

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Household estimates and projections update

General

1. The Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) is responsible for advising GROS on the productions of household estimates and projections. HARG is meeting on 22 November, and papers and minutes from HARG meetings can be found on the HARG website at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/user-consultation-groups/harg/index.html>.
2. Published household estimates and projections can be found on the GROS website at <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/household-estimates-projections/index.html>.

Household estimates

3. GROS has carried out a review of the household estimates methodology over the past year, considering three alternative approaches: the previous, stock-based approach, a population-based approach which is similar to that used to produce the household projections, and a Council Tax based approach. GROS wrote to each council in Scotland to describe the alternatives, and following meetings of HARG and PAMS, it was agreed that future household estimates should be based on Council Tax figures. The advantage of this approach is that the figures will be far more timely, and information on vacant dwellings will be updated annually, rather than relying on information from the Census, for private sector housing. In addition, these statistics will tie in with the small area household estimates being developed (see below).
4. Household estimates for 2004 were published on 30 August: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/library/household-estimates-projections/household-estimates-for-scotland-2004/index.html>. The publication included revised household estimates from 1991 to 2004, and figures on the total number of occupied and vacant dwellings in each council area. It also included summary figures for Scotland on trends in household composition, from the Scottish Household Survey. The publication received a lot of positive media coverage.
5. GROS will publish household estimates for 2005 on 13 December. The PAMS member in each council will be sent their draft figures in advance of this, for quality assurance purposes. **Any comments on the publication, and potential ways to improve it, would be very welcome.**

Small area household estimates

6. There is strong demand among local authorities for household estimates for areas other than local authority areas, so GROS has investigated the potential to develop a new data collection, based on Council Tax systems, which would allow the production of household estimates (or, more accurately, estimates of the number of occupied and vacant dwellings) for each data zone in Scotland.

7. GROS has written to each council's finance department to discuss the feasibility of this, and met with representatives from the councils and software suppliers. A detailed data specification has now been produced, which is available from the HARG website (see link above – paper HARG 2005(12)), and sent to the lead council representative for each software supplier, to take forward.

8. The information we would request, for each data zone, is:

- Total number of dwellings on the valuation list (excluding free-standing private lock-ups and garages)
- Number of exempt dwellings:
 - Number of unoccupied exempt dwellings
 - Number of occupied exempt dwellings (e.g., all-student households)
- Number of dwellings subject to a 25% discount. This may include, for example, dwellings with a single adult, or dwellings containing two adults, one of whom is disregarded for Council Tax purposes.
- Number of dwellings subject to the following discounts of between 10 and 50%:
 - Number of dwellings subject to a discount due to being second homes.
 - Number of dwellings subject to a discount due to being long term empty properties.
 - Number of dwellings subject to a discount due to being dwellings occupied entirely by adults who are 'disregarded' for Council Tax purposes.
(If this level of detail is not available, councils will enter the combined total)
- Number of other dwellings (subject to no discounts or exemptions)

9. The first full data collection is planned for September 2006. When the data becomes available, PAMS members will be sent draft data for quality assurance purposes.

10. GROS would welcome any comments on whether the proposed data collection will provide the information required for small area household estimates, and any suggestions for additional work that will be required.

Household projections

11. 2004-based household projections are due to be published in Spring 2006. GROS held a one-day seminar in Edinburgh on November 9, with people from across the UK describing the approaches used to produce population and household projections. The presentations will be made available on the GROS website. This seminar was aimed at informing reviews of the population and household projections produced by GROS.

12. A number of possible changes will be considered to the household projections methodology. These include increasing the length of time covered by the projections, producing projections for different geographic areas, updating the information on communal establishment residents, and incorporating the results of household surveys such as the Scottish Household survey, to measure changes in household structure at the national level, since the last Census. Most of these changes will be incorporated into the 2006-based projections, rather than then 2004-based projections, as they are quite substantial, and it will take time to ensure they are done well, and tested and consulted on thoroughly. Meanwhile, we want to avoid having to delay the publication of the 2004-based household projections.

Communal Establishments

13. The GROS household estimates and demography branches are working together to develop a more up-to-date source of information on communal establishments, for use in population statistics, household projections and census planning. This will be based on a number of data collections of different types of communal establishment, carried out by the Scottish Executive and NHS Scotland. The main gap identified has been for students, so we are considering setting up a new data collection from HE/FE institutions, collecting information on students' term-time addresses/postcodes. We are aiming to pilot this over the next few months.

Esther Roughsedge
GROS: Household estimates branch
8 November 2005