

Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee Scotland

Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland) 30 May 2018

Present		Organisation
Mike Atkinson		Highland Council
Cliff Beevers		South West Communities Forum
Nick Cassidy		Improvement Services
Liam Cavin		Scottish Government
Archie Clark		South West Communities Forum
Esta Clark		NRS
Bethanie Fenney	Minutes	NRS
Alan Ferrier	Chair	NRS
Venetia Haynes		NRS
William Langdon		Argyll & Bute Council
Martin Macfie		NRS
Kirsty MacLachlan		NRS
Paul McNamara		Stirling Council
John McCoskry		NRS
Peadar Morgan		Bord na Gàidhlig
Steve Morley		North Ayrshire Council
Jill Morton		NRS
Sarah Nodwell		Scottish Water
Denise Patrick		NRS
Alex Pritchard	Minutes	NRS
Julie Ramsay		NRS
Esther Roughsedge		NRS
Steve Smallwood (via phone link)		ONS
Hannah Smith		NRS
Heather Smith		Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Sandy Taylor		NRS
Sara Townsend-Cartwright		Scottish Water
Fiona Tweedie		Church of Scotland

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. Alan Ferrier thanked Kirsty MacLachlan for chairing the PAMS meetings for the last 12 years. Alan will now be chairing meetings as the Head of Demographic Statistics within the NRS.

1.2 Everybody present introduced themselves around the table

1.3 The minutes of the previous meeting (PAMS (17) 20) were approved without comment

1.4. Action Points from previous meetings (PAMS (18) 01)

Action Point 2018.01: Martin Macfie to send mock ups of the final Council Area profiles to the PAMS members for comment. Closed – these were circulated by Martin

Action Point 2018.02: Tina Fu to cascade the consultation on vital events publication dates to colleagues at ISD and encourage responses. Closed – this has been completed

Action Point 2018.03: Nick Cassidy to invite PAMS members to the profile integration group. Closed – this has been completed

Action Point 2018.04: Nick Cassidy to call for volunteers from PAMS members to attend the IS profile integration group as local expert users. Closed – Nick invited members of the group from the NRS to participate, and Esther and other NRS colleagues have attended several meetings. Nick also issued a wider invite for participation or at least to be kept up to date with developments ahead of the next PAMS meeting. Nick completed this by organising regular meetings over the last few months.

Action Point 2018.05: Kirsty MacLachlan to find out about the timescale for releasing more data of Statistics.Gov.Scot and circulate this to the PAMS group. Closed – Data providers are now uploading data onto statistics.gov.scot on a more timely basis. There are still issues with adding education data because of the way education data is collected and analysed e.g. at school level. Liam Cavin to discuss some of these issues in a presentation later in this meeting.

Action Point 2018.06: Denise Patrick called on PAMS members to think of colleagues who would like to be consulted about settlement boundaries and to feedback to her. Closed – A consultation on this took place in December 2017

Action Point 2018.07a: Denise Patrick to share a summary of the impact of a change in the methodology of armed forces population estimates. Closed – paper shared by Denise

Action Point 2018.07b: Esta Clark to ask Tricia Cooper for more information about the NUTS2 boundary change. Closed – Paper and action log shared by Tricia

Action Points 2018.08: Denise Patrick to share a link to the Scottish Government response to the MAC call for evidence. Closed – links shared by Denise

Action point 2018.9: Esther Roughsedge/Sandy Taylor to do an analysis on rate of household formation and put recommendations for potential household projection variants to HARG. Closed - An analysis on rate of household formation will be carried out over the next month as part of preparing the 2016-based household projections. The results of this analysis will be reported to the Household Analysis Review Group. Given time constraints, it may be that any potential new

household projection variants will not be available to include in the main household projections publication planned for July, in which case we would plan to issue them as supplementary material later in the year.

