have been working with ONS and NISRA on revising the Qualifications and Labour Market Questions to make them clearer and shorter for higher quality data. Jill asked the committee what local authorities are currently using the Qualifications and Labour Market questions for, to feed into this review. There will also be a stakeholder event to consult on these questions on 19 December.

3.3.1. Archie Clark asked if the revised qualifications question could capture information about life experience as well as formal educational qualifications. Jill noted that the question has traditionally focussed on qualifications rather than skills, but they would consider whether it would be possible to broaden the scope of the question.

3.3.2. Cliff Beevers asked what the question development team are doing to ensure the accessibility of the online Census form, and noted that time limits on form completion can cause accessibility problems. Jill responded that colleagues are working on the accessibility specifications for the OCI.

3.3.3. Jan Freeke asked whether the question is about removing, or only changing the questions. Jill clarified that the questions are not being considered for removal, this is an opportunity to be clearer about what is being asked and collect better quality data.

3.3.4. Jan also commented that as long as we are still able to generate Standard Occupation Codes (SOCs) there will be some flexibility about the labour market questions.

3.3.5. Jan suggested that there could be a session at the PAMs / Census conference to consult on individual questions for development. Esta Clark responded that the Census conference will be timed to coincide with question development.

4. New Developments

4.1. Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). (PAMS (17) 13)

Will Howes presented the results of a study using HESA and NHSCR data to investigate the feasibility of adjusting for student flows in internal migration estimates. ONS and NISRA already use HESA data in this way, but it has not been done so far for Scotland. HESA data fills the gap in NHSCR data by students who don't register for a GP after moving to study.

Linkage was limited to full time students aged 17-30 only, and is very variable between universities. As only one year of HESA data was available, they have been able to look at moves into the student population but not onwards.

Will asked the PAMS committee for endorsement to support ongoing work in this area once NRS gain access to HESA time series data.

4.1.1. Andrew Waugh noted that he has a data sharing agreement in hand for HESA data from 2007/08 onwards. As HESA is a charity and not a public body the data sharing agreement, access to the data will be affected by the Data Protection Act and/or General Data Protection Regulation in 2018.

4.1.2. Esther Roughsedge noted this work doesn't affect household estimates, but it will affect population projections.

4.1.3. Cliff Beevers asked if Edinburgh had high levels of student moves missed as well as Aberdeen – it has.

4.1.4. Jan Freeke reported that PAMS members strongly endorsed the request for more HESA data and ongoing work in this area.

4.2. Council Area Fact Sheets (PAMS (17) 14)

Martin Macfie introduced the redesigned Council Area Profiles / Demographic Fact Sheets and circulated paper copies of an example profile. The profiles have been updated and redesigned, and the plan is to make them available in an interactive online form, using Shiny in R. This will be more user-friendly and up to date than the previous excel publications.

Martin would like to hear **feedback** on the updated profiles, to statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk.

4.2.1. Peadar Morgan asked if it would be possible to include Census data on the profiles. Martin noted that consideration would be given to the best way of disseminating Census data on Gaelic. There were already area profiles of Census data on the Census website, which can be viewed at Council Area level or lower.

4.2.2. Jan Freeke reported that PAMS members in the pre-meeting were happy with the content of the profiles but wanted to clarify whether it will still be possible to export the data in excel form – it will.

4.2.3. Angela Adams commented that PAMS are big fans of the key facts. The ability to compare different council areas was particularly useful, so this should stay.

Action: Martin to send mock-ups of the final Council Area profiles to the PAMS members for comment.

4.2.4. Nick Cassidy asked whether feedback on the code, presentation and use of Shiny was also welcome – it is.

4.3. Consultation on timing of Vital Events publications (PAMS (17) 15)

Julie Ramsay asked for PAMS members' views on a change to the timing of vital events publications, so that final number of deaths and age-standardised death rates can be published simultaneously. As age-standardised death rates and total number of deaths are diverging, it is important to report these together, but this would involve revising the timescale for publication and possibly not releasing preliminary estimates in advance of the final figures. Various options were outlined in the paper.

4.3.1. Angela Adams reported that PAMS members at the pre-meeting felt they weren't the best people to respond to consultation on this.

Action: Tina Fu to cascade the consultation on vital events publication dates to colleagues at ISD and encourage responses.

4.4. Improvement Service Profiles (Presentation 05)

Nick Cassidy gave a presentation introducing the Improvement Service's data products, including the Population Projector, ViewStat and Community Planning Outcomes Profiles. The Population Projector is a new online resource developed in Shiny/R, using NRS population projections and ScotPHO healthy life expectancy data and allowing interactive comparisons between local authorities and custom regions. ViewStat and CPOP are Excel tools using various government data to compare outcomes between communities. There are plans to make ViewStat and CPOP available as Shiny interfaces as well in the future.

4.4.1. Cliff Beevers asked how NRS's work has been affected by Brexit. Kirsty MacLachlan replied that the Demographic Statistics team produced some illustrative population projections based on different migration scenarios. Denise Patrick said that the population and migration statistics branch are also working with ONS to improve migration statistics which she will mention in the branch update.

4.4.2. Jan Freeke commented that the ViewStat and CPOP tools are both still using 2001 datazones. Nick reported that CPOP is due to be re-released with 2011 datazones later this month.

4.4.3. Jan Freeke commented that IS could benefit from including local expert users in the Profile Integration Group. Nick responded that local authority partners were welcome to the group.

