

Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)
--

**Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland):
6 May 2015**
Present

Angela Adams

Cliff Beevers
Jenny Boag
David Campbell
Chris Carr
Nicholas Cassidy
Archie Clark
Esta Clark
Tricia Couper
Jan Freeke
Alastair Greig
Alistair Harvey
Venetia Haynes
Darren Knox (minutes)
Jay Lindop
Cecilia Macintyre
Kirsty MacLachlan (chair)
Julie Ramsay
David Readhead
Esther Roughsedge
Nicholas Sobey
Iain Stewart
Sandy Taylor
Fiona Tweedie
Tom Wallace
Amy Wilson

Organisation

Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Area
Planning Authority
South West Communities
Falkirk Council
National Records of Scotland (NRS)
Argyll & Bute Council
Improvement Service
South West Communities Forum
NRS
NRS
Glasgow City Council
Scottish Government
Edinburgh City Council
NRS
NRS
Office for National Statistics (ONS)
NRS
NRS
NRS
NHS Information Services Division (ISD)
NRS
Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Renfrewshire Council
NRS
Church of Scotland
NRS
NRS

1. Introduction and apologies

- 1.1 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed the group. There were apologies received from Paul McNamara and Konrad Zdeb.
- 1.2 Kirsty MacLachlan advised that Fiona Tweedie is taking over from Norman Jamieson as the Church of Scotland's representative on the PAMS Committee and offered sincere thanks for Norman's contribution to the group over the many years which he has contributed.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (PAMS (14) 19)

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Update on action points from previous meeting

Action point 2013.03 – Kirsty MacLachlan to investigate the potential for adding user defined geographies to the outputs dissemination system. It was noted that this was covered at the last meeting and users can create their own geographies – closed.

4. National Records of Scotland Statistics Plan 2015-16

- 4.1 Kirsty MacLachlan went over NRS' statistical plan for 2015-16. She explained that users' views were important at the time of planning the work to ensure that their needs are met.
- 4.2 Jan Freeke asked how it would be possible to produce household projections for areas within Council areas given we do not have household estimates by data zones. Esther Roughsedge said that occupied dwellings could be used. Alistair Harvey noted that these are a close match to household estimates.

5. 2011 Census progress

- 5.1 Sandy Taylor gave an update on progress from the 2011 Census.
- 5.2 Sandy Taylor noted that Census Outputs and Statistical Information Services have merged into a single team.
- 5.3 All of the standard outputs are now complete and UK origin-destination statistics are available.
- 5.4 The focus is now on finalising microdata, releasing statistics on workplace and daytime populations as well as commissioned outputs. Reports on equalities and migrant characteristics have been published and reports on Gaelic language and inhabited islands will follow.
- 5.5 Sandy informed the group that there is now an Excel based search tool available on the Census website which allows searching by topic to find a list of already published tables with that topic, making finding the data easier.
- 5.6 Sandy has received some feedback on the uses of Census data but would welcome any further examples. He also said that NRS continued to look for feedback from users on the Census website.
- 5.7 Alistair Harvey asked about the mechanism for requesting a commissioned output. Sandy Taylor advised that the information is on the website and there is a template for logging queries.
- 5.8 Kirsty MacLachlan spoke positively about the Church of Scotland's use of Census data to produce statistics for Church of Scotland parish areas. Fiona Tweedie informed the group that there are many charts available comparing areas which anyone can use.
- 5.9 Kirsty MacLachlan noted that Nicholas Sobey commented that he had found the geography tool useful. Nicholas added that he had used the tool to create specific bespoke geographies.

