

Scottish Postcode Directory 2022/2

August 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 July 2022 release of Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) and contains:

	All postcodes	Live postcodes	Deleted postcodes
All postcodes	243,221	160,178	83,043
Small User	193,357	154,597	38,760
Large User	49,864	5,581	44,283
<i>Small User Linked¹</i>	19,252	3,764	15,488
<i>PO Boxes</i>	30,612	1,817	28,795

The number of live, digitised small user postcodes² is 153,393.

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 2022/1

1.1 NRS Services

Like all organisations, NRS has been on a considerable journey since the pandemic began. Throughout this period our organisational response has been to focus on protecting customers and our staff, whilst continuing to deliver our essential services.

From 31 January 2022, Scottish Government guidance encouraged employers to consider the implementation of more flexible and collaborative ways of working, balancing the needs of individuals and their wellbeing, with those of the business. NRS is taking the opportunity to consider how best to adopt these redesigned ways of working and how best to deliver our services.

Please be assured that NRS Geography will continue trying our best to keep things moving in a timely manner.

1.2 Geographies

The following geographies have changed on the Postcode Index:

- ElectoralWard2022Code
- Settlement2020Code
- Locality2020Code
- UrbanRural6Fold2020Code
- UrbanRural8Fold2020Code

Electoral Ward 2022 – Note this is a change from what was mentioned in the SPD 2022/1 bulletin. There was a typo for the year, it should have read 2022 and not 2021, and apologies if this has caused any inconvenience.

Settlement and Locality 2020 – the new boundaries and codes have been implemented following the publication of the [‘Mid-2020 Population Estimates for Settlements and Localities in Scotland’](#) on 31 March 2022.

Urban Rural Classification 2020 - the new boundaries have been implemented following the publication of the [‘Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification 2020’](#) on 31 May 2022.

1.3 Boundaries

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

We aim to ensure that the postcode boundary encompasses all addresses that belong to the postcode, and can be distinguished as being either urban or rural. In urban postcodes, we follow the minimum sensible boundary, which is the area necessary to ensure all address content is contained while following features (road center lines, back garden fences, and/or natural features such as rivers and streams); whereas for rural postcodes that have scattered housing and farms, the postcode boundary will normally have fields and open land included. If there are any postcode boundaries you would like reviewed please contact the [Geography Customer Services team](#).

We use Ordnance Survey BoundaryLine product’s High Water Mark to produce our clipped boundaries. If you notice any anomalies at the coastline when working with the postcode boundaries please let us know and we can investigate and feed information back to Ordnance Survey.

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 2022/1 release.

3. Changing Geographies

3.1 Islands

From 2023/1 we will be changing the Island map and corresponding lookup.

The map will be referred to as 'Island', there will be no year assigned to it and it will no longer have an inhabited status field. The lookup file will also be updated to remove the inhabited status field. The new version of the geography will be updated in the 2023/1 SPD Postcode Index as follows.

2022/2 fieldname	2023/1 fieldname
Islands2022Code	IslandCode

Users will be able to find inhabited islands using the postcode index by selecting all live digitised small user postcodes (Date of Deletion and Never Digitised fields are null) and the island code.

When a new island (that has never had an island code before) is introduced it will be highlighted in the SPD Bulletin.

3.2 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 was completed on 23 March 2022. All comments received during the consultation are available on the consultation site www.bcs2023review.com.

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

3.2 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 census collection phase took place between 28 February and 31 May 2022.

Breakdowns of the [2022 Census response rates](#) are available on the Scotland's Census website. Information on [what happens next](#) and [publishing census results](#) are also available on the website.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement exercise on draft Census Geographic Boundaries

As part of the 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 assess impact on DZs.

We received responses from a number of Local Authorities and we are very grateful for users taking the time to provide comments and feedback on this exercise. We have now been in touch with individual users to discuss their specific requests. We'd like to thank you again for your patience whilst this work had been put on hold due to the COVID pandemic.

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. Where relevant, we will review the feedback from the stakeholder engagement exercise again when creating the final Census versions. Also, 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 existing 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.

- Boundary files Shape format
Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PGSA) members only
- Index files CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access 2000 compatible format
- 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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For more information, PGSA members should look at the [public sector licensing guidance](#) or contact Ordnance Survey via their [Contact Us](#) page.

8.2 Postcode District and Sector Boundaries and Grid References

You may use this information (not logos) free of charge in any format or medium under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#) (National Archives website).

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