Action Point 2018.10: Kirsty MacLachlan to invite Gregor Boyd and Jeremy Darot to the next PAMS meetings to talk about the Statistics.Gov.Scot website and planned development. Closed – Liam Cavin presented at this meeting (30 May 2018)

Action Point 2018.11: Esta Clark and others to consider the timing of the next PAMS meeting and the Census conference and update PAMS members by email. Closed – Decisions on timing of next conference will be made in late 2018. Kirsty MacLachlan called for feedback on the feasibility and timing for a joint PAMS conference.

2. Draft of NRS Statistics Plan and Vision for 2018-2020 (PAMS (18) 02)

Alan Ferrier introduced the initial draft of the “Vision for Demographic Statistics” a business strategy for the Statistics directorate within the NRS which outlines the values and objectives of the organisation. A particular focus will be on outlining the purpose, goals and priorities for Demographic Statistics over the 2018-2020 period. The paper will also discuss the core values of NRS teams and how the organisation will continue to develop the strengths and skills of staff to ensure that the needs of users and stakeholders are met.

The NRS 2018-2020 Statistics Plan flows from the “Vision for Demographic Statistics” and the NRS intends to report progress against the objectives these plans contain on an annual basis. NRS is also designing the Statistics Plan in such a way that the individual objectives of each team align with higher level objectives at directorate level which in turn support the overarching commitments outlined in the NRS Business Plan.

NRS hopes to finalise the Vision and Statistics Plan over the summer so that this can be shared in advance of the next PAMS meeting to be included for discussion.

2.1 William Langdon commented that the draft paper effectively captured the key values and objectives of the NRS Demographic Statistics and indicated that it was useful to see the future plans for the organisation as a whole.

3. Scotland's Census

3.1. Scotland's Census 2021 Update (PAMS (18) 03)

Esta Clark gave an update on the Scotland's Census 2021 programme. Work is continuing at pace, and the size of the programme has increased now to include around 100 people. Question development has continued on new and amended questions and a wide range of stakeholder engagement and question testing has been undertaken all of which will inform the eventual Census question recommendations to be made to the Scottish Parliament. Jill Morton spoke in more detail on question development and testing later in the meeting.

In the last few months there has also been extensive work on understanding what data users need from the Census and how they will want to access data in 2021. As such the findings from several user engagement events fed into the “Scotland’s Census 2021 Output Strategy”, published in January 2018. Recent stakeholder events have also been used to gain feedback on this strategy and a detailed write up is published on the Census website. Venetia Haynes spoke in more detail on the feedback received from these stakeholder events later in the meeting.

Work is also on-going to ensure effective delivery of the Census in partnership with suppliers on a range of key products and services. Notably, two contracts were awarded to CACI in February 2018 to deliver the online census tool and to provide the overall operational system for managing the Census. Work continues to engage with potential suppliers for systems and services which will be crucial to Census delivery. This work will continue throughout 2018 and into 2019 when the majority of contracts are likely to be awarded.

Finally Esta updated on the continued investigation into the use of administrative data for the collection, production and quality assurance of population statistics. NRS now has data sharing agreements in place with a number of public sector data suppliers and is considering how these new data sources can improve current and future population estimates. This work has been carried out in close cooperation with colleagues at the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency (NISRA). NRS hopes to publish some initial findings from this research along with a first set of population estimates in Autumn 2018.

Esta highlighted that details on future Census events and workshops are available on the Scotland’s Census website and encouraged feedback or queries on any aspects of the Census work to be sent to scotlandscensus@nrscotland.gov.uk.

3.1.1. Cliff Beevers asked about how the Scotland’s Census Programme would work in conjunction with the separate Censuses being carried out by the ONS in England & Wales and by NISRA in Northern Ireland. Esta explained that a “Statement of Agreement” is in place which will ensure that key aspects of the methodology and Census outputs are harmonised across the three offices where possible.

