

**POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE
(SCOTLAND)**

THE GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE FOR SCOTLAND (GROS) STATISTICS PLAN FOR 2006-07

The draft GROS Statistics Plan for 2006-07 is attached. Comments from PAMS are invited.

Implicit in the plan is a reorganisation of Statistics Division, whereby the Census and other demographic work will be separated into 2 new divisions, Census and Demography. I will head Census Division and a new C2 Statistician post is being created as Head of Demography to oversee the non-Census work. That post should be filled this summer.

Peter Scrimgeour

May 2006

Scottish Statistics Plan 2006/07 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 Finance and Public Service Reform.

Key Outputs

2. GROS produces the following statistical series:-

- Census, every 10 years
- Population estimates between the Censuses, annually
- Population projections, every 2 years
- Household estimates, annually
- Household projections, every 2 years
- Dwelling estimates, annually
- 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).

4. 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 (SCROL - 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.

5. A special analysis service is offered for Census and other demographic information. Recent examples include:

- A report on the use of Gaelic in Scotland, based on the 1991 and 2001 Censuses.
- A SCROL DVD incorporating data held on the entire SCROL CD series 1 to 7.
- The availability, on the GROS website, of the vast majority of published tables for the new 2005 Westminster Parliamentary Constituency areas.

Resources

6. The Census and Demography Divisions are two of the four Divisions within the General Register Office for Scotland, with 103 staff including 12 professional statisticians. The Divisions' budget for 2006/07 totals around [to be finalised].

7. Staff development is a high priority. In the past year, areas that have been strengthened have included data management and analysis skills (in particular, using SAS), leadership and project management.

Progress in 2005/06

8. Details of achievement against last year's plan are given in the Appendix.

9. The year was marked by several important developments in our statistical outputs, in response to a growing interest in demographic statistics. In particular, we have published estimates of the number of households, are continuing to develop small area estimates (of population and households) and are now publishing life expectancy data for Scotland and areas within Scotland (previously such data were only published by ONS). We also now make a wider range of background data available on our website, including weekly births and deaths data.

10. We made great progress during the year in the use of SAS as an analytical tool, bringing greater analytical power to our work.

5. Main Targets for 2006/07

11. The following are the main targets for the coming year.

Census

Plan and implement a development programme towards a high quality Census in 2011.

- **Conduct and evaluate the 2006 Scottish Census Test to appraise options for delivery and collection methods, form layout, question design and data processing.**
 - Complete all operational tasks for the 2006 Census Test and de-brief field staff.
 - Evaluate the 2 data collection methods and other fieldwork matters (including the in-house payroll system).
 - Progress the data capture and evaluation tasks of the 2006 Test:
 - Take forward recommendations from 2006 Census Test evaluation into strategies for 2011.
- **Continue planning for a 2011 Census, including working with ONS/NISRA, in a way that will deliver a Census that meets both Scottish needs and key UK needs while providing good value for money.**
 - Develop and consult on further proposals for the questions to be asked and the design of the form.
 - Develop and implement strategies for communication and community involvement, fostering trust and understanding of why the Census is important.
 - Investigate delivery and collection methods (including online completion), web self-help and call centre operations.
 - Ensure that Scottish requirements are taken into account in the procurement of downstream processing of the outputs of the 2009 Rehearsal and 2011 Census and participate fully in the choice of suppliers.
 - Progress preparations for statistical analysis and geography strategy, including work on disclosure control, edit and imputation

- Develop and manage governance of the 2011 Census programme (within GROS and with ONS/NISRA).
- Develop a business case for the 2011 Census, achieving quality and value for money goals.

Demography

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

- Collect and maintain the records (e.g. vital events and the National Health Service Central Register) that are the foundation for the information we provide, in a way that is consistent with best practice in the collection, storage and archiving of information.
 - Ensure that information on all vital events registered in 2006 is received and processed in line with stated performance targets and publication deadlines.
 - Develop, using appropriate software, an efficient and user friendly replacement for the current vital events IT system.
 - Run the NHS Central Register on behalf of NHS Scotland, processing all health service and medical research updates in line with stated performance targets.
 - Develop the NHSCR to provides the data spine for the Citizen's Account index.
 - Maintain geographic information service including the timely production and issue of geography products and metadata.
 - Represent GROS interests on addressing initiatives, including the Definitive National Address Project and Assessors' Portal.
- Publish the Registrar General's Annual Report and other demographic data and analyses about Scotland to meet customer needs and National Statistics Code of Practice standards, and inform and foster debate on demographic issues in SE and more widely.
 - Produce the following regular outputs

● National and sub-national population estimates	April 2006
● Projections of number of households	May 2006
● Settlement population estimates	June 2006
● Marital status estimate	July 2006
● Registrar General's Annual Review	July 2006
● Life expectancy for administrative areas	September 2006
● Estimates of numbers of households	December 2006
 - Review the methodology for sub-national population projections, household projections and international migration estimates and develop small area household estimates, based on information from Council Tax systems.
 - Meet all customer requests for GROS statistical data within stated timescale; provide appropriate advice and analysis to support users, through user groups, publication in journals and presentations.
 - Disseminate agreed statistical outputs via the web and other means; review GROS and SCROL websites to ensure they serve users well.

