Scottish Postcode Directory 2022/1

February 2022

Introduction

The Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) bulletin contains specific information about each release of the Postcode Index and accompanying spatial data.

The Postcode Index links live and deleted postcodes to administrative, health, statistical and other areas. It also contains the Gridlink® one metre grid reference or National Records of Scotland (NRS) assigned grid references. The SPD is produced by NRS Geography, who provides geographic support to the Scottish Government (SG) and its associated agencies, as well as other organisations.

The Postcode Index uses the Government Statistical Service (GSS) standard 9-character codes for statistical geographies. The SG maintains the 'Standard Geographic Codes Register – Scotland' and is responsible for assigning new geographies with a 9-character code for Scotland. The register is available on the 'Small Area Statistics – Reference Material' section of the Scottish Government website. Users are encouraged to adopt these standard names and codes, as they are the recognised standard to be used for National Statistics publications. More information on National Statistics can be found on the UK Statistics Authority website.

Latest Statistics

The data is based on the January 2022 release of Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) and contains:

	All postcodes	Live postcodes	Deleted postcodes
All postcodes	242,557	159,816	82,741
Small User	192,894	154,200	38,694
Large User	49,663	5,616	44,047
Small User Linked[1]	*19,249*	*3,789*	*15,460*
PO Boxes	*30,414*	*1,827*	*28,587*
The number of live, digitised small user postcodes[2] is 152,996.			

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[1] Small User Linked: The Small User postcode that contains the grid reference of the Large User postcode.
[2] Live digitised small user postcodes: There are 1,204 live, undigitised small user postcodes. These postcodes were planned for 'administrative' purposes; and cannot be digitised as they have no distinctive geographical position.

1.   Updates since 2021/2

1.1   COVID-19
On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister advised that people should work from home where possible to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. NRS took the decision to close the buildings following this announcement and we have been working remotely since.

Due to this situation it has added additional time on our operations and how we send data out to customers.

As ever, we are trying our best to keep things moving in a timely manner and we thank you for your patience during this time.

1.2   Geographies
The following geographies have changed on the Postcode Index:
- Islands2022Code
- ITL2021Level2Code
- ITL2021Level3Code

Islands 2022 – this update reflects a change of inhabited status for Pabay.

International Territorial Levels 2021 – following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, a new UK-managed international statistical geography - International Territorial Levels (ITLs) was introduced on 1 January 2021, replacing the former NUTS classification. To ensure continued alignment, the ITLs have been established to mirror the NUTS system and will be reviewed every three years.

1.3   Boundaries
Our continuous postcode improvement work using the latest Scottish Address Directory data is ongoing.

2.   Known Errors

Corrections and identified omissions to the data content of the SPD Index and/or Spatial data are included on the subsequent SPD release.

2.1   There were no errors identified in the SPD 2021/2 release.

3. Changing Geographies

3.1 2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements
Following parliamentary approval of Boundaries Scotland proposals, the electoral ward boundaries in Na h-Eileanan Siar, North Ayrshire, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands came into effect on 28 October 2021. This is in time for the next local government elections, expected in May 2022.

Scottish Statutory Instruments related to the review:
Na h-Eileanan Siar SSI 2021/369
North Ayrshire SSI 2021/370
Orkney Islands SSI 2021/371
Shetland Islands SSI 2021/372

Further information on the review is available on the Boundaries Scotland 2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements page.

SPD Postcode Index
Following the review, the geographies in the 2022/2 SPD Postcode Index will be updated as shown below.

2022/1 fieldname	2022/2 fieldname
ElectoralWard2019Code	ElectoralWard2021Code

SPD Postcode Boundaries
The attributes found on the postcode boundaries for Electoral Ward will also be updated to reflect the new version.

3.2 Settlement and Locality 2020
NRS Population and Migration Statistics branch are publishing the 'Mid-Year Population Estimates for settlements and localities – mid-2020' on 31 March 2022. The new versions of the geographies will be updated in the 2022/2 SPD Postcode Index as follows.

2022/1 fieldname	2022/2 fieldname
Settlement2016Code	Settlement2020Code
Locality2016Code	Locality2020Code

3.3 Urban Rural Classification 2020
We anticipate that there will be a Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020 publication, and will aim to include this in the 2022/2 SPD Postcode Index. On this basis the new versions of the geographies will be updated as follows.

2022/1 fieldname	2022/2 fieldname
UrbanRural6Fold2016Code	UrbanRural6Fold2020Code
UrbanRural8Fold2016Code	UrbanRural8Fold2020Code

3.4 Review of UK Parliament constituencies
The Boundary Commission for Scotland began the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies in January 2021.

The 6-week secondary public consultation on the initial proposals for the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies started on 10 February 2022.

Further information on the review is available on the Boundary Commission for Scotland's 2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies page.

3.5   Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries
Boundaries Scotland are expecting to start their Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries in Autumn 2022.

Further information is available on the Boundaries Scotland Reviews in Progress page.

4. Scotland's Census

4.1 Scotland's Census 2022
The official count of everyone in Scotland starts on 28 February 2022.

NRS will write to every household in Scotland with instructions for taking part. Census day will be Sunday, 20 March but you will be able to complete your questionnaire as soon as you receive your letter.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement exercise on draft Census Geographic Boundaries
As part of work leading up to the 2022 Census, colleagues in the Scottish Government and National Records of Scotland produced draft versions of new Data Zone (DZ) and Output Area (OA) boundaries. These were created late-2019 to allow processes to be tested for the creation of OAs and DZs, to identify potential issues with OA design, and to allow SG to access impact on DZs.

