

Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) Population Estimates

Background

The European Union NUTS Regulation, enacted in June 2003, formalised the statistical geography (Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics) of the European Union (EU). The United Kingdom (UK) NUTS structure was established in 1998 following an extensive consultation exercise.

Some changes were made to the structure following a review in 2006. A further review took place in 2010 and the amendments were implemented on 1 January 2012 (although Scotland was not affected by the latest changes).

The purpose of the NUTS regional structure is to provide a single uniform breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics for the EU.

The NUTS regional structure is important because it is used for various policy purposes, the most important of which is for the allocation of Objective 1 structural funding whereby if any NUTS2 region has a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per head less than 75% of the EU average it is entitled to financial support.

An [Introduction to the NUTS and the Statistical Regions of Europe](#) is available on the EU website.

Geography

There are three levels of NUTS geography. It is a hierarchical structure - in the UK there are currently 12 NUTS1 areas (Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the 9 Government Office Regions in England), 37 NUTS2 Areas and 133 NUTS3 Areas.

The previously named NUTS4 and NUTS5 areas were renamed LAU1 and LAU2 (Local Administrative Units) and were not included in the Regulation. LAU1 population estimates are included here.

In Scotland there are 4 NUTS2 areas, 23 NUTS3 areas and 41 LAU1 areas. Table 4 provides a list of the names of each area.

Population

Population estimates for NUTS areas are based on data zone population estimates where each data zone has been assigned to a particular NUTS area. Data zones do not fit exactly into NUTS boundaries and are allocated on a 'best fit' basis. Where a data zone crosses a boundary of two (or more) NUTS areas it was assigned to the NUTS area containing the population-weighted centroid of the data zone. More information on data zones is available on the [Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics](#) website.

Because data zones are used as the 'building block', the NUTS population estimates will be consistent with the mid-year population estimates for local authority areas.