5.10 Jan Freeke commented that he was concerned that the Census tables do not contain exactly what the local authorities need. Commissioned tables are expensive and he was wondering whether NRS would be able to provide certain tables free of charge if there was a demand from the local authorities. Sandy Taylor said that if there are gaps in the standard outputs and if there is a wide demand then this could be considered. Kirsty MacLachlan said that this would, of course, be resource dependent. Jenny Boag commented that the local authorities do not have the money to pay for commissioned tables and, therefore, the tables they need should be taken into consideration when planning for the 2021 Census. Esther Roughsedge commented that all commissioned tables are published on the Scotland's Census website. Kirsty MacLachlan asked the group to formalise what is required and send an emailed request.

Action: local authorities to send a joint request to Kirsty MacLachlan for common commissioned tables.

5.11 Tom Wallace informed the group that many additional tables have been published which they may not be aware of. In this respect the new Excel based table index tool may be useful. At the moment the table index tool enables searching for tables by title but it is being developed so that searching can also be done for the variables in the tables. Alistair Harvey commented that being able to search by variable would be useful. Tom Wallace commented that the table index tool will also inform users what geography the tables are available at.

5.12 Iain Stewart asked whether IT monitor site usage. Tom Wallace replied that they do monitor usage of individual tables, adding that while use of the data warehouse is also monitored the metrics do not identify which specific content in it is accessed.

5.13 Jan Freeke asked when the report on the comparability of questions asked in the 2001 and 2011 Censuses will be available. Sandy Taylor informed him that this was being given a final check and so should be available soon.

5.14 Cecilia Macintyre informed the group that she had recently been involved in training for users on the use of origin-destination data from the 2011 Census. ONS have published approximately 500 origin-destination tables. The majority of them are for England & Wales only, and only 20 are publically available. Access to safeguarded subsets of the data can be gained by registering with the UK Data Service. Cecilia informed the group that when users have hired contractors to carry out analysis, the UK Data Service were unable to pass the data to the contractors. Furthermore, Cecilia informed the group that NRS are not able to share data they have downloaded from the UK Data Service. At present Data Access Agreements are being developed to enable this. ONS and the UK Data Service are meeting on 19 May to discuss wider access to this data.

Action: local authority contacts who wish to use transport flow data should email Cecilia MacIntyre.

6. Overall key messages around the 2011 Census

6.1 Tom Wallace gave a presentation on the 'Overall key messages around the 2011 Census'.

6.2 Tom started by outlining the challenges around the 2011 Census that had been identified which included timing, setting user expectations, statistical disclosure

control and its impact on table design, the release-by-release approach and also communication with users (particularly around the middle of 2012).

6.3 Jenny Boag commented that these were mostly the same as the challenges identified in the local authority meeting earlier in the morning. There was a feeling that the best use was not made of the experts on the PAMS Committee. Tom Wallace said that stakeholder engagement will be a priority in planning for the 2021 Census.

6.4 Tom then went on to outline some of the successes of the 2011 Census: the data was actually published (413 standard tables and 225 commissioned tables were published) while sticking to the amended timetable; the new table index tool makes searching for tables easier than before; NRS were more flexible at responding to feedback, there was more user consultation, more user events and issues were raised to PAMS and the table decision group; and finally there was minimum need for corrections.

6.5 Tom then asked if that resonated with the group and Jenny Boag said that it did.

Action: all to pass any feedback on the 2011 Census to Tom Wallace.

7. 2021 Census

7.1 Amy Wilson gave an update on progress with the 2021 Census. Amy informed the group that though the 2011 and 2021 Censuses are separate programs they are in reality a continuum.

7.2 Though externally it may look as though not a lot of progress is being made, internally lots of things are happening: a new program manager has been appointed; realistic expectations have been agreed among senior management; a draft business case is being written; the current team of 18 full and part-time staff will double by the end of the year.

7.3 There is a focus on understanding and reviewing the statistical methodology. Whilst still working closely with ONS and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) there is a drive to develop our own skills. ONS are moving at a very fast pace and have very high ambitions for their 2021 Census. Issues around harmonisation are being investigated. NRS' focus is on delivering a Census on time that meets the needs of users.

7.4 ONS will be undertaking a topic consultation in the summer and NRS hope to conduct a similar exercise by the end of the year. NRS are considering how the consultation can be improved to encourage a better response; the last consultation received only nine responses.

7.5 When the program is designed, planned, resourced and costed and an enumeration strategy is in place then a draft business case will be put to Scottish Ministers next year.

7.6 Jay Lindop commented that ONS plan to produce trial population estimates (using alternative sources) in October and asked if NRS have plans to do similar. Amy advised that this is possible but is unlikely to happen this year.

8. Update on the address register for the 2021 Census

- 8.1 Tricia Couper gave an update on the address register for the 2021 Census and the work carried out to maintain the register since the 2011 Census.
- 8.2 Cecilia Macintyre followed this up by asking Tricia if there was any evidence of deficiencies in the address register used for the 2011 Census. Tricia explained to Cecilia that the communal establishment lists used for some local authorities were better than others. Tricia is keen to identify people working for local authorities who could help in this regard for the 2021 Census. Furthermore, Cecilia wanted to know if the address register was available publically and Tricia informed her that the data is available publically through the One Scotland mapping agreement.

Action: all to send suggestions for local authority contacts for communal establishment information to Tricia Couper.

- 8.3 Jenny Boag said that she was not aware of any addresses that were missed in the 2011 Census but that she did have some concerns around duplication and how caravan sites were recorded. Tricia advised Jenny that caravan sites appear as an address record on the register.

9. Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC)/Scottish Informatics and Linkage Collaboration (SILC) update

- 9.1 David Campbell gave an update on ADRC/SILC.
- 9.2 Jan Freeke asked if the Scottish address register is used by these services and was informed by David that this is indeed the case.
- 9.3 Furthermore, Jan asked whether or not ADRC/SILC would be relevant to local authorities and David informed him that this would depend on the type of research they wanted to do. It would be possible but funding routes will be dependent on the type of project proposed. If the research aligned with Scottish Government policy or if they were working with an academic, then it may be possible to obtain funding through existing routes. Otherwise, a local authority would likely be required to fund the project themselves. Any local authorities interested in using ARDC/SILC were advised to contact David directly.

10. Household Estimates and Projections

- 10.1 Esther Roughsedge gave an update from NRS Household Estimates and Projections and asked for any comments on the paper.
- 10.2 Esther advised the group that their publications normally contain breakdowns by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) but that SIMD was not yet available for new data zones. Esther wanted the group's views on whether to drop these breakdowns for this year's publication or use a best fit approach. The group agreed that it would be best to drop these breakdowns, this year. Fiona Tweedie asked whether SIMD will eventually be produced for new data zones.

Action: Kirsty MacLachlan to find out whether SIMD will be produced for new data zones.

- 10.3 Esther asked the PAMS committee if they find NRS' infographics useful. Jenny Boag commented that the infographics are fine but stressed that it is important not to neglect the data in pursuit of infographics. Jenny noted that the PAMS group were perhaps not the intended audience for the infographics and perhaps the media and public were more the target audience. Cecilia Macintyre asked if it is easy to reproduce Scotland level infographics for local authorities and Esther informed Cecilia that this would involve a lot of work but NRS would be happy to provide local authorities with templates.
- 10.4 Esther informed the group that NRS do not propose to make major changes to the Registrar General's Annual Review for 2014. NRS have not yet had time to analyse the feedback from the recent consultation. The intention is to focus on improving the infographics, this year.
- 10.5 Jan Freeke asked if there was any doubt around the publication of 2014-based household projections – in Jan's view a key output. Esther informed the group that there was some doubt and NRS would be putting forward a stronger case for funding. Chris Carr informed the group that the Scottish Government Centre for Housing Market Analysis states that Planning Authorities must use NRS household projections as part of the Planning process; this means that there is a requirement for NRS to produce the projections. Jenny Boag noted that it would be odd if one part of the Scottish Government said to use the household projections and another part stopped producing them. Kirsty MacLachlan reiterated that all funding and resourcing requests were being carefully considered in the current climate but that in this situation a stronger case would be made.

