

Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)
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Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)
31 May 2017

Present		Organisation
Angela	Adams	Clydeplan
Mike	Atkinson	Highland Council
Vicky	Avila	National Records of Scotland (NRS)
Janice	Blanc	NRS
Nick	Cassidy	Improvement Service
Sarah	Christison	University of St Andrews
Esta	Clark	NRS
Róisín	Farrell	Information Services Division (ISD)
Jan	Freeke	Glasgow City Council
Jay	Gillam	NRS
Alistair	Harvey	City of Edinburgh Council
Maria	Kaye	Minutes NRS
William	Langdon	Argyll and Bute Council
Kirsty	MacLachlan	Chair NRS
Alan	Marshall	University of St Andrews
John	McCoskry	NRS
Martin	Miller	NRS
Peadar	Morgan	Bòrd na Gàidhlig
Jill	Morton	NRS
Sarah	Nodwell	Scottish Water
Denise	Patrick	NRS
Julie	Ramsay	NRS
Ludi	Simpson	University of Manchester
Sandy	Taylor	NRS
Fiona	Tweedie	Church of Scotland
Andy	White	by phone Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Andrew	Waugh	NRS

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed the group and everyone introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Amy Wilson, Frank Dixon, Gavin Ross, Paul McNamara, Heather Smith, Chris Carr, Cliff Beevers, Marina Curran and Esther Roughsedge.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (PAMS (16) 21)

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Update on action points from previous meeting

Action point 2015.15: Esta Clark to invite Phil Rees and colleagues to give a presentation in Scotland about their population projections by ethnic group.

Denise Patrick attended a BSPS seminar in Leeds where ethnic population projections were discussed. She will investigate whether the presentation slides can be shared with PAMS.

Action point 2016.07: Circulate the most recent Official Statistics Strategy to the PAMS group. Closed. This was circulated after the last meeting.

Action Point 2016.08: NRS to write to PAMS members and PAMS LA representatives asking for nominations for a census subgroup. Closed.

Action Point 2016.09: Sandy to provide a summary of who has requested commissioned tables. Closed.

4. Vital events branch update

4.1 Julie Ramsay gave an update on progress and changes in the vital events branch. The quarterly publications have been expanded to include information on Alzheimer's disease and dementia in response to an increased interest in cause of death. These data will also be added into the annual reference tables to be published in August 2017.

4.2 She then explained that from January 2017, the branch had changed the software package they use from MMDS to IRIS in order to bring NRS death coding more into line with ONS. In the most recent published figures, deaths from Alzheimer's and dementia had increased at the expense of deaths from respiratory disease. Julie stressed that some of this change may be attributable to the change in software. Alongside the 2017 first quarterly report, the vital events branch will publish a paper detailing changes in methodology.

4.3 In March, the vital events team published a paper on the quality of data on the ethnicity of the deceased. They concluded that data is not suitable for calculating reliable mortality rates for most ethnicities, and that NRS might be able to improve the quality of future data.

5. Scotland's Census 2021

5.1 Census update. Amy Wilson sends apologies. Esta Clark gave the update on what is currently happening in the census team. They are currently taking on new staff, expanding the programme and have launched two

major procurements for the online questionnaire and the control centre for the census. Jill Morton is heading up the development work on which questions are needed, building on consultation and question testing.

- 5.2 She went on to explain that the census team had trawled for interest in joining a PAMS Census subgroup but only had one response and asked how PAMS would like to interact with census. Jan Freeke responded that this issue had been discussed at the local authority pre-meeting. It was concluded that there was no need for a PAMS subgroup and specific issues could be raised in a PAMS pre-meeting.
- 5.3 Jan Freeke asked how relevant the hard to count index analysis is for a mostly online census, given that it is based on the responses to the 2011 census which was on paper.
- 5.4 There was a short discussion on whether there would be a question on income in the census. Jan Freeke suggested linking with ONS who get their income information from other sources. Jill Morton said that ONS use PAYE data which doesn't include all income information (this is pensions). Andy White said that when an income question was tested for the 2011 census, it drastically reduced response rates.
- 5.5 Question development. Jay Gillam gave a brief presentation (Paper 10 PAMS (17)) about the development of Migration Questions for Scotland's Census 2021. As outlined in the [Topic Consultation Report](#) (PDF), published August 2016, Scotland's Census 2021 are giving further consideration to three migration questions that were not asked in 2011: intent to stay (short term migration), reason for migration and passports held (proxy for citizenship). The presentation contained a link to a short online survey to gauge PAMS user need for obtaining this data from Scotland's Census 2021. Jay asked for all PAMS Committee Members and Local Authority representatives to fill in the online survey on behalf of their organisation, even if they do not wish to obtain this data from the census. An email containing the relevant information and a link to the survey would be circulated to the PAMS mailing list.