3.2 Question Development Update (Presentation 1)

Jill Morton gave a presentation updating on the continuing question development and question testing work for the 2021 Census. Over the last 18 months, the team has been engaging with stakeholders in order to understand the needs and priorities of data users, to discuss what the Census can reasonably produce and engage with different interest groups, particularly on sensitive question topics such as ethnicity and religion.

More recently the team has been testing questions for their suitability using three key testing methods, cognitive testing, quantitative testing and public acceptability testing. Cognitive testing was used to understand whether respondents could comprehend key terms within questions, whether the content of questions was acceptable and whether response options were suitable. This work was completed in

2017 but further work is planned as questions develop. Quantitative testing used a survey of around 3,300 households in Scotland to gather data on new and revised potential Census questions. This helped gain additional feedback on acceptability and respondent understanding of questions as well as providing some useful information on potential data quality issues. Finally Public Acceptability testing was used to test acceptability of sensitive questions and how this might influence response rates. The team has received value feedback and data from these testing methods all of which will inform future question development decisions and feed into the eventual Census question recommendations to be made to the Scottish Parliament.

There is however further work to be done with more work planned to test questions as they continue to develop. The team is also planning to release topic reports in Autumn outlining the key findings of the question development and testing work carried out to date. Finally the team is also planning several “road shows” in the Autumn to gain further feedback on the Census question set.

3.2.1 Cliff Beevers asked if the team returned to the same user groups when testing for questions needed to be repeated or whether different users were tested each time. Jill replied that this largely depended on the question. For example when testing on sensitive questions such as the proposed new question on trans-status, it would be necessary to engage with targeted communities on a regular basis, returning to the same groups each time. For other questions, it may be more useful to analyse how well the question is understood by the wider population making it less important to return to the same groups for testing.

3.2.2 Archie Clarke asked if any consideration had been given to a question on where a respondents nearest bank branch was located, in light of recent widespread closures of banks, particularly in rural communities. Jill indicated that the Census may not be the best vehicle for such a question given the 10 year Census time frame and also highlighted that other data sources (such as administrative data) may be more appropriate. Paul McNamara pointed out the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) included a measure of proximity to services and may therefore be useful in this regard. **Action Point: Esta Clark/Denise Patrick to forward details of Elizabeth Fraser, who works on the SIMD, to Archie Clarke.**

Post-meeting update: SIMD access to services domain does not include travel time to a bank (it covers travel to GP surgery, post office, retail centre, primary school, secondary school and petrol station). There is however some data (for earlier years 2007 and 2009) on travel time to a bank or building society on statistics.gov.scot.

3.2.3. Steve Smallwood reported that the ONS had been undertaking similar testing on Census questions. Steve also noted that the ONS has been investigating messaging and guidance for the front end of the Census questionnaire to inform the public of who should be completing the Census, particularly for the online questionnaire. Jill agreed that this work would be crucial to ensure that population counts were being accurately gathered from

the Census and that continued cooperation across UK Census offices would be important in achieving this.

3.3 2021 Census Outputs Strategy (Presentation 2)

Venetia Haynes gave a presentation on the “Scotland’s Census 2021 Outputs Strategy Paper”, published in January, and the feedback received on it. The strategy briefly outlined key aspects of Census outputs, notably data confidentiality, harmonisation with other UK census offices, ensuring that Census outputs meet user needs and the Census outputs release schedule. The strategy also detailed plans for dissemination tools that will be used in 2021, in particular the flexible table builder, new for 2021, that will allow users to create their own tables from Census data. This flexible tool will significantly reduce the need for standard Census tables meaning fewer are planned to be released from the 2021 Census. Finally the paper also outlined plans to include more detailed variable breakdowns for questions in the Census which include write in options.

NRS hosted several events and provided an online questionnaire to gain feedback on the content of the outputs strategy. At the events - held in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee – a total of 43 stakeholders from a range of backgrounds provided feedback that was largely positive. In particular stakeholders were enthusiastic about the flexible table builder tool and the possibility of more detailed variable breakdowns and most users were happy with the proposed release schedule. Some concerns were expressed, for example over the reduction in the number of standard Census tables. Questionnaire responses were similarly enthusiastic on the broad content of the Outputs Strategy, the flexible table builder and more detailed variable breakdowns in particular, whilst expressing some concern on the reduction in the number of standard tables.

The team will now consider all feedback received to continue developing the Outputs Strategy. Priorities for continued development include: engaging with specific stakeholder groups about additional detail for write-in questions (for example religious and ethnic minority groups), liaising with key stakeholders to test outputs systems and drawing up an initial list of standard Census tables which should continue to be produced in 2021 based on stakeholder feedback.

Venetia indicated that a more detailed breakdown of the feedback received at these events is available on the [Scotland’s Census website](#).

3.3.1 Alan Ferrier asked if there were any themes emerging from the different types of users and stakeholders in relation to their specific requirements. Venetia responded that stakeholders who regularly used Census data or other data sources seemed overwhelmingly happy with aspects like the flexible table builder whereas some with perhaps less first-hand experience of using Census data had some concerns over using the technology. Venetia highlighted however that the feedback had been broadly positive across all groups.

4 Statistics Dissemination

4.1 Publication Improvements (PAMS (18) 04)

Martin Macfie spoke about plans to modernise NRS Statistics Publications and make it easier for users to extract key points without compromising the depth of the content that they contain. As such publications will now include a “Summary” section which will be located at the start of the document and be between 2 and 3 pages long. The “Summary” section will communicate the main messages of the publication so that users can extract these quickly and use them in, for example, tweets or other briefing documents. These summary sections will also be available as standalone documents.

Martin also spoke about improvements to the style for ‘Scotland’s Population’, the Registrar General’s Annual Review (RGAR), NRS’ flagship annual statistical publication, to make it less text heavy. As such, work is being undertaken towards making the document more readable and interesting for non-specialists. For example Hannah Smith has been working on information boxes to break up text, containing key concepts and figures on demographic statistics. Finally it is being designed to be more similar in style to the “Scotland’s Population Infographic Report”, which is published alongside it each year, so that the reports complement each other visually.

Examples of all these improvements are contained within the annex of this paper including examples of on-going work to rebrand the front page of statistics publications. Martin noted that work is continuing on how publications can be improved and welcomed feedback from PAMS users.

4.1.1 Cliff Beevers asked about whether accessibility concerns had been considered for these publication improvements, in particular where graphics were involved. Martin replied that accessibility concerns had been considered and would continue to inform publication improvement decisions.

4.1.2 Paul McNamara was enthusiastic about the use of summary sections and infographics to enable users to draw out key messages quickly.

4.2 Council Area Profiles Update (PAMS (18) 05)

Hannah Smith gave an update on the relaunch of the Council Area Profiles, which are published on the NRS website. These profiles provide key demographic trends in Scotland’s 32 council areas, receiving thousands of page views every year. The previous versions of the profiles were produced in Excel and PDF formats which made them cumbersome and difficult to update quickly. Hence these profiles are now produced as automated reports in HTML format. As such the profiles can now be updated within half an hour with the data fed in directly from an excel dataset, reducing the risk of errors. There have also been improvements made to data visualisation and search tools and profiles have been expanded to include a more comprehensive range of statistics than previously, such as additional information on birth rates and migration statistics.

PAMS users have already provided feedback on the new Council Area Profiles and as profiles were updated on 19 April, a number of improvements suggested by PAMS users were incorporated. These include the addition of 20 year comparisons between 1997 and 2017 for Council Area population pyramids, links to source tables and charts and information on last and next update for each chapter of the Council Area Profiles.

Work continues to draw on feedback to iteratively improve the Council Area Profiles, in particular looking at the incorporation of more demographic information into profiles and the development of an R Shiny interactive web application. Consideration is also being given to the production of Council Area Profiles for combinations of council areas of interest, for example a profile for all Council Areas in Ayrshire.

Examples of the re-launched Council Area Profiles are given in the annex to this paper. Hannah noted that the NRS is keen to gain feedback from PAMS users on how best to disseminate the Council Area Profiles tool and is keen for PAMS users to share the tool with others. This process will help to tailor the profiles going forward to make them as useful as possible.

4.2.1 Mike Atkinson indicated that access to key demographic information via the Census Area Profiles was very useful, particularly given the limited time and resources of local authorities.

4.2.2 Kirsty MacLachlan asked PAMS members to feedback on any other profile tools that they used, and whether there were any specific aspects of other profile tools that might be useful to include in future iterations of the Council Area profiles.

4.2.3 Steve Morley and Paul McNamara both indicated that they would be likely to use the Council Area Profiles in future.

4.2.4 Steve Smallwood asked whether the R-Shiny interactive interface would be hosted on the NRS website or hosted externally. John McCoskry replied that this was hosted externally. **Action point: Hannah Smith to pass on details of an NRS colleague to consult with Steve Smallwood on technical aspects of the R-Shiny interface.**

4.2.5 Liam Cavin asked whether any consideration had been given to linking the Council Area Profiles to Statistics.gov.scot (the open data source for Scotland's official statistics) via an Application Programming Interface (API). This would potentially allow updates on Statistics.gov.scot to feed directly into the Council Area Profiles automatically. Hannah Smith replied that this would be useful to investigate. **Action point: Liam Cavin to contact Hannah Smith to discuss API use.**

4.3 NRS Statistics Website – Navigation Improvements (PAMS (18) 06)

Martin Macfie introduced some of the changes that are being made to improve navigation within the statistics section of the NRS website. These changes were chiefly concerned with making it easier for users to find the most commonly used statistics on the site, as identified using Google Analytics. This work followed feedback gathered from PAMS users, colleagues within NRS Demographic Statistics and comments from NRS Statistics Customer Services which suggested that users often had difficulty finding the information they needed.

John McCoskry then gave a demonstration of some of the changes to the NRS website, including a new section called “Scotland’s Facts” which gave links to eight of the most popular statistics and a “Statistics A-Z” page which lists all statistics in alphabetical order by topic. Other changes include a new “Jump” menu which allows users to quickly move between pages and publications on the site and other minor improvements to menu wording to make website navigation easier. John highlighted that these changes were all focused on improving website usability, particularly for non-specialists and those without extensive experience of using demographic statistics.

John mentioned that the website will be monitored using Google Analytics and user feedback to determine how effective these changes have been in improving site navigation. Finally John noted that the website was intended to go live at 9 a.m. on 1 June but that this could be moved if necessary.

4.3.1 Steve Morley, Paul McNamara and Mike Atkinson all expressed concern that the “Future Publications” link was no longer on the front page of the website. John McCoskry indicated that this decision had been made due to this page having relatively few views according to Google Analytics stats. Esther Roughsedge pointed out that the “Future Publications” page could still be searched for, it was just no longer on the front page. Nevertheless Mike Atkinson noted that inexperienced website users may not think to look for the “Future Publications” section and may therefore not be aware that it exists.

4.3.2 Esta Clark also expressed concern at the “Future Publications” link being removed from the front page as there is a requirement for NRS to be transparent about upcoming releases, in line with the Code of Practice.

4.3.3. Esta Clark asked whether accessibility concerns had been taken into account for new features such as the drop down “Jump” menu. John McCoskry replied that more work would need to be done to ensure that these features met accessibility standards but highlighted that users could still search by typing the first letter of their topic of interest, in line with accessibility standards.

Action Point: John McCoskry to investigate accessibility issues around new website features like the drop down “Jump” menu.

Action Point: Esta Clark and Martin Macfie to investigate whether there would be a requirement for the “Future Publications” link to be included on the website front page.

Post-meeting note: The 'Future publications' link has been included on the front page of the website.

