

Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

Small Area Population and Household Projections

Background

1. There is demand from councils and community planning groups for sub-council area level population and household projections. National Records of Scotland (NRS) have been asked directly by councils and also through our ScotStat PAMS group, to produce small area population and household projections. The Improvement Service have also said that there is demand from community planning associations as well as councils. Small area projections are needed to help with a wide range of issues including resource allocation and service planning for local areas.
2. NRS have been successful in bidding for funding from the Scottish Government (SG) Statistics Development Fund to develop methods for small area population and household projections and produce them as a one-off exercise. If they were to be produced again, additional funding would need to be secured from a different source.
3. We have recently interviewed and we are hoping that someone will join us for around 10 months to take forward this work. Professor Ludi Simpson will also be providing academic support for the project. Before the project starts we need input from the users of the projections, including PAMS members, to ensure we deliver what users need. We will also need ongoing input and are looking to set up a small group to look at the methods that are being developed for this work and to give the opportunity to shape this work as it progresses. We are also hoping to combine this with a group looking at the new methodology for the council and NHS Board area level population projections which is currently being developed (see PAMS (15) 07 for more detail). Please let us know if you would like to be involved with this group.

Project definition

4. This project will build on the guidance produced by NRS and Professor Ludi Simpson which is available on the [Small Area Population Projections](#) section of the NRS website. As well as developing methods and processes for producing small area population and household projections, additional insights will be gained from the project, including information on the quality of small area data and robustness of methods for small areas. The first step of the project is to agree its definition and scope.

Geography

5. The aim is to produce small area population and household projections for areas within all 32 council areas in Scotland. One of the first decisions of the project will be the geographical areas to be used for the projections. There are various options available but the decision is not straight forward as different councils use different small area geographies for planning purposes and even within a council area, different small area geographies are used for different purposes. However the project has limited resource which suggests that either one consistent small area geography needs to be chosen for

all council areas across Scotland, or perhaps one small area geography per council area needs to be selected. The geographies will probably need to be built up as best fit from data zone boundaries. One possible geography for the projections would be Housing Market Areas, though these vary widely in size across Scotland. Another possibility would be Multi-Member Wards or Intermediate Zones, which are more consistent in size.

6. The first step of the project will be to document what the uses of the projections will be and to agree the geographies and data to be used. Input from users on the uses of the projections and views on the geography or geographies to be used are welcome.

Base year for the projections

7. Given the availability of input data, the base year for the projections will be 2012.

Other items to be built into the project specification

8. Other items to consider for the project if there is time and resource which it would be useful to get a steer on just now are:
 - It is unlikely that variant projections will be produced given the timescales.
 - Would data packs for other software packages such as POPGROUP to allow councils and other to run different scenarios be useful?
 - Should the projections be constrained to the NRS projections for the council area?
 - Next steps and timescales.
9. Once the person taking forward this work is in post the first step is to fully specify the work and produce a project plan which will be shared for comment with the PAMS projection sub group. The aim is to complete the development work and the projections by the end of March 2016.

Please let us know if you would like to join the group to advise on this work, and also let us know if you have any views on what we are proposing, including what geography should be used.

NRS: Population and Migration Statistics
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