Action Point 2017.01 : PAMS members and Local Authority contacts to fill in the online survey, which will be available online until Friday 30 June.

Alistair Harvey asked whether the questions should include internal migration. Jay responded that there had been no call for it so far but would add it to the list of considerations.

- 5.6 Róisín Farrell asked where the 'smart list' options available in online versions of questions would come from. Jay responded that these would be taken from answers given in the 2011 census but that there would still be the option to add a unique answer.
- 5.7 Jan Freeke asked if the addition of new questions would mean 'giving up' an old question. Jay responded that they will be prioritising questions

across the census questionnaire; data collected in the census needs to meet a strong user need that cannot be met elsewhere. The purpose of the presentation and survey to PAMS was to follow up with requests for additional migration data identified in the Topic Consultation, to identify evidence of user need for this data.

- 5.8 Alistair Harvey asked whether the reason for migration question only referred to international migration. Jay responded that the stakeholders who responded to the Topic Consultation were mostly interested in international migration and that the question discussed in the presentation and survey reflected that stakeholders typically use the UK level information provided on reason for migration from the International Passenger Survey, but because of the small sample size of this data source for Scotland, Scotland level information is not available.
- 5.9 Alistair Harvey and Jan Freeke asked if there were quality concerns about data on intent to stay. Jill Morton and Jay Gillam agreed that there are known quality concerns around data on intent to stay. This is asked in the rest of the UK, where it was used to estimate the census population base for 2011. A strong user need was identified for this data in England and Wales, but less strong a need was identified elsewhere. Jill explained that there was work going on to determine whether user need for this information outweighs the expense and effort needed to capture this information.
- 5.10 Hard to count index. Martin Miller gave a presentation to explain how the census team identify areas where there are low response rates to the census. The factors which best identify hard to count areas are: proportion of 16-29 year olds, proportion of flats, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and English as an Additional Language (percentage of pupils). They combine these into a single hard to count index which is used to identify areas predicted to have low response rates. There will be discussion between the census team and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) about the method used to combine the factors into the index.
- 5.11 Martin referred back to Jan Freeke's question earlier (5.3) about how relevant hard to count data would be for an online survey. He said that they were looking into which people's response rate will change with the addition of an online census.
- 5.12 Data grouping for Scotland's census. Janice Blanc explained how the census identifies areas where people are over or under counted and then a process of coverage adjustment adjusts the population estimates for these areas so that the final figures produced are the best estimates of the actual Scottish population. In the past, coverage adjustment was done in geographically adjacent council areas for ease of collection. In the 2021 census, because there is no need to group the data for collection, council areas can be grouped to best meet the needs of data processing. For coverage adjustment this means grouping council areas together based on similarities of likelihood of response. Census are proposing to do this by

grouping council areas based on the distribution of datazones at different hard to count levels.

Janice Blanc noted that as shown in the paper (PAMS (17) 03) eight draft groups were currently proposed based on 2011 hard to count data but these would be reviewed and if required revised once the 2021 hard to count levels were available.

5.13 Janice Blanc asked for any comments or questions about the proposed approach. Jan Freeke noted that the paper was informative and it seemed a sensible approach. There were no other comments.

5.14 Kirsty MacLachlan asked what the ONS response has been. Janice responded that they had not yet decided but were contemplating processing all of the data in one group.

