

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

SCOTTISH STATISTICS PLAN 2004/05 POPULATION AND MIGRATION

Introduction

1. The collection and dissemination of statistics on Population and Migration is the task of the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), an associated department of the Scottish Executive responsible to the Registrar General, who reports to the Minister for Justice.

Key Outputs

2. GROS produces the following statistical series:-

- Census, every 10 years
- Population estimates between the Censuses, annually
- Population forward projections, every 2 years
- Other demographic statistics (births, marriages, deaths, divorces, adoptions) annually, with provisional figures for most quarterly
- Drug-related deaths, annually
- Electorate statistics, annually.

3. These provide the source data to measure aspects (especially outcomes) of a number of the high-level undertakings in the Partnership Agreement (e.g. "We are committed to maintaining strong, prosperous and growing communities in rural Scotland"). Population statistics are also essential to the monitoring of other targets (e.g. as the denominator for per capita rates).

3. The GROS website (www.gro-scotland.gov.uk) is the main publication medium. Some outputs are also available in printed form – particularly the Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends, which is laid before the Scottish Parliament. The results of the 2001 Census are published in CD form and on a special website (Scotland's Census Results On Line – www.scrol.gov.uk), designed to encourage the use of, and widen access to, the information and to allow users to explore and self-analyse outputs, including by thematic mapping.

4. A special analysis service is offered for Census and other demographic information. Recent examples include a comparison of the number of deaths in winter and in other seasons and the production of Census data by religious parish.

Improvements planned in 2004/05

5. The main planned improvements in quality, methodology and timing are:-

- Annual small area population estimates will be provided at the new datazone level (at present available at ward level), subject to the resolution of quality issues (particularly for special groups e.g. students and institutional populations). A key use for these data is the updating of the index of deprivation.
- Discussions are in hand with ONS about the possibility of quarterly population estimates – primarily for use with the Labour Force Survey - subject to resolution of quality problems;

- The scope for replacing the decennial Census by a continuous population statistics system, based on administrative and survey data, is being investigated. That would give good small area information, more cost effectively than more frequent Censuses. It is a medium-term project, depending for example on the development of a population register such as the Citizen Information Project;
- Migration data will be improved with the implementation of the ONS quality review of international migration and a review by GROS of within-UK migration flow information. Discussions will be held with SE and Scottish Enterprise about improving the research base. Migration will be the main theme of the Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends this year;
- In order to promote a joined-up approach to population and household projections, work will be transferred from SE to GROS, bringing together statistics about households and population;
- More context and analysis will be provided for SE policy interests on demography (e.g. Fresh Talent);
- In consultation with the ScotStat Population and Migration Statistics Group, new user requirements for population statistics will be identified and implementation pursued where agreed;
- Research on key demographic issues will be fostered, in co-operation with the SE Office of the Chief Researcher;
- GROS will facilitate data linkage exercises, especially for the Scottish Longitudinal Study which links Census and NHS data, in conformity with the National Statistics protocols on Data Access & Confidentiality and on Data Matching;
- To reinforce GROS's commitment to postcode-based geography products, geographic information systems will be converted to Arc software;
- The range of statistics available on SCROL, and the relationship between the SCROL and main GROS websites, will be reviewed (particularly to see how 1991 Census outputs might be included);
- A review of the software for analysing vital events data will be initiated.

Programme of action for ScotStat Population and Migration Statistics Group

6. The following programme of work is envisaged for the Population and Migration Statistics Group of ScotStat:-

- Comment on the effectiveness of the 2001 Census outputs and on the published GROS evaluations of the Census operation as a whole; and offer advice pertinent to planning 2011 conventional Census activity;
- Comment on consultation proposals and responses in relation to future population statistics systems, including alternatives to census;
- Support closer integration of work on population and household/dwelling estimates and projections, particularly by assisting GROS in accessing dwelling data from Assessors and occupied household information from council tax billing systems;
- Review the 2004 issue of Neighbourhood Statistics and consider whether there is scope for the addition of any new data sets that fall under the Group's remit;
- Monitor and guide the Working Group set up to review population projection methodology;
- Monitor and support developments related to the implementation of the National Statistics quality review of international migration;
- Comment on developments to refine the methodology developed for small area population estimates and comment on quality issues;
- Comment as necessary on the different approaches used in calculation of Standardised Mortality rates and similarly in relation to different estimates of life expectancy.

Detailed Targets for 2004/05

Demographic statistics service

Provide the demographic context and information for the sound government of Scotland.

- Deliver National Statistics outputs on pre-announced dates and meet customer requests within stated timescale. *Continuous.*
- Complete production of remaining 2001 Census output. Various dates.
- Review statistical content of GROS website. *31 July 2004.*
- Liaise with ONS in the programme of work which followed the quality review of international migration to improve the international component of migration. Carry out a GROS review of within UK migration flow information used in both estimates and projections. *31 December 2004.*
- Identify, in consultation with the ScotStat Population and Migration Statistics Group (PAMS), new user requirements for population statistics and pursue implementation where agreed. *31 March 2005.*
- Agree with SE changes in responsibility for collecting dwelling and household information from Assessors and Councils, and for population and household outputs and develop transition plan. *30 June 2004.*
- Develop, using SAS software, efficient and user friendly tools for extracting information from the vital events database and for disseminating statistics on vital events. Initiate a review of the VE processing system. *31 March 2005.*

2011 Conventional Census

Plan and implement a development programme towards a high quality Census in 2011 as the default option for meeting the needs of users for the type of information normally collected in a Census.

- Liaise with ONS on their plans for a census processing contract to ensure that GROS retain an option to be part a contract that ONS may let in late 2004 for the period to 2011. *15 September 2004.*
- Produce a 2006 Census Test Design. *30 April 2004.*
- Define 2006 Census Test strategies for Field Management Information System, Field pay, Field Communications, Field Staff Recruitment and Training. *May-October 2004.*
- Develop high level Processing Strategy and associated lower level documentation (including business and technical requirements for key systems, interface requirements and detailed work package plans) for the 2006 Census Test. *30 November 2004.*
- Review strategy for 2008 Test in Scotland the light of ONS plans for a Census rehearsal in 2009 and latest thinking on extent of census processing co-operation with ONS. *31 March 2005.*

Census Alternatives

Review, pilot and where possible implement the options for meeting user needs for the kind of information normally collected in a Census, from alternative sources such as administrative records or surveys.

- Agree consultation strategy and plan. *31 May 2004.*
- Undertake consultation with public and users on future demographic statistics options. *31 August 2004.*
- Develop a detailed plan of future research needed to take forward the aims of census alternatives and an integrated population statistics system in the longer term so that a specific programme of concrete developments to replace the 2011 Census or 2021 Census can be announced by March 2008. *31 December 2004.*
- Manage GROS work on data matching exercises in compliance with the Data Protection Act and National Statistics protocols and use experience to develop a GROS guidance manual on matching. *31 March 2005.*
- In concert with other Government Departments, improve the scope for increased sharing of data about Scotland's people, in order to assist joined-up delivery of services, combat fraud and improve statistics. *31 March 2005.*

General Register Office for Scotland

6 May 2004