11. Population and Migration

- 11.1 Esta Clark gave an update from NRS Population and Migration Statistics and asked for feedback and comments.
- 11.2 Esta informed the group that most of the development work being undertaken within the branch would be covered later in the agenda but there were a couple of things she wished to bring to the groups attention.
- 11.3 Academics from the University of Leeds are reviewing the methodology to produce subnational population projections and are writing a report with recommendations. The team would like to establish a small subgroup of the PAMS Committee to discuss the recommendations in this report and Jenny Boag expressed an interest in joining this group.

Action: expressions of interest in joining the subnational population projections working group to be sent to Esta Clark.

- 11.4 Esta informed the group that there have been some staffing changes within the team. A PhD intern has joined the team to compare data on address one year ago from the 2011 Census with the migration estimates used to produce mid-year population estimates. Also Jay Gillam has started to look at Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data and whether it can be used to improve migration estimates. Furthermore, discussions are taking place with NHS ISD with a view to a member of their staff being seconded to NRS Population and Migration Statistics to produce population estimates for 2001 data zones for mid-2014 as these estimates are needed as an input to produce comparative health resource allocations.

12. Vital Events

- 12.1 Julie Ramsay gave an update from NRS Vital Events.
- 12.2 Julie informed the group that NRS Vital Events will be increasing the frequency of their births and deaths estimates. These are currently published quarterly but will be published monthly from 17 June. In addition, monthly deaths will be published by Council area whereas they are currently published by NHS Board area.
- 12.3 Jenny Boag asked whether comparisons with previous years would be possible and Julie informed the group that a long back series will be made available. Earlier estimates will be revised when the most recent estimates are published.

13. An update on small area population and household projections

- 13.1 Esta Clark gave an update on small area population and household projections.
- 13.2 Esta informed the group that funding had been secured from the Scottish Government Statistics Development Fund to produce small area population and household projections as a one-off project. Professor Ludi Simpson from the University of Manchester will be providing academic support and Angela Adams will be joining the branch on secondment from Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Planning Authority to undertake the work. There is a lot of work to do to specify the details of the project but it is hoped that it will be able to commence by the end of May. The biggest question is what level of geography the projections should be produced for.
- 13.3 Jenny Boag commented that every local authority will probably be interested in different geographies and that there was a lot of interest from Fife and Highland.
- 13.4 Alistair Harvey suggested that small areas probably do not follow trends for long periods of time. Esta agreed with this and said that the projections will probably only cover a shorter period, for example ten years.
- 13.5 Jenny Boag commented that the smaller the area, the more likely population growth is to be affected by house building. There was some discussion around producing the projections for housing market areas but Chris Carr commented that some housing market areas are smaller than data zones, while others are very large.
- 13.6 Nicholas Cassidy asked that the plans are run past the Improvement Service but the local authorities should have the final say on geographies.
- 13.7 It was decided that further discussions should take place within the subnational population projections group and that these projections should be referred to as sub-Council area projections rather than small area projections.

Action: Jenny Boag to provide Esta Clark with a list of volunteers who could feed into the sub-Council area population and household projections group.

- 13.8 Jenny Boag asked if the projections should be constrained or unconstrained. Esta advised this would be considered as part of the project.

14. Improving migration estimates using patient registers

- 14.1 Darren Knox presented a paper on 'Improving migration estimates using patient registers'.
- 14.2 The paper was tabled at the meeting and Darren informed the group that he was happy to take any feedback via email after the meeting.
- 14.3 Alistair Harvey asked why the proposed methodology was estimating more within Scotland migrants and Darren explained that he thinks this may be due to people who migrate (between NHS Board areas) but remain registered with the same General Practitioner (GP). Cliff Beevers asked if this could also explain why the proposed methodology estimates fewer cross-border moves. Darren commented that he did not think this was the case.
- 14.4 Jan Freeke asked for clarification on how overseas migration would be estimated and Darren informed him that NRS will continue to use ONS Long-Term International Migration (LTIM) estimates of total in-migration from overseas and total out-migration to overseas. The estimates of overseas in-migration produced using the proposed methodology will be used only to determine age, sex and geographical distributions for overseas migrants.