6. Dissemination and Census Analysis Branch update

6.1 Sandy Taylor gave an update on the range of work that the Dissemination and Census Analysis branch had undertaken over the past six months. This had mostly involved ad-hoc and specialist analysis of census data. Sandy noted that a major two year collaborative project with the Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory to analyse in detail census data on people with learning disabilities and developmental disorders had recently concluded.

6.2 A total of 300 ad-hoc tables had been published in the year to March, predominately on health and migration topics. Sandy noted that just over a quarter of requests for commissioned census tables had come from academics, though other categories of users were also well represented in the requests. In addition to commissioned tables, the customer services team in the branch had dealt with around 900 requests for information in the last year.

6.3 Sandy noted that over the next six months the branch plans to add tables of 1991 Census data to the Census Data Explorer (CDE). In response to a question from Angela Adams, he confirmed that electoral wards would be one of the output geographies available for these tables. Jan Freeke raised a concern that age and other variable groupings for 1991 may not be the same compared with later censuses. Sandy responded that table designs were being looked at on a case by case basis to maximise comparability between census years.

6.4 Kirsty MacLachlan asked if the 2001-2011 census comparison tool could be extended to include comparisons with 1991 Census data. Sandy responded that this may prove challenging due to changes in the question set and population base between censuses, but would consider this further. Peadar Morgan asked whether tables of 1981 Census data would also be uploaded into the CDE and Sandy confirmed that it was planned to do this after the 1991 tables had been added, around the end of the year.

- 6.5 Sandy reported that a revamp of the council area factsheets was being considered for later in the year. Jan Freeke noted that for this there was a preference among local authority members of PAMS for using an excel-based tool.

7. Population and Migration Statistics. Branch update.

- 7.1 Denise Patrick gave the branch update. There have been staffing issues in the branch, which were solved for a short time but one staff member leaving and another on maternity leave has left the branch understaffed again. They hope to fill the gaps with the upcoming recruitment board.
- 7.2 Denise then gave an update on current and upcoming publications, and ongoing work of the branch.
- The Mid-year population estimates were published in April with streamlined technical information and interactive visualisations.
 - Work to add GP practice code and GP postcode to the NHSCR is ongoing with data quality being checked.
 - SAPE will be published in August. The National Population Projections are scheduled for publication in October/November, with the user consultation meeting on the 21st of June and all PAMS members are encouraged to attend.
 - After consulting PAMS, there is a clear user demand for sub-council level population projections. The branch are currently working with St Andrews University to provide training in producing small area projections.
 - The branch have also produced council area profiles in April, along with the DACA branch, drawing on the latest migration data and Census data to summarise key statistics on EEA-born residents in each council. The centenarians national publication will be published in September but not at council area level.
 - The national level life expectancy publication will be moved to September to align with ONS. Harmonisation work is on-going with ISD to explore options to harmonise the methodology for healthy life expectancy estimates and bring the data into line with ONS as well.
 - Local area migration statistics will be published in July and August with streamlined presentation for easier navigation. Denise asked PAMS if they would like migration tables in .csv format.
 - In June, a student will begin a placement working on HESA data to improve students migration estimates.
 - Settlements and Localities will be published for 2016-based population data in December 2017. The process for producing settlements and localities will move away from being so reliant on NRS geography IT department.
 - SAPE is currently being uploaded onto statistics.gov.scot and data from other publications will follow afterwards.

- 7.3 Jan Freeke asked why the MYE detailed tables had not been part of the initial pre-release. Denise responded that this was due to the new streamlined format of MYE and in future the tables would be sent at the same time.
- 7.4 Jan also fed back: -there was interest in having a column for council area in the SAPE data. The council area migration profiles were welcomed as was the use of HESA data. Local authority users were satisfied with accessing the migration tables in excel and there was no pressing demand for .csv formatted data (post meeting update: We have an obligation to publish our data as 3 * / CSV Open Data under the Scottish Government's Open Data Strategy.)
- 7.5 Jan Freeke asked what was planned on the re-estimation of SAPE from 2001 to 2010 based on 2011 datazones. Denise responded that until staffing issues were resolved, this work may have to wait.
- 7.6 There was general unhappiness with the availability of data on statistics.gov.scot, voiced by Jan Freeke and Angela Adams. Denise responded that the branch have fed back frustrations to the team managing statistics.gov.scot and are working to load as much data as possible to the new site.
- 7.7 Post meeting update: From 2017 NRS are proposing to change its reporting of life expectancy by SIMD to focus on SIMD quintiles (5 categories from most deprived 20% to least deprived 20%). Previously reporting focused on 15% most deprived compared to 85% least deprived. By reporting SIMD quintiles this will provide a more detailed picture of how life expectancy varies across deprived areas.