We are very grateful for users taking the time to provide comments and feedback on this exercise, and have now begun the process to review all the feedback received. Unfortunately this work had been delayed until recently, as our GIS colleagues in Scottish Government had been required to prioritise providing analytical support for COVID-19 resilience work. We will be in touch with individual users in due course to discuss their specific requests, and thank you for your ongoing patience.

Please note that final OA and DZ boundaries will be based on results from the 2022 Census, rather than the Scottish Address Directory and population estimates used for these draft boundaries. It is intended that there will be a public consultation on the final post-census DZ and IZ boundaries.

4.3 Census 2021
The Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency held their Censuses on Sunday 21 March 2021.

You can find out more about their Censuses via the following Census websites:
- Office for National Statistics
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

5.   Postcode FAQs

5.1   Postcode recoding
Wherever possible Royal Mail try not to change addresses and postcodes. Changes are however sometimes necessary to ensure that mail is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible. It is also possible for a council to prompt change by re-numbering buildings or re-naming roads.

Further information on the process for postcode re-coding is available in the [PAF Code of Practice](#) on the Royal Mail website.

Updates on [recodes](#) are available on the Powered by PAF website.

5.2   Postcode re-use
Royal Mail deletes postcodes for various reasons but most commonly, it is due to the demolition/re-development of buildings or to postcode re-use. Deleted postcodes are occasionally re-used by Royal Mail but not usually before an elapsed period of two or three years. When a postcode is re-introduced, it will not necessarily contain the same addresses or cover the same area as the original postcode.

5.3   Postcode boundaries do not align to administrative and electoral area boundaries
Royal Mail defines postcode areas for sorting mail efficiently; the postcodes have no relationship with administrative or electoral boundaries. Royal Mail requires a stable geography in order to deliver its services, which these areas cannot provide.

NRS split postcodes for statistical reasons; they are not a feature of Royal Mail. Split postcodes are those with an 'A', 'B' or 'C' suffix and occur when:
- a postcode straddles two or more Council area boundaries. The most populous part of the postcode is identified by suffix A and the smaller parts by suffixes B, C, etc.;
- a postcode straddles the Scottish/English border and the Scottish postcode is allocated a suffix 'A';
- an island and the mainland share a postcode, or a postcode contains property on more than one island.

5.4   PO Box postcodes
PO Box addresses do not have a specific geographic location; instead, the mail is sent to a local delivery office, from where it can be forwarded to the real address or collected by the addressee.

Grid references for PO Box postcodes are assigned to the local Royal Mail sorting/delivery office and are deemed low quality.

6.   Differences in Scottish data between the Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) Postcode Index and the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory (ONSPD)

6.1   Postcode History
The SPD Postcode Index provides full postcode history; the ONSPD provides the most current version of the postcode only (as shown below).

SPD Postcode Index:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	01-Aug-73	01-May-95
G31 4QD	20-Apr-12	06-Jul-12
G31 4QD	17-Apr-13	07-Aug-13
G31 4QD	16-Jan-14	

ONSPD:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	201310	

6.2   Postcode Updates
Due to differing update regimes exiting between ONS and NRS, the dates for introduction and deletion can differ. The SPD Postcode Index contains quarterly PAF updates, whereas the ONSPD contains monthly PAF updates.

6.3   Split postcodes
Unlike the SPD Postcode Index the ONSPD does not recognise split postcodes. Instead the ONSPD holds the postcode as a whole record.

7.   Supply arrangements

7.1   Data Formats
The 'Cut Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory is available for free download from the Scottish Postcode Directory page of the National Records of Scotland website.

- o   Boundary files   Shape format
  Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PGSA) members only

- o   Index files   CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access 2000 compatible format

- o   Lookup files   CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access 2000 compatible format

7.2   Full Version
The 'Full Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory can be supplied for a charge (a royalty payment to Royal Mail), please contact the Geography Customer Services team.

8. Licence and Copyright Statements

8.1   Postcode Boundaries and Grid References
This dataset is being made available for your personal, non-commercial use under the terms of the INSPIRE End User Licence because it includes Ordnance Survey (OS) Licensed data.

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8.2   Postcode District and Sector Boundaries and Grid References
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8.3   Scottish Postcode Directory - Postcode Index
The following attribution statement must be acknowledged or displayed on any product using NRS data:

    'Contains NRS data © Crown copyright and database right [year].'

8.4   Further information of licensing can be found in the geography licensing page of the NRS website.

9. Open Data
Geographic data is becoming increasingly available as open data throughout the world. This means that it is free to access, use and share.

9.1   SpatialData.gov.scot
SpatialData.gov.scot Metadata Portal is Scotland's catalogue of spatial data. The spatial data is covered under EU Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE) regulations.

The Scottish Government Geographical Information Science and Analysis team (GI-SAT) manage the portal, which contains INSPIRE data, metadata, and web services from the Scottish Government and other Scottish public sector organisations.

9.2   Data.gov.uk
Data.gov.uk is the UK's data and metadata portal. Unlike SpatialData.gov.scot, it includes non-spatial datasets as well as spatial data.

9.3   Ordnance Survey Open Data
Ordnance Survey publish free open datasets under their OpenData program, which can be downloaded from their website. Ordnance Survey simply ask that you acknowledge the copyright and source of the data by including the following attribution statement: 'Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (year)'.

10.   Enquiries

Please contact our Geography Customer Services team if you need any further information.

E-mail: geographycustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk