

Summary of PAMS responses

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was decided that the usual May meeting for PAMS would be cancelled and replaced by an online user consultation, with NRS sending out update papers to members and collecting feedback through an online survey.

This document outlines the responses we had from PAMS members, and a response from NRS.

Overall, there was feedback from 29 organisations to the survey.

Vital Events Statistics update – [PAMS\(20\) 02](#)

16 users gave feedback

Common themes were how useful people felt the COVID-19 and life expectancy data were, as well as people welcoming the regular publication of homeless deaths and healthy life expectancy.

On COVID-19, there was specific feedback on:

- How the local level data has been really helpful, as have the SIMD breakdowns.
- Positive feedback on the dissemination of the COVID-19 stats.
- Being able to compare across councils is useful

On life expectancy related publications, there was specific feedback on:

- Work related to communicating the slowing of life expectancy was helpful.
- Council level life expectancy and healthy life expectancy being useful across a number of different projects.
- Not being previously aware that there were council level stats on life expectancy.
- User wanted sub-council level life expectancy stats, possibly for datazone or intermediate zone.

More general comments:

- Wanted links to specific areas of the website.
- Baby names publication wasn't really used by local authorities.
- Useful that we have a regular quarterly vital events publication rather than having to wait a full year till the reference tables are published.

Response from NRS: *We're grateful for the feedback on the COVID-19 work, and will use it going forward as we continue to develop further analysis in this field.*

On life expectancy and healthy life expectancy at lower geographies it's very difficult to calculate because we need to go down to 5 year age groups because of the size of these areas. The result is very large fluctuations and confidence intervals. In order to produce robust figures we would need to group together so many years that it may make the data meaningless - especially if change over time is of interest. However, it should be noted that the SCOTPHO profiles do include some lower level LE estimates if you are interested - although please note the wide confidence intervals.

Scotland's Census 2021 update – [PAMS\(20\) 03](#)

16 users gave feedback

Note that users were consulted before the decision to delay the Census to 2022 was taken by Scottish Ministers.

Feedback was varied due to the amount of information given in the update paper, there were fewer common themes in this paper than in other PAMS updates. One common thread was that users were pleased about the timeliness of planned outputs for the next census.

Summary of comments:

- Pleased about plans for island geography data
- Interested in admin data developments, wanted to know how local authorities can assist.
- Positive feedback on the flexible table builder.
- Pleased about progress the census is making, excited to see outputs when they are ready. Pleased about proposed timescales.
- User wanted more contact from NRS about engagement.
- Happy about the timetable for outputs.

Response from NRS: *We are interested in receiving stakeholder feedback after the first publication of our administrative based population estimates in late 2020. We see members of PAMS being very much involved in the feedback process of this new 'experimental' statistics publication and hope to engage with them about the future use of administrative data.*

We plan to set up our LA conference calls again soon. We are also considering setting up virtual engagement networks for other stakeholders to keep them updated with our plans.

Population and Migration Statistics update – [PAMS\(20\) 04](#)

16 users gave feedback

Common themes were feedback on usage of sub-national projections and how best NRS can promote these, as well as users giving their views on whether the Local Area Migration Spreadsheet should only be published as an interactive visualisation (rather than in an excel spreadsheet).

On usage of projections, there was specific feedback on:

- Projections were used to inform local planning (from a number of different users)
- Different sets of projections (2014 based, 2016 based, 2018 based) have presented different pictures at local level, and have changed the type of scenario that some councils could expect to see in regard to population increase/decrease.

On how best to promote population projections work:

- Promote through PAMS initially, then through other means such as Knowledge Hub groups, Third Sector Interfaces, and Community Development Trust Associations.
- Tailored webinars and presentations would be useful, as it could be targeted to a wider audience.
- Post new updates on social media
- Scotstat
- Presentations/seminars for specific council areas

On the local area migration spreadsheet:

- Many users said they prefer it in excel format, and would like for it to continue to be published like this,
- One user said they don't care how its published, as long as it's available and easy to download.
- Overall, users liked the tool, but would prefer to use an excel spreadsheet product.

Response from NRS: *Thank you very much for your feedback. It's very helpful for us to understand how the projections are being used, and we will work with the Improvement Service to promote the upcoming sub-council area projections through the various networks suggested. We will also consider options to host events/webinars subject to capacity and interest. We will continue to publish the Local Area Migration statistics output in excel format as well as update the interactive tool.*

Some specific points were raised around data availability for the City Regions. Most of our statistics are published at local authority level, however it is possible to use our small area population estimates at data zone level to aggregate to higher/custom geographies. We are happy to provide advice or answer more specific queries. Please contact us at: statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

Households Estimates and Projections update – [PAMS\(20\) 05](#)

13 users responded

The common themes for feedback on this paper were that the outputs from this branch were useful, and that delays to the upcoming publication were noted.

Summary of comments:

- User wanted to know if a back series of dwelling estimates would be made available, and if household type projections would be produced.
- A few users noted the delay to the upcoming publication.
- One user asked about the quality of dwellings data from Assessors.
- A user stated they were grateful for the datazone level publication, and the work undertaken to produce it.

Response from NRS: *The back series of dwelling estimates for 2011 Data Zones for years prior to 2014 is certainly falls into the 'nice to have' category and so is a relatively low priority task for us. But the work involved is not particularly complex and we think would be a useful output. The 2018-based household projections will include the same breakdown of household type as in the 2016-based projections. But we would be happy to look at producing variant projections for other household types and to discuss options for this with the Household Analysis Review Group.*

On data from Assessors, there are no specific data quality or commercial issues involved. The Assessors remain happy to continue to share the data. The clarification of some data governance issues has taken longer than anticipated, but we expect an agreement to be finalised shortly.