4.4. Statistics.gov.scot (Presentation 3)

Liam Cavin gave an overview of the Statistics.gov.scot website, the open data portal for Scottish Official Statistics and updated on plans for future developments. As an open data portal, the website has no restriction on use and includes mostly official statistics gathered from three main data sources: the Information Services Division (ISD), the Scottish Government and NRS. The website allows users to create custom spreadsheets from official statistics datasets and users can browse datasets characteristics like theme, organisation or geographic area. Statistics.gov.scot also has some basic tools for data visualisation such as automatic interactive mapping and automatic charts but at the moment the data portal is intended for users to extract the data and manipulate it themselves.

Work is on-going to ensure that Statistics.gov.scot is meeting user needs. A recent development has been the addition of an interactive Atlas to make areas, such as specific data-zones, easier to search for based on their geographic location. Planned future developments include "Cube Dive" functionality which will add more options for users when applying filters to datasets and extracting data from the website. Work is also being done to improve data visualisation features. A key aspect of this will be to include summary visualisations, for example by topic, to give users an overview of key facts in the topic area before they begin to filter and extract data.

Liam also updated on plans for expanding the data content on Statistics.gov.scot. The responsibility to publish data lies with the data owners themselves making definite timescales for when datasets will appear on Statistics.gov.scot difficult. Nevertheless work is on-going to incorporate datasets on topics such as education, crime, labour market and health in the near future. Liam also noted that work is continuing to try and incorporate more survey data into the portal and reported that chapters from the Scottish Household Survey, Scottish House Condition Survey and Scottish Crime and Justice Survey are being fed into Statistics.gov.scot datasets.

Finally Liam indicated that he had been presenting seminars and training courses on using the Statistics.gov.scot portal and would be happy to be contacted by anyone interested in these in the future.

4.4.1 Paul McNamara asked whether more than one data-zone could be selected at a time using the interactive Atlas and Liam Cavin replied that they could.

4.4.2 Martin Macfie noted that being able to select data-zones from the interactive Atlas is very helpful given the data-zone names (codes) are not always intuitive making them difficult to search for.

4.4.3 William Langdon asked if there were any server capacity constraints on the number of datasets that could be hosted on the data portal. Liam Cavin indicated that there was no server capacity issue but that there were cost considerations, for example highly detailed demographic data for small areas

had significant cost implications for the site and are therefore not available at the moment.

4.4.4 Denise Patrick asked about how quickly datasets on Statistics.gov.scot could be updated if they were being used to feed into things like the NRS Council Area Profiles. Liam suggested that automation on both ends could be investigated to facilitate this kind of functionality.

4.4.5 Alan Ferrier asked whether there had been any instances where users had flagged up lags between the data available on Statistics.gov.scot compared to data owners own website. Liam said he was not aware of any such instances and highlighted that guidance is included within the metadata for datasets to indicate the last and next update. Steve Morley and John McCoskry suggested that it may be worthwhile having this update information presented more clearly as users may not think to check the metadata.

4.4.6. Alan Ferrier asked if any work was being done to determine website or dataset usage. Liam Cavin responded that Google Analytics was being used to identify frequently used datasets and that this information was being fed back to the original data owners to acknowledge their contributions.

5. Branch Updates

5.1 Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS (18) 07)

Denise Patrick updated on the recent work and developments in the population and migration statistics branch, in particular the success and positive feedback from the POPGROUP training last Autumn which sought to help local authorities to produce their own small area population projections rather than relying on centrally produced projections from NRS. Following this the NRS bid for additional funds from the Statistics Development Fund (SDF) to continue this work to build capacity for locally produced small area projections however this bid was unsuccessful. Nevertheless given the positive reaction to the POPGROUP work NRS is now considering new sources of funding for this project both internally and externally and Denise encouraged PAMS members to feedback any potential funding streams that could be explored.

Denise also noted that the ONS are currently gathering feedback on whether there is demand for ethnic population estimates for Scottish local authorities and are particularly keen to hear from Scottish users on this. Links are included in this paper to the details of the ONS methodologies being used for this investigation.

