

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

**Migration from Northern Ireland (NI) to Scotland**

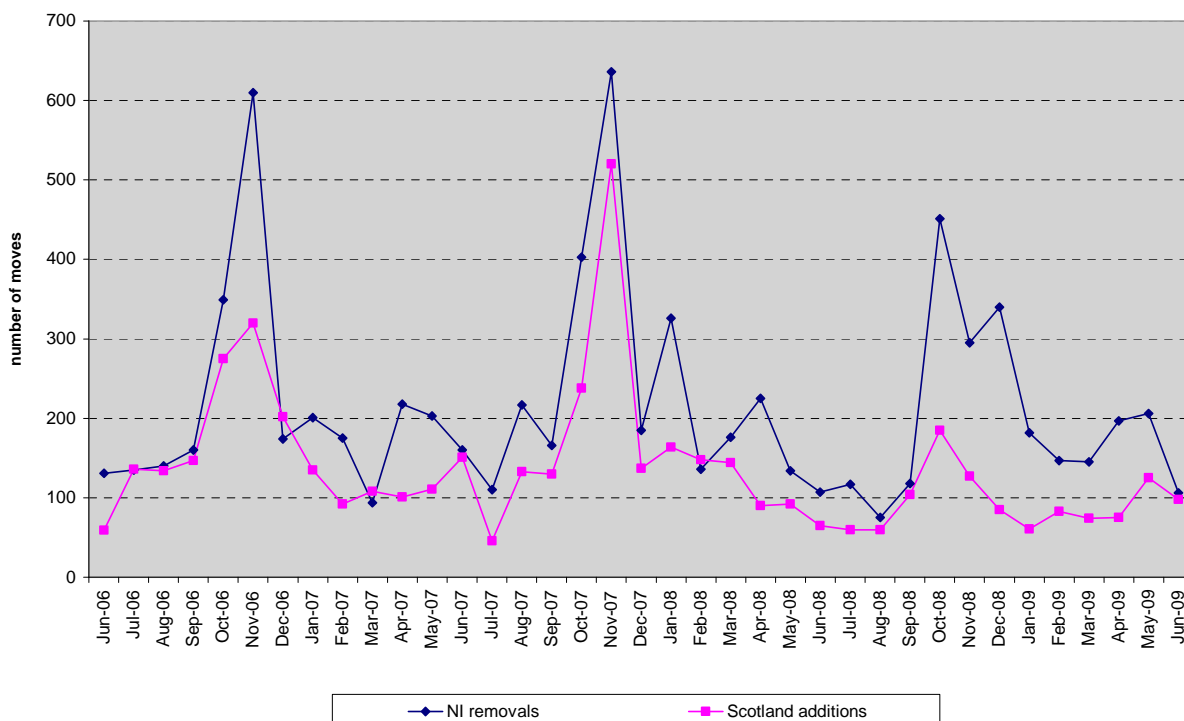
**Introduction**

1. This paper outlines a problem in the estimation of migration flows from Northern I to Scotland and the measures taken to correct the problem (non-retrospective). It also invites comments regarding the question of whether revisions to published Northern Ireland - Scotland flows are necessary.

**Background**

2. At a meeting of the UK Internal Migration working group it was highlighted that Northern Ireland records of removals to Scotland did not match the corresponding records of arrivals into Scotland from Northern Ireland (see figure 1). Having invested some time looking into this issue, the Population and Migration Statistics branch together with National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) Dumfries and NISCA (Northern Ireland Central Services Agency) have discovered a likely explanation for this discrepancy.

**Figure 1 - Monthly comparison of Northern Ireland record of removals to Scotland vs. GROS record of additions to Scotland from Northern Ireland**



3. The discrepancy is thought to stem from the way in which the migration data file (PNPm) supplied by NHSCR, and used by the Population and Migration statistics branch in the estimation of migration flows, records moves from Northern Ireland to

Scotland. When a person returns to Scotland, having lived in Northern Ireland for a period of time, and re-registers with a Scottish GP the action taken to process that move on the NHSCR database results in a record being written to the PNPm file. However, when a persons moves to Scotland for the first time, having lived in Northern Ireland previously, and registers with a Scottish GP the action taken to process that move on the NHSCR database does not result in a record being written to the PNPm file. The outcome of this is that for some time previous to August 2009 GROS had no record of (either all or the majority of) first time Northern Ireland to Scotland moves and so these moves were not included in GROS migration estimates.

4. It is unknown how long this has been occurring. In July 2009 NHSCR staff introduced a work-around so that as of August 2009 the migration data being received by GROS no longer excludes first time Northern Ireland to Scotland moves.

### **Monitoring the data**

5. The plan for the time being is to continue to monitor the Northern Ireland removal data against the GROS counts of people moving into Scotland from Northern Ireland. The two sources are expected to begin to become more consistent as the fix put in place by NHSCR is realised through the PNPm data.

### **Revisions**

6. Consideration must be given to whether the published Northern Ireland to Scotland cross border flows should be revised. In light of the size of the difference, GROS recommend not making revisions.

7. The tables below give an indication of the likely impact the error has had on Scottish migration and population estimates. The first table compares removals from the Northern Ireland system with arrivals according to GROS migration data. The large differences begin in the year to mid-1999 but if revisions were to be made it is likely they would begin in the year to mid-2002, the first year after the 2001 census. In this case the cumulative effect by mid-2008 would be to increase the population by 5,660. The second table uses the existing NHS board distribution (i.e. that for patients returning to Scotland) and applies this to the missing patients to give an indication of how NHS Board area figures may be affected. It is possible that NIHSS could provide this information (along with age/sex distribution) directly and this will be investigated.

## NIHSS removals and NHSCR additions (Northern Ireland to Scotland)

	NIHSS	MYE	Difference (NI - MYE)	Cumulative difference from 2001
1996	2,550	2,490	60	-
1997	2,827	2,681	146	-
1998	2,852	2,799	53	-
1999	3,265	2,311	954	-
2000	2,976	2,324	652	-
2001	2,485	1,826	659	-
2002	3,119	2,004	1,115	1,115
2003	2,905	1,734	1,171	2,286
2004	2,381	1,789	592	2,878
2005	2,551	1,983	568	3,446
2006	2,535	1,919	616	4,062
2007	2,604	1,804	800	4,862
2008	2,620	1,822	798	5,660

**Indicative cumulative effect of error, 2002-2008**

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>2,286</b>	<b>2,878</b>	<b>3,446</b>	<b>4,062</b>	<b>4,862</b>	<b>5,660</b>
Argyll and Clyde	56	138	178	205	228	266	300
Ayrshire and Arran	62	150	183	215	243	314	363
Borders	21	47	53	61	68	84	101
Dumfries and Galloway	48	119	150	163	181	209	241
Fife	94	163	192	221	245	280	316
Forth Valley	50	85	112	128	149	182	205
Glasgow	274	637	782	917	1,076	1,229	1,382
Grampian	87	160	199	223	273	322	381
Highland	27	59	81	106	122	151	242
Lanarkshire	57	143	173	200	221	254	278
Lothian	289	452	569	721	939	1,199	1,419
Orkney	3	4	4	5	5	5	6
Shetland	6	7	8	11	11	11	12
Tayside	42	119	187	261	289	341	395
Western Isles	1	4	7	9	10	11	13

General Register Office for Scotland  
December 2009