

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

POPULATION STATISTICS UPDATE

Introduction

This paper summarises the recent work done on population statistics and the further work to be carried out over the coming months. PAMS is asked to note the paper and provide any written comments on the papers by 30 April 2003.

Mid-Year Estimates

Work has begun to produce a set of 2002 Mid-Year Estimates, which will be available in May. These estimates will use the new migration methodology as outlined in PAMS (03) 10.

Estimates are being produced for council and health board areas. Like the 2001 mid-year estimates, the health board estimates will be based on the corrected health board boundaries. Previously published health board estimates did not conform exactly to the legal health board boundaries. This affects 7 of the 15 health boards, namely Argyll & Clyde, Fife, Forth Valley, Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire, Lothian and Tayside. The differences between the previously published and the corrected boundaries are very small, except between Glasgow and Lanarkshire. This area contains just under 1,700 people who previously have been incorrectly included in the Greater Glasgow total rather than Lanarkshire.

There will also be small area population estimates produced, which are consistent with the 2002 Mid-Year Estimates, (see PAMS (03) 11). For this, and a number of other reasons, we will be stopping the production of estimates for old district levels. However it will be possible to aggregate the small area estimates to gain a "best fit" population figure for old district areas.

Revisions 1982-2000

The final population from the 2001 Census indicated that we had previously overestimated the 1991 Census underenumeration and therefore the 1991 population estimates were too high. As a result population revisions were required back to 1982 rather than just 1992. These revisions by single year of age and sex for council areas were published on 27 February. Revisions consistent with these for health board areas are currently being prepared and should be available by end-April. There has also been some interest in a set of revisions for old district areas. This is currently under consideration and may be done in conjunction with the revisions for health board areas.

In addition to the population revisions, GROS are also planning to undertake revisions to the migration series for 1982-2000. The revisions published on 27 February 2003 made a net adjustment for migration but did not identify any of the origin-destination characteristics of the adjustment. Work on allocating the migrants as international, within UK etc will be undertaken, in conjunction with the other Census offices, once more information on migration is available from the 2001 Census. It is planned that this work will be completed by end-August 2003.

As well as migration revisions, we are also planning on revising the marital status estimates. In doing this we also plan to look at our method for producing marital status estimates in more detail with the intention of improving the annual marital status estimates. Provisionally this work is planned for completion by end-December 2003.

Population Projections

A set of interim 2001-based population projections were published, at Scotland level only, on 1 November 2002. These were classed as interim since they did not take account of the full results of the 2001 Census. The assumptions were the same as in the 2000 based projections apart from the migration assumption which was a loss of 1,000 persons a year compared with a nil assumption in the previous projections. The revised assumption was to reflect the findings of the 2001 Census and the sizeable underestimate of out migration in previous mid-year estimates.

A full set of 2002 based projections, which take full account of the results from the 2001 Census, are currently planned for publication in November 2003. Consultation on the national assumptions for Scotland will occur in June for agreement in July.

A set of 2002 based sub-national projections will be published shortly thereafter. GROS is aiming, for the first time, to publish sub-national estimates in the same calendar year as the national projections. The discrepancy in timing between the two sets will be minimised as far as possible and GROS is considering whether sub-national projections can be produced and published to coincide with the national projections. On the new timetable, GROS would be aiming to consult Local authorities on the proposed assumptions in September 2003.

Quarterly Population Estimates

A requirement has been stated by a number of users, principally a number of ONS surveys and Eurostat, for timely quarterly population estimates. To meet this requirement a project has been initiated within the Population and Demography section of ONS. The aim of the project is to deliver a method for producing quarterly population estimates 6-8 weeks after the end of each quarter. ONS is leading this work with comment from GROS and NISRA on the appropriateness of the proposals in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Once a method has been devised and agreed throughout the UK, the production of quarterly estimates will be the responsibility of each of the Registrars General.

Research is concentrating on developing methods to produce these for the countries of the UK and for Government Office Regions. Evaluation of suitable methods is underway. Research so far has shown that the most appropriate method is likely to be an application of the cohort component method, where births and deaths are estimated using the partial data available in the period, inflated for the degree of under estimation. This is a technique employed by other National Statistics Institutes for producing estimates such as these. The data to form an estimate of the migration component are not available, hence a statistical technique such as time series analysis may be used to produce a short term forecast. Quarterly population estimates will then be revised when final estimates of the components are available and will be in line with the mid year estimates when they are published. It is hoped that the first set of QPEs will be published in the autumn.

GROS

March 2003