Finally Denise called for feedback on the mid-2016 population estimates for settlements and localities that were published on the 12 March 2018, particularly with regards to how that data is being used to gain an understanding of how well the publication is meeting user needs. Further to this, work is currently on-going in conjunction with the Scottish Government to consider the frequency of this publication in future given that settlement and locality estimates feed in to the production of the Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification. One option being considered is to produce an Urban Rural Classification every 10 years based

on Census data, with an interim review 5 years after the Census, given that limited changes are assumed to occur over the short term. As such feedback from PAMS members is being sought on the preferred frequency of publication for the settlements and localities population estimates in future, taking into account how the data is used and considering the impact on the Urban Rural Classification.

5.1.1 Mike Atkinson indicated that he did not use the settlements and localities population estimates as these often did not represent the areas that were needed. Instead Mike noted that it was often preferable to create estimates from scratch by aggregating lower level geographies in line with the specific requirements of stakeholders. Mike also suggested that a 10 year interval for the urban/rural classification would be too long.

5.1.2 Esta Clark asked if there had been any consultation on changes to the frequency of publication for the Urban Rural Classification and Denise Patrick indicated that at the moment there had not as the proposal on changing publication frequency is still in the very early stages and no decisions have been taken yet.

5.1.3 With regard to the question from ONS on demand for ethnic group population estimates, William Langdon and Paul McNamara both indicated these would be useful for their requirements.

5.1.4 With regards to the POPGROUP training Steve Morley suggested that the responsibility for creating small area population projections now rested with local authorities themselves rather than with the NRS given that the training had already been carried out. Denise Patrick expressed concern about reaching councils who had not been involved in the original POPGROUP training. Mike Atkinson and William Langdon indicated online instructions, such as video tutorials, would be useful to help with small area population projections, particularly for those who were not involved in the POPGROUP training and for infrequent users of POPGROUP.

5.1.5 William Langdon and Paul McNamara also indicated that the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) may be a potentially useful funding stream to allow the POPGROUP work to continue.

5.2 Statistics Engagement and Promotion (PAMS (18) 08)

Kirsty MacLachlan and Esther Roughsedge updated on the work of the Statistics and Engagement Promotion unit, set up in January, whose priorities include engagement with data users and the general public to identify the issues important to them, reviewing the format of NRS publications to ensure key messages are conveyed effectively and sharing best practice on communicating key messages from official statistics.

Kirsty noted that gathering feedback from users has been a key priority over the last few months for example at events such as the “Gathering” in February and “Fire Starter Festival” in March with further events planned for local area statistics. The unit has also been working to enhance the Scotland Census website, in particular by

increasing functionality for users accessing 2011 Census data. One such improvement allows users to select outputs for a geography that is nested within a higher geography, for example to select some or all data zones contained within a specific council area. Work is also continuing to respond to requests for commissioned tables and bespoke outputs from 2011.

Esther Roughsedge updated on continuing work with input from users investigating how best to convey key messages from statistics publications, for example using infographic summaries and the continued development of Council Area Profiles. The team have also been sharing best practice on making messages more appealing and easy to understand for data users, and how to create infographics and interactive data visualisations. This has included running seminars targeted at specific groups, for example academics working with demographic statistics and for Scottish Parliament researchers.

5.2.1 Cliff Beevers asked if engagement with individual community councils, in particular on finding and accessing data, and what the statistics show, would be possible. Kirsty and Esther agreed that this was possible **Action point: Kirsty MacLachlan to follow up with Cliff Beevers to engage with community councils.**

5.3 Household Statistics (PAMS (18) 09)

Sandy Taylor updated on the work of the Household estimates and projections branch. Sandy took over from Esther Roughsedge as the branch head in January 2018.