Action: Nick to invite PAMS members to the profile integration group

Action: Call for volunteers of PAMS members to attend the IS profile integration group as local expert users – next meeting 4 Dec

4.4.4. Jan Freeke expressed some unhappiness about the range of data available on the new statistics.gov.scot site. Kirsty responded that the work to migrate data available on statistics.gov.scot is ongoing, but that she will feed back about this directly to the SG team.

Action: Kirsty to find out about the timescale for releasing more data on statistics.gov.scot and circulate this to PAMS group.

5. Branch Updates

5.1. Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS (17) 16)

Denise Patrick gave an update about the recent work of the branch. A key recent publication was the National Population Projections; the team are now working on the Sub-National Population Projections which will be produced at council area and health board level.

Denise also updated the group on changes to the method of estimating armed forces personnel in the mid-year population estimates; developments in reporting of migration statistics by ONS and NRS; changes to the way life expectancy is reported with respect to SIMD; and a change to NUTS boundaries in southern Scotland producing one extra NUTS2 region.

Denise would like to hear **feedback** from PAMS members who attended the sub council area projections training. She would also like to consult with PAMS on the settlement area boundaries for population estimates for settlements and localities, and would like to know if members have colleagues who should be involved.

**Action: PAMS members to think of colleagues who would like to be consulted about settlement boundaries and let Denise know:
Denise.Patrick@nrscotland.gov.uk.**

5.1.1. Cliff Beevers asked what the NHSCR is going to be replaced by after its closure in England and Wales. The NHSCR is being replaced by the Personal Demographic Service. NRS are currently awaiting internal migration data based on the PDS from ONS.

5.1.2. Angela Adams asked whether there would be an explanation of the impact of the change in methodology estimating armed forces personnel; Denise responded that Anne-Marie has been looking into the impact of this change and she is happy to share a summary. Angela also asked if NRS would be able to share the armed forces data itself; Denise said that this will depend on the data sharing agreement, as it may be reserved for statistical purposes only and there may be disclosure issues.

Action: Denise to share a summary of the impact of change in methodology of armed forces population estimates.

5.1.3. Peadar Morgan asked for more detail on the NUTS boundary change; Esta said she would ask for this.

Action: Esta to ask Tricia Cooper for more information about the NUTS2 boundary change.

5.1.4. Cliff Beevers asked whether the migration statistics work had been published; Denise responded that the population projection scenarios have been used as part of a Scottish Government response to the

Migration Advisory Committee's call for evidence on EEA workers in the labour market, and she can share a link to this.

Action: Denise to share a link to the Scottish Government response to the MAC call for evidence .

5.1.5. Jan Freeke reported that PAMS members in the pre-meeting would be happy to comment on settlement boundaries and expressed their appreciation for the POPGROUP training.

5.2. Household Statistics (PAMS (17) 17)

Esther Roughsedge gave an update on recent work and changes in the household estimates and projections branch. Esther is moving on from household estimates but will still be involved with PAMS in her new role on statistics promotion and engagement.

Esther asked PAMS for **feedback** on two options for household projection geographies to reflect changes to planning area boundaries during the Planning Review. Should they wait for new SDP (or equivalent) boundaries, or continue to publish projections based on the old SDP boundaries?

5.2.1. Angela Adams asked Esther to keep publishing household projections for the old SDP areas, as until the Planning Bill is enacted the SDPAs have a statutory requirement to report on SDP areas, and the Bill is unlikely to give detail about the new boundaries.

5.2.2. Jan Freeke asked if NRS can look at the evidence for changes in projected household size and come to HARG with recommendations for alternative household formation scenarios.

5.2.3. Jan thanked Esther for her work on household estimates and projections over the last 13 years.

Action: Esther/Sandy to do analysis on rate of household formation and put recommendations for potential household projection variants to HARG.

5.3. Dissemination & Census Analysis (PAMS (17) 18)

Sandy Taylor gave an update on the work of the dissemination and census analysis branch, highlighting the release of new outputs from the 2011 census by workplace population and daytime population. Sandy gave an overview of the range of customer service requests and requests for commissioned tables, and described plans to make census microdata available to researchers at the National Safe Haven. NRS already provides record-level data to researchers at the National Safe Haven using it for data linkage projects, and Sandy outlined the role NRS plays in regulating this access.

5.3.1. Jan Freeke thanked Sandy for the useful information. There were no other comments.

5.4. Vital Events (PAMS (17) 19)

Julie Ramsay updated the meeting on recent releases from vital events including vital events reference tables, avoidable mortality, drug related deaths, and an upcoming publication on mortality by deprivation. Julie highlighted the caveats on the avoidable mortality statistics.

On 13 December an update to the Alcohol-related deaths will be published, as ONS has revised their definition of alcohol-related deaths. The December update will include figures consistent with the new ONS definition. NRS will continue to release figures on both definitions for consistency. Baby name statistics are also due to be released on the 19th December.

5.4.1. There were no questions or comments.

6. AOB

6.1. Kirsty asked the group for suggestions of topics for the next meeting. Esther Roughsedge suggested a presentation about the [statistics.gov.scot](https://www.statistics.gov.scot) website.

Action: Kirsty to invite Gregor Boyd and Jeremy Darot to the next PAMS meeting to talk about the [statistics.gov.scot](https://www.statistics.gov.scot) website and planned developments.

7. Date and time of next meeting

7.1. There was a discussion about whether the next meeting could be combined with the Census conference. It was agreed that this will not work well as PAMS takes a whole day for members who attend the pre-meeting, but the two events shouldn't be too close together.

Action: Esta and others to consider the timing of the next PAMS meeting and the Census conference and update PAMS members by email.