15. Update on the development of single year of age population estimates for administrative areas in Scotland for those aged 90+

- 15.1 Esta Clark gave an update on the development of single year of age population estimates for administrative areas in Scotland for those aged 90+.
- 15.2 Esta informed the group that we currently use the Kannisto-Thatcher (KT) method to produce these estimates at Scotland level and we have been looking at four alternatives including the KT method to produce estimates for Council areas. The four methods are the cohort component method, the KT method, constraining the NHSCR to the 90+ mid-year estimates and a constant ratio method. The cohort component method and constraining the NHSCR to the 90+ mid-year estimates produce similar results and are the preferred methods but there is still some work to be done. It is hoped that trial estimates will be available at the end of September.
- 15.3 Cliff Beevers asked if estimates for all years would be made available in September and Esta informed him that the focus will be on the most recent years and revisions for earlier years will be dependent on user needs and resource.
- 15.4 David Readhead said that a long time series will be needed to look at long term mortality trends.
- 15.5 Jenny Boag asked if the assumption that there is low migration in the 90+ age group was true, citing the example of people moving into care homes or moving to be closer to relatives. Esta advised that part of the project was looking at the quality of sources including the Census and NHSCR to test the validity of these assumptions.

16. Small Area Population Estimates (SAPE) review

- 16.1 Esta Clark gave an update on the SAPE review.

16.2 Esta informed the group that Michael Hunter had reviewed the SAPE methodology and that the current cohort component method is still relevant for new data zones but other methods have been considered. The main conclusion of this review is that it is best to continue with the cohort component method until better administrative data is available.

16.3 Esta informed the group that when population estimates for new data zones for earlier years are created, where data zone boundaries have not changed there may be some small differences with the currently published figures due to the constraining process. The PAMS committee had no concerns regarding this.

17. Investigating quality measures for mid-year estimates

17.1 Alastair Greig presented a paper on 'Investigating quality measures for mid-year estimates'.

17.2 Esta Clark commented that her team have found these quality measures useful for quality assuring the mid-year population estimates. The UK Statistics Authority is keen for such quality measures to be published and Esta wanted to know if the PAMS Committee members would find them useful. Jenny Boag commented that they would be useful but what would be really helpful would be more information about the sources that feed into the population estimates.

17.3 Alastair Greig commented that local authorities should produce alternative estimates to quality assure the estimates produced by NRS and Jenny Boag commented that she used to do this but it is no longer possible because of the unavailability of a key data source. Esta Clark commented that NRS quality assure their estimates against the Community Health Index, NHS Central Registrar (NHSCR), Child Benefit data, and Pension Age Client Group data. Esta commented that the difficulty is in finding data sources to quality assure the working age groups and that hopefully HESA data may be helpful in this respect.

18. Any other business

18.1 Kirsty MacLachlan asked for topics for the next PAMS meeting and for the PAMS conference. Several topics were suggested: high-level plans for the 2021 Census (Amy Wilson/Jenny Boag), feedback from the subnational population projections group (Jenny Boag), feedback from the recent consultation (Kirsty MacLachlan), 2014-based projections (Jenny Boag) and uses of Census outputs (Jan Freeke).

Action: all to send suggested topics for the PAMS conference to Kirsty MacLachlan.

18.2 Esta Clark commented that there will be a Scottish projections experts meeting on 25 June ahead of ONS setting the assumptions for the national projections and asked if anyone would like to attend this meeting. Jenny Boag said that she would like to attend.

19. Date of next meeting

19.1 Late October or early November 2015.