Statistics Engagement and Promotion update – [PAMS\(20\) 06](#)

17 users responded

The common themes on this paper were that people agreed with the steps being taken for the Scotland's Population publication, and that people are generally in favour of the new layout used on our stats publication pages. Users also fed back on how NRS could engage at a local level in light of the current situation prohibiting mass gatherings at events.

On Scotland's Population:

- A few users noted that they agreed with adding a specific COVID-19 chapter, and giving chapters more of a focus on the current pandemic.
- Users noted they are content with the delay, understanding the reasons given.
- One user noted that there probably wasn't enough being done on social media to promote these changes.
- One user noted that the publication is less relevant at local authority level

On web pages:

- A few users noted that the format is easy to use.
- One user noted that a lot of NRS content is in accessible formats, making it useful for non-data users, and for quickly checking things.

On engagement events:

- One user called for regionally focussed online events.
- Another user asked about receiving more info about talks that were mentioned in the paper (such as the talks NRS will do at the British Society for Population Studies (BSPS)).

Response from NRS: *Feedback on the Scotland's Population publication and the web pages is noted. The publication will be released on 6 October this year. We have also released a tweet and put information on our web pages regarding this change of date.*

On engagement events it is a good idea to do regionally focussed online events. We'll think about how best to organise these, and then get in touch to see what interest there might be.

We have emailed all PAMS members, giving details of the BSPS conference and the titles of the NRS talks. The full programme and abstracts are on the [BSPS website](#). Slides from some of our previous events are available on the [NRS website](#), and if you would like more information or the slides from any other events we take part in, just ask.

Update on production of sub-council area projections – [PAMS\(20\) 07](#)

17 users responded

Users gave a lot of detailed feedback on this paper, common themes were on how the data and analysis should be accessed, and how this work should be promoted.

On how it should be accessed:

- There was some support for the idea of a dashboard, but one user made it clear that any dashboard would have to be accessible such that it can be accessed from any browser, and that data can be extracted.
- Many respondents supported the idea of summaries that could be made available, as well as excel spreadsheets that could be downloaded.
- It was also noted that products would be useful if also available in Gaelic.
- One user suggested creating summaries for council areas as well as having the dashboard, where users could create custom reports.

On how it should be promoted:

- A number of platforms and groups were suggested for promotion by users, these were:
 - Scotstat
 - Knowledge Hub (Community Planning Group, Fairer Scotland Duty Group)
 - Third Sector Interfaces
 - Community Development Trust Associations
 - PAMS itself
 - Improvement Service Newsletters
 - NRS Open Book blogs
 - Webinars (or online videos available to download)
 - Social media (and encouraging councils and Health and Social Care partnerships to share through their channels)
 - The NRS and Improvement Service websites

Other comments:

- Some users suggested that having the Improvement Service produce all these projections on a consistent and comparable basis would be one of the most important features, to compare across and within council areas.
- There were some specific comments relating to the way the projections work. One organisation wanted to understand more about how the mortality projections worked, and one user wanted more customisable geographies.
- Many users were extremely supportive of the work in general, and said how valuable this type of information is to councils, informing them of how the population could change within their area.

Response from the Improvement Service and NRS:

Thank you for your comments on the upcoming sub-council area projections (SCAP). We had a total of 13 people who gave feedback on sub-council area projections.

Case studies and uses of projections

Thank you for providing information on how you use sub-council area projections. Understanding how these population projections are used will help us to determine further outputs. It also helps us understand the value that these projections to your organisation and can be used to inform future work in this area.

If you would like to provide further feedback or case studies, please e-mail statisticscustomerservices@nrs.gov.uk

Outputs

Responses highlighted that there was some interest in additional outputs to those which will be published on 17 August. The most popular (1/3 of respondents) requested were:

- Online dashboard
- Detailed summary paper

The Improvement Service are currently considering the capacity and demand for these additional outputs. If you have any feedback on how these additional outputs would be used please contact research@improvementservice.org.uk.

Some comments asked for outputs to be shared with Local Authorities prior to publication. The Improvement service shared these projections with Local Authorities in June and July and asked for feedback. If any new analysis is undertaken, these will also be shared prior to publication.

Promotion

Thank you for highlighting other groups we should promote these projections to. We also have plans to promote these projections through twitter ([@NRS](https://twitter.com/NRS) and [@Improvserv](https://twitter.com/Improvserv)), [knowledge hub](#), newsletters and [ScotStat](#).

You can sign up to the Improvement Service newsletter by completing this [form](#).

Feedback also highlighted that there is an interest in webinars on these projections. We are currently considering the capacity to hold such events and will keep you updated.

Stakeholder engagement exercise on draft Census Geographic Boundaries – [PAMS\(20\) 08](#)

14 users responded

Overall, feedback was positive and users understand the reasons to the delay.

Summary of responses:

- There was some concern from one user that 16 of 32 councils had responded and wondered if there was a cut off point for local authorities to respond.
- Many users noted that they understood the reasons for the delay, and that COVID-19 had affected their own work in similar ways, meaning they were unable to respond immediately.
- A few users noted that they will respond to the consultation in due course.
- One user asked about information on new housing estates or building knockdowns, and if this will be useful.

Response from NRS/Scottish Government: *Due to COVID-19 pressures, we have been unable to yet respond to individual queries but we are happy to accept returns from other councils. We are aware of the considerable pressures that councils are under and our priorities have changed considerably. Our GIS colleagues in Scottish Government who are working with us on this project are currently providing analytical support for COVID-19 resilience work. As such, it is going to take us a bit more time than we anticipated to respond with comments. Please be assured that we will respond, once we have capacity. All feedback is extremely welcome.*