Estimates of households and dwellings for 2017 were published on the 22 May which gave statistics on different types of dwellings and trends in dwelling characteristics and household types. Included with the publication are infographic and data visualisation tools to summarise and help present the key findings. Small area (data-zone) household and dwelling estimates have also been added to the NRS website and are in the process of being added to Statistics.gov.scot.

Household projection estimates for 2016 are due to be published on 11 July. No methodological changes are planned though the Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) has been consulted for input.

With new members coming into the team, the first half of 2018 has been focused on getting team members up to speed with the detail of the branch's work and with publications. Moving forward, the branch will be spending more time engaging with data providers and users. A key aspect of this will be refreshing membership of the HARG, particularly in the light of recent retirees such as Jan Freeke, formerly of Glasgow City Council. The team would therefore be particularly grateful for any volunteers from local authorities to join the HARG.

5.3.1 Paul McNamara suggested that Angela Adams of Clydeplan could be a useful contact for the HARG. **Action Point: Sandy Taylor to contact Angela Adams to discuss potential HARG membership.**

5.4 Vital Events (PAMS (18) 10)

Julie Ramsay gave an update for the Vital Events Statistics branch. A key development has been a decision to stop the publication of preliminary annual vital events results in March and to bring forward the publication of final tables from August to June following consultation with data users. The 2017 reference tables and associated deaths from selected causes will be published on 27 June with further information on drug related deaths in July.

As of April 2018 the monthly deaths publication has also been expanded to include a breakdown by high level cause of death due to increased interest after a spike in deaths in January 2018. The branch has also adopted the new National Statistics definition on alcohol specific deaths following ONS' consultation last year, however the time series on the old alcohol related deaths definition will be maintained for a few years for continuity. More detail on dementia and Alzheimer's disease deaths will also be included in the 2017 figures to be published on the 27 June.

Finally the Vital Events Branch has now taken on responsibility for life expectancy statistics from the Population and Migration statistics branch. Following the publication of ONS' response to the consultation on Healthy Life Expectancy, the team is working with colleagues to determine what changes should be made to Scottish estimates of healthy life expectancy (which are currently published by the Information Services Division not NRS).

5.4.1. Cliff Beevers asked if any trends were apparent from the recent spike in deaths in January. Julie Ramsay indicated that detailed information on causes of death would follow later in the year which might help to explain the recent spike.

5.4.2. Paul McNamara asked if information on dementia and Alzheimer's disease deaths would be available at intermediate zone level. Julie Ramsay replied that it would not be available in June as there were potential issues with regards to protecting the confidentiality of individuals, but that this could be explored for future releases.

6. Any other business

6.1 Alan Ferrier mentioned that a new data explorer tool for migration and vital events data is currently being developed and that there will be more to discuss on this at the next PAMS meeting.

6.2 Alan also noted that given the new GDPR legislation, which came into force on 25 May, various NRS mailing lists are being updated. Individuals and organisations on mailing lists are being asked whether or not they wish to continue being contacted and this will extend to PAMS members in the near future.

6.3. Kirsty MacLachlan asked if any PAMS members had details for new potential new members to contact, particularly for Edinburgh or Glasgow council who were not represented at this meeting. **Action point Liam Cavin**

to identify and send through details of a possible contact for Glasgow and details for Xander Flat for Edinburgh council

6.4 Esta Clark indicated that NRS is working on methods for encouraging people to fill in their Census in 2021, which will include case studies from Census data users. Esta asked PAMS members to get in touch if they were happy to offer examples of how they had used Census to be included in these case study examples.

6.5 Steve Smallwood reminded attendees of the Integrated Data Research Conference to be held at the University of Surrey on the 9th and 10th of July 2018.

6.6 Steve Smallwood also reported on the postponement of the latest quarterly migration report from the ONS noting that the delay had been caused by data quality issues. Cliff Beevers asked Steve what implications “Brexit” might have for future migration statistics publications. Steve indicated that this was uncertain at the moment but should become clearer as the terms of “Brexit” are confirmed.

Date and time of next meeting provisionally set for Wednesday 21st November 2018