

## Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee Scotland

Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)  
15<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

### Present

Ryan Scott (**Chair**)  
Ruby Adam (**Minutes**)  
Aileen Cameron  
Alan Ferrier  
Andrew Ballingall  
Andrew Gasiorowski  
Cara Connachan  
Christopher McCrum  
Colin Fryer  
Clare Leadbetter  
Daniel Burns  
Elizabeth Mann  
Esther Roughsedge  
Fiona Tweedie  
Gregor Docherty  
Heather Smith  
Heidi Goodship  
James Arnott  
James Gosling  
James Reid  
Jane Jarvie  
Jen Pennock  
Joe Adams  
Julie Ramsay  
Kathleen Shirkie  
Katie Roper  
Kath Ray  
Lara Olszenka  
Lesley Mann  
Marie Kaye-Bardgett  
Michael Atkinson  
Mel Greig  
Nick Cassidy  
Piers Elias  
Rhiannon Batstone  
Sandy Taylor  
Sarah Nodwell  
William Howes

### Organisation

NRS  
NRS  
Argyll and Bute Council  
NRS  
Fife Council  
PHS  
Improvement Service  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
Church of Scotland  
Dumfries & Galloway Council  
Highlands & Islands Enterprise  
Scottish Borders Council  
Glasgow Council  
NRS  
Edinburgh University  
Argyll and Bute  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar  
Scottish Government  
Scottish Government  
NRS  
North Lanarkshire Council  
NRS  
Highland Council  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Improvement Service  
NRS  
NRS  
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Scottish Water  
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## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Ryan Scott welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting on 10 May 2022 (PAMS (22) 06) were approved without comment.

Action Points from Previous Meetings:

- **Action Point 2022.1: Esther to highlight issue of definitional discrepancy to the Statistics Geography Cross Office Group** Closed – the issue was raised at the group meeting. A [paper](#) by NRS Geography provides a useful summary of the geographic terms used in Scotland, in particular different definitions of the word ‘localities’.
- **Action Point 2022.2: Joe to circulate slides from presentation to PAMS** Closed – slides circulated.
- **Action Point 2022.3: Esta to provide an update of the impact of the delay of the census on outputs to PAMS** Closed – covered under main agenda item.
- **Action Point 2022.4: Lynsey to circulate slides from presentation to PAMS** Closed – slides circulated.

## 2. Scottish Government - Strategic Insights (PAMS (22) 07)

Kath Ray provided some background on the work of Strategic Insights Unit (SIU), a multi-disciplinary unit in Scottish Government. Its aims are to strengthen Scottish Government’s ability to consider cross-cutting issues in an integrated way in order to deliver better outcomes, and to analyse future risks and opportunities so that stronger and more resilient policies and strategies can be developed.

Kath noted that in February 2022, the SIU had been tasked by the Scottish Government’s Ministerial Population Taskforce to lead on the development of a package of work on how we can best adapt to population change in Scotland. She said that feedback was being sought by engaging with local authorities and others to explore how trends might go over the next 20-25 years, with demography seen as a priority for initial focus. Further background on the background to the work package, and on plans to take it forward were provided in the paper. There were 4 main strands to the work package:

- Fiscal sustainability – managing any shifts in expenditure that might be required
- Public services – opportunities for changes in delivery models
- Labour market – impact of demographic changes on labour market participation
- Local impacts – how are planning and responses to challenges of demographic changes being developed in different parts of the country

Katie Roper provided further detail on progress with the local impacts strand of work. This had featured interviews with local authorities, gathering evidence and feedback on challenges being faced across a number of areas, including housing, urgent care and education. Cross-cutting topics discussed included aspirational demand in relation to housing supply and adapting for an increasing older population and a decreasing child population.

James Arnott noted that in Glasgow a marked increase in the diversity of its population in recent years had mitigated to an extent the impact of wider demographic trends. For example, around a third of births are now to mothers born outside the UK. He noted that this raised potential issues down the line for education and other provision, such as communication challenges in relation to uptake of childcare for 2 year olds.

