

2005 to 2013 Small Area Dwelling Estimates for Scotland: Methodology Guide



Published on 21 September 2021

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1. Introduction

This paper describes the methodology used by NRS to produce the rebased small area dwellings estimates (SADE) for 2011 Data Zones covering the period 2005 to 2013.

These small area estimates are consistent with the dwelling estimates for Scotland and its council areas. They are also comparable with the published SADEs by 2011 Data Zones for 2014 onwards.

Small area dwelling estimates have been released previously for 2001 Data Zones, covering each year in the period 2003 to 2017. However, the 2001 Data Zones have different boundaries compared with 2011 Data Zones and so do not allow for the creation of a consistent time series between these two geographies.

Background

Uses of small area dwelling estimates

Estimated numbers of dwellings currently have a wide variety of uses within central government, as well as being used by local authorities and other public bodies, commercial companies and individuals in the private and academic sector.

Data zones

Data zones are the Scottish Government's small area statistical geography. Data zones are based on Census population estimates. They were first introduced following the 2001 Census – the set of 2001 data zones. An updated set, of 2011 data zones, was produced following the 2011 Census. The [2011 set of data zone boundaries](#) was published by the

Scottish Government in November 2014, based on the results of the 2011 Census. There is a total of 6,976 data zones covering the whole of Scotland. These data zones were designed to have populations of between 500 and 1,000 people in 2011. The number of dwellings in 2011 in these data zones varied from 38 to 903; the median number of dwellings was 345.

Data zones are designed to cover the whole of Scotland and to nest within council area boundaries. They can be combined to provide best fit aggregations to larger geographies, for example to create estimates for areas such as parliamentary constituencies and electoral wards.

Dwellings

Dwellings are the physical buildings in which households live (or could live) – i.e. people's homes, second homes, and vacant properties. This should not include communal establishments such as student halls, prisons, etc.

Dwelling estimates by Council Tax band have been published annually from 2003. The 2003 dwelling estimates were produced by the Scottish Executive (Housing Statistics Branch), before the Scottish Assessors' Portal was launched. Figures for 2004 onwards have been produced annually by NRS using the information available from the Scottish Assessors' Portal.

Calculation of dwelling estimates

The starting point for producing the dwelling estimates each year is the data from the [Scottish Assessors' Portal](#).

The Scottish Assessors are responsible for determining the Council Tax band of each dwelling. They keep a record of all dwellings in Scotland, with detail about council tax band, type of dwelling, etc. (see <https://www.saa.gov.uk> for more information). As well as estimates of number of dwellings, we use the Scottish Assessor's data to produce estimates by dwelling type, council tax band and number of rooms per dwelling.

The Assessors' Portal data is provided around December – January each year and is taken to refer to the previous calendar year (e.g. data taken from the Assessors' Portal in January 2021 is considered to cover the calendar year 2020). For more details on the method used to produce the dwelling estimates refer to the 'Household estimates and dwellings' publication [methodology](#).

It was not possible to produce back-series dwelling estimates for 2003 and 2004 because the available data were already at data zone level.

2. Methodology for producing a back-series of dwelling estimates for 2011 Data Zones

A back-series of dwellings estimates by 2011 Data Zones for the period 2005 to 2013 was created by first taking each year's data at postcode level. This data was then aggregated to data zone level by using lookup tables of postcodes to 2011 Data Zones. Old postcodes do not necessarily fit exactly into the boundaries of 2011 Data Zones, so there are some dwellings that may not be assigned to the correct data zone in this process. However,

postcodes are usually small compared to data zones so any resulting errors from this will be minimal.

For each year, the data zones with the largest overall change (more than 15% change) were inspected and attempts made to find explanations for these changes. For example, data zones that had negative change values were usually areas where large-scale demolitions or clearings of buildings had been carried out.

The back-series of dwelling estimates was compared with small area population estimates to calculate the household size within each data zone. Those data zones with unusually large or small average household sizes were then inspected to determine if there was a plausible explanation for this (for example the existence of a prison or student accommodation within the data zone).

Once the dwelling estimates for each year had been produced, checks were made to ensure that:

- the total number of dwellings in each council area was consistent with the data published previously based on 2001 Data Zones; and
- the number of dwellings split by council tax band, dwelling type and number of rooms added up to total dwellings per data zone.

Availability of small area dwelling estimates

Estimated numbers of dwellings and their characteristics in Scotland are produced every year by NRS, and published within '[Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland](#)'.

Data sets may be downloaded free of charge in [Excel](#) or Comma Separated Value ([CSV](#)) format. Data are also published onto www.statistics.gov.scot.

Enquiries and suggestions

Please contact our Statistics Customer Services if you need any further information. Email: statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

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