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.

- Continue to investigate the potential usefulness of a wider range of administrative and survey sources in supporting and enhancing key products.
 - Produce reports on School Age Children (updated with 2005 School Census data), Child Benefit data, 2006 Electoral Register, update on DVLA vehicle registration data.
 - Develop work on further sources.

- Manage GROS work on data matching projects in compliance with current legislation and National Statistics protocols and ensure lessons are learned.
 - Complete the development of the Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS) database in conjunction with SLS team, promote and develop use of the data.
 - Carry out experimental data matching work.

12. Throughout the coming year GROS will continue to work within the Scottish Administration's SCOTSTAT framework for consultation with providers and users of statistics. In particular, the SCOTSTAT Population and Migration Statistics Group and its subgroups will continue to provide a key focus to assist in the development of demographic statistics for Scotland. We also keep in close direct contact with customers, especially from local authorities and academia.

Improvements planned in 2006/07

13. In the coming year, GROS will be pressing ahead with preparations for the next Census, and further improvements in demographic outputs, facilitated by the subdivision of the former single Statistics Division into two new Divisions – Demography Division and Census Division.

14. As throughout the Government Statistical Service, quality improvement is a constant focus in GROS's statistical work. This relates both to outputs and to the procedures used in arriving at those outputs. A number of improvements were mentioned above under Main Targets. Other major improvements envisaged for the year ahead include:

- Providing a suitable secure working environment to allow external bodies to access sensitive data sets confidentially under controlled conditions.
- Comparing the Census Test address list and other address lists, to help inform future decisions about address lists for the 2011 Census.
- Continuing work to involve communities in Census development through enumeration methods, question development and community use of Census data.
- Reinforcing GROS's commitment to postcode-based geography products, by completing the conversion of our geographic information systems to Arc software.
- Continuing involvement in wider addressing initiatives, with the provision of improved geographic analysis options to external customers.
- Investigating the scope for replacing conventional Census-taking in future years, giving shorter-term benefits for the production of small area population estimates and other statistics .
- Continuing to support the SE and ESRC funded programme of research into Scottish demography, instigated by GROS, which will report during the year.
- Providing more context and analysis for SE policy interests on demographic matters.
- Promoting the use of outputs from data-matching projects, such as the Scottish Longitudinal Study, to improve the Scottish evidence base on demographic issues.

Achievement of 2005/06 Plan

Here is a summary of the achievement of the Plan for 2005/06.

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. Achieved. Particular attention was paid to briefing customers on the 2004-based population projections published in October (for Scotland) and December (for council and NHS Board areas).
- Review the coverage and presentation of statistics on the GROS website (October 2005). Achieved in part, and changes made to website. Scope for more improvement, which is being pursued.
- Publish small area population estimates at datazone level for 2001-2004 (October 2005). Achieved.
- Provide long-term trend data on the GROS website to supplement the information on 150 years of Scottish demographic statistics to be included in the Registrar General's Annual Report for 2004 (July 2005). Achieved.

Develop a methodology for producing household estimates and projections at local authority level, and small area household estimates, which are consistent, timely and better meet our customers' needs (May 2006). Achieved and ongoing. Estimates of the number of households in each local authority area are now based on information from Council Tax billing systems, following a methodology review agreed with the relevant sub-group of the Population and Migration Statistics Group (latest estimates published in December 2005). A detailed data specification for developing estimates of the number of households at small area level from Council Tax systems was produced and work is being taken forward by software suppliers.

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.

- During 2005/2006 deliver systems and services as follows for the 2006 Census Test: Field Management Information System, Data Processing Services, Geographical Services, Field Communications Infrastructure. Achieved: Census Test date 23 April 2006.
- Continue to work closely with ONS and NISRA to identify the extent to which GROS requirements can be met via jointly procured contracts. Achieved: agreed in November 2005 that key contract for data processing and other services should be UK-wide.

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.

- Undertake investigation of administrative data sources and evaluate their potential to supplement and replace Census in future years. Good progress made, notably in evaluating the read-across between intercensal population estimates and education department sources, Census and CHI and Census and DVLA car registration data. Ensured new regulations allowed access to electoral roll data and began building time series from benefit records to help quality assure current population estimates and develop new methodologies.
- Continue to facilitate data matching projects in compliance with current legislation and NS protocols and ensure lessons are learned for GROS work on developing an integrated system of population statistics. Some progress made, particularly bringing Scottish Longitudinal Survey database close to completion and contributing to the SE/local authority Customer First programme to produce an entitlement card and improve back-office efficiency. Contributed to the creation of new research resource integrating census ethnicity information with administrative data on cardiac disease and the production of a research report on the findings.
- Promote the use of the Scottish Longitudinal Survey database and arrange an introductory seminar for Scottish Executive staff (April 2006). Achieved.

General Register Office for Scotland

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