Mike Atkinson noted that Highland faced a range of challenges, with the population decreasing in the remote rural north west while it was increasing in other parts such as around the Moray Firth.

Heidi Goodship said that Scottish Borders faced similar issues to those noted by Mike for Highland. In addition she noted the area had lost some of its migrant population following Brexit, and that an increase in the average age of the population will present challenges down the road.

Ryan Scott noted that NRS had been working to make its statistical publications more accessible and were open to suggestions on to how to get key messages on demographic trends across.

Katie thanked everyone for their comments, She noted that the kind of issues mentioned were already on the radar, and would be explored further in interviews with local authorities and when connecting with NRS and other organisations such as COSLA and the Improvement Service. She invited anyone with further thoughts, ideas or suggestions just to get in touch with either her or Kath, and said she would be happy to set up further discussions.

### **3. Plans for census and population statistics outputs (PAMS (22) 08)**

Will Howes outlined NRS plans to engage with local authorities on quality assuring census estimates of the population and households ahead of publication. This process would provide an opportunity for local authorities to look at the data for their area and identify any potential inconsistencies between the census estimates and data sources available to them. NRS will consider any evidence provided and decide

whether to take further action. NRS plan to write out to local authority contacts in December to begin this process, with local authority QA panels to be convened around July 2023.

Chris McCrum ran through the provisional planned release schedule for outputs from Scotland's Census 2022. It was planned to release these outputs in a number of phases from the second half of 2023 onwards:

- Phase 1
  - rounded population estimates by local authority and age group
  - unrounded population estimates by single year of age and sex
  - unrounded household counts by household size down to output area.
  - unrounded population estimates by whether living in a household or communal establishment down to local authority
- Phase 2
  - unrounded univariate tables by topic down to output area level
- Phase 3
  - pre-defined multivariate tables on topics by age and sex down to output area (for unchanged/ largely unchanged questions)
  - multivariate tables on topics by age and sex down to output area (for new questions)
  - topic analysis reports
- Phase 4
  - origin-destination statistics and microdata
- Phase 5
  - workplace and daytime population estimations

Chris noted that feedback from the current census outputs consultation will help inform and provide confidence in the proposed release schedule, for example on the order and sequencing of topics to publish and on what to cover in the analytical reports.

Esther Roughsedge said that in the period when census results are being released many demographic statistics will continue to be released on their usual schedule. However, for population estimates and statistics on life expectancy the provisional plan is to delay their publication until the census results can be incorporated. This will help reduce the potential for confusion. Esther also noted that it is currently planned to produce 2021-based national population projections in the second half of 2023 and then 2022-based projections (which will incorporate the results of the 2022 Census) in the second half of 2024. Esther commented that NRS are keen to get feedback from users and stakeholders on the relative need for census outputs against population estimates, on the proposed sequencing of outputs set out in the paper, and also to gain a better understanding of any other implications. Ryan Scott added that NRS was in contact with colleagues in Scottish Government about potential impact on funding allocation work.

Heidi Goodship asked about plans for revising data zone boundaries. Chris McCrum noted that data zones are a Scottish Government (SG) product. His understanding was that a revised set of data zone boundaries will be released which will take into account the results of the 2022 Census. He agreed to clarify plans on this with the relevant group in SG.

**Action: Chris McCrum to provide an update to PAMS on plans for revising data zone boundaries.**

## **4. Demography Updates**

### **4.1 Statistics Engagement and Promotion - PAMS (22) 09**

Joe Adams gave an update to the group on recent developments from the Statistics Engagement and Promotion unit and related activities.

#### **Statistical Promotion and Analysis**

Scotland's Population 2021 was published at the end of August. It had built on the success of the previous release by focussing on a clear and concise story covering all the most important points in our demographic statistics.

Over the last year there had also been a focus on improving the accessibility of NRS statistical publications. This included running plain English workshops with colleagues across demographic statistics, covering 6 publications. This had resulted in an overall reduction of over a third in the wordcount for the publications involved.