Action point 2017.02: PAMS members are invited to flag if they have any concerns with the proposed change to report life expectancy estimates by SIMD quintiles.

8. Update on research from St Andrews University on small area forecasts/estimates.
 - 8.1 Alan Marshall gave an overview of the proposed training course to support councils carry out their own small area population projections. The course will be run over four days, the first three will be consecutive and introduce the POPGROUP software and demographic concepts/methods, the fourth will be a chance to produce population projections for a small area.
 - 8.2 There was some discussion as to whether this would be using data supplied by the course organiser or users' own data. Ludi Simpson said that the second option would be preferable to a lot of users but would require a day of work beforehand to get the data into the right format and it would be frustrating to have to do this work during the workshop itself. He

also suggested that a follow up workshop to troubleshoot and discuss results a few weeks later might be useful.

- 8.3 Alan asked the group about issues there might be with travelling to St Andrews. Feedback included difficulties trying to get multiple days off work and the expense of making multiple trips. (The course will be held in St Andrews during days 1-3 because it requires a computer lab and in Edinburgh on day 4). Alan said that there was the option to attend for only the days which were relevant to the individual and you can book which days are of interest in the survey. He is going to look into whether accommodation in student halls might be an option for those who wanted to do the full course. Angela Adams suggested that Falkirk Council might have a suitable computer lab if it made travel easier for people coming from the central belt.

Action point 2017.03 : Alan to investigate the possibility of accommodation in student halls for the duration of the course.

Action point 2017.04 : Angela to check with Siobhan Couttie at Falkirk Council to confirm whether the computer lab in Falkirk is appropriate and available.

- 8.4 Ludi asked if there was someone willing to provide Scottish input into a UK wide steering committee for popgroup users. Jan Freeke felt that some of his colleagues may not feel they have enough expertise yet and after the course there may be a better response.
- 8.5 Esta Clark asked about the rounding functions of popgroup and whether it could produce 'whole people'. Ludi explained that rounding constraints could be added relatively easily.

9. NRS Demographic statistics plan

- 9.1 Kirsty MacLachlan stated that next year NRS would produce a new corporate plan and asked the committee for their views on the updated priorities outlined in the paper.
- 9.2 The committee approved the priorities.

10. Household estimates and Projections. Branch update

- 10.1 Esther Roughsedge sent apologies and Vicky Avila gave the update. The household projections have already been published and the estimates will be published in two weeks' time. Vicky asked people to direct questions to Esther. Vicky also asked for feedback on infographics and interactive visualisations.
- 10.2 Jan Freeke commented that most PAMS users were more interested in data and may not therefore be the most useful people to ask about

infographics. Angela Adams said that she had had good feedback on the interactive visualisations.

11. Any other business

- 11.1 Angela Adams asked if a schedule of what mid-year estimate data is available online and what can be obtained on request. John McCoskry responded that there is a datasheet online with this information in it.

Action point 2017.05: John McCoskry to provide a link to the datasheet

- 11.2 Esta Clark suggested that there might be scope for including SAPE by single year of age on the website. Data is currently available in 5 year age groups because of an historic data agreement that no longer stands.

- 11.3 Peadar Morgan asked whether NRS will still be using European geographies following the UK's decision to leave the EU. Esta Clark responded that it was probable that they would to maintain comparability but NRS is likely to have less control over these geographies. Denise Patrick also responded, saying that ONS and NRS geography are currently considering options around this issue.

Action point 2017.06 : Denise to give an update on these discussions relating to European geographies.

12. Date of next meeting

- 12.1 The next meeting will be held in November 2017.