Joe noted that the potential to tweak our publication titles to make them easier to use for new users was currently being explored. Most people visiting our website are first time users and our titles are often the first thing people see. Initially teams within NRS had been engaged on this and some usability tests have been facilitated. Once some drafts have been developed the plan is then consult externally.

#### **Statistics Dissemination**

Joe noted that a busy schedule of web publications dealt with over the last six months, including the ongoing weekly release of statistics on deaths involving Covid-19. Numerous customer requests across the whole range of demographic topics covered by NRS had also been dealt with.

#### **Data Access**

Joe noted that NRS continued to provide secure extracts of census data for data linkage research projects, and to provide commissioned census tables, where customers have requested census information not covered by existing published tables.

### **4.2 Population and Migration – PAMS (22) 10**

Esther Roughsedge presented an update to the group on the recent work of Population and Migration statistics.

Esther noted that the population estimates, and small area population estimates, showed an interesting change to previous trends - the number of people living in large urban areas fell in the year to mid-2021. In contrast, the populations of rural areas, small towns, and other urban areas have either increased or fallen more slowly than the previous year.

Esther commented that the latest Centenarians publication showed that there were over 1,000 people aged 100 and over in Scotland in mid-2021, for the first time.

Numbers increased by 16% in the year to mid-2021. This reflects the increase of births which occurred in Scotland after the end of World War I.

The [interactive map](#) for the small area population statistics was updated, including additional contextual information on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and the Urban Rural classification.

### **4.3 Household Statistics – PAMS (22) 11**

Sandy Taylor noted that the paper provided an update to the group on recent work by Household Statistics. He said he would welcome any feedback PAMS members may have on it. In particular he drew attention to the request for any suggestions from PAMS members on specific analyses of interest on 2022 Census data on households and for any comments on the tasks and associated priorities set out in the annex to the paper.

### **4.4 Vital Events – PAMS (22) 12**

Julie Ramsay presented an update to the group on recent work by Vital Events.

Julie noted the routine publication of statistics on deaths involving Covid-19 had continued unchanged since the last PAMS meeting, with a short weekly publication (spreadsheet only) and a monthly report with more detailed analysis. She flagged up that there will be a minor disruption to the publication schedule over Christmas: there will be no publication on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> December, with the next publication due on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January (which will include figures for two weeks).

Julie noted that almost all cause of death publications for 2021 have now been published, as listed in the paper. Statistics on deaths of people experiencing homelessness in 2021 are due to be published on 22 November. These are still classed as an experimental statistics publication. Additional data sources to help improve the quality of these latter statistics are being investigated. While the upcoming publication will be based on the same data sources that have been used previously, findings on the impact of the new data sources will be published in due course. Julie also commented that some work had been done with colleagues in ONS to look at comparability between UK countries in our homeless deaths estimates. ONS will publish a blog on 21 November which will conclude that estimates for different countries are not comparable.

Julie noted that the Life Expectancy 2019-2021 statistics were published in September 2022, although the ONS data which is usually published on the same day is delayed until next year as they are awaiting population estimates based on the census. Healthy Life Expectancy will be published on 14 December. Again, there will be no equivalent ONS publication until next year.

Finally, Julie noted that the figures on baby names for 2022 will be published in March or April 2023. She said it is hoped to include in these additional analysis of birth records going back to 1855.

## **5. Agenda items for future meetings**

Ryan Scott noted that NRS remained keen for members of PAMS to present at future meetings on any work or projects that might be of interest to others. Heidi Goodship noted place-making profiles of local communities might be an area of future interest, and the importance of census data for this. Mike Atkinson also noted that there was interest in information about small areas (i.e. below data zone) level.

**Action: Ryan Scott to consider including an item on this topic at a future PAMS meeting.**

## **6. A.O.B.**

Ryan Scott thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

**Date and time of next meeting:** May 2023 (precise date to be confirmed)

## **Summary of Actions**

- **Action Point 2022.5:** Chris McCrum to provide an update to PAMS on plans for revising data zone boundaries.
- **Action Point 2022.6** Ryan Scott to consider including an item on the use of data in creating 'place making' profiles on the agenda for a future meeting.