

Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

Population and Migration Statistics Update

Introduction

1. This paper provides an update on recent work and developments in population and migration statistics.

Feedback is welcomed on all areas of work covered in the paper. There are a few areas where we would particularly welcome comments and views from PAMS members:

- **Sub-national Population Projections (SNPP)** – we would be interested in hearing from users about how they use these statistics and would welcome feedback on things that they would like to see included in the upcoming 2018-based SNPP publication (see paragraph 7 for more details).
- **Sub-council Population Projections (SCAP)** – feedback is welcomed on the proposals to create a standard set of sub-council area projections (see Annex A for more details and specific questions from the Improvement Service).
- **Population programme** – we would be grateful if you could promote the new population programme across your organisation and consider collective action that might be feasible. Please let us know if there is interest in understanding more about the range of demographic data available and/or how your organisation might get involved in the population programme and we can consider opportunities for visits or sharing of information (see paragraphs 19 and 20 for more details).

Staffing and branch changes

2. Recent staffing changes over the past few months include:
 - Lara Olszenka joined the team in August 2019 and is working on migration statistics.
 - Sarah Letsinger joined the team in October 2019 and is working on sub-national population projections.

Publications

3. Publications since the last PAMS meeting:
 - Population by Country of Birth and Nationality for Scottish Areas, 2018 (24 May 2019)
 - Local Area Migration (22 Aug 2019)

- Mid-2018 Small Area Population Estimates (22 Aug 2019)
- Population estimates for Scottish Centenarians 2008-2018 (25 Sep 2019)
- 2018-based National Population Projections (21 Oct 2019)

Future publications:

- Population by Country of Birth and Nationality, Jul 2018-Jun 2019 (28 Nov 2019)
- 2018-based Sub-national Population Projections (Mar 2020)
- Mid-2019 Population Estimates (Apr 2020)
- Mid-2019 Migration Statistics (Apr 2020)

National Population Projections (NPP)

4. Population Projections for Scotland (2018-based) were published on 21 October 2019, and showed that Scotland's population is projected to continue growing, but at a slower rate. There are projected to be more deaths than births in each year going forward, with inward migration being the only source of population growth. The population is also projected to age, with an increase of around 240,000 pensioners over the 25 years to mid-2043.
5. A range of outputs were made available online for this publication, including:
 - [Key findings \(infographic summary\)](#)
 - [Statistical publication](#)
 - [Interactive visualisation](#)
 - [Summary tables \(includes variants\)](#)
 - [Detailed tables \(includes variants\)](#)
 - [Open data](#)
6. Projections using alternative assumptions of migration from the EU have also been made available, but these are not designated as National Statistics as they are not produced using a standard method. A [summary](#) showing the possible effects of reduced EU migration on Scotland's population and a range of data tables have been made available on the [NRS website](#). Note that this data is also included in the interactive visualisation and has also been loaded to statistics.gov.scot.

Sub-national Population Projections (SNPP)

7. Work has started to produce the 2018-based SNPP which are pre-announced for publication in March 2020. We are currently in the process of acquiring the data needed for these projections. There will be a similar suite of outputs as the 2016-based publication including the national statistics publication, infographic summary, interactive visualisation and detailed datasets. Based on feedback received for the last publication, we intend to focus on projections over a 10 year period and include the same set of standard variants (high/low fertility, high/low life expectancy, high/low migration, natural change only). **Please get in contact if you have any feedback or would like to see any changes for the upcoming publication.**

Sub-council Population Projections (SCAP)

8. POPGROUP training took place over four days in September and October 2019, and feedback from these sessions was positive. There is ongoing work to develop and finalise written guidance and instructional videos outlining the steps to produce population projections using POPGROUP. We will make these available on the NRS website and promote once published. To support users in creating sub-council projections, a tool (excel add-in) is being developed by NRS which will aggregate data from various population and migration statistics and convert it into the right format for POPGROUP skeleton files.
9. NRS are collaborating with the Improvement Service to produce a standard set of sub-council area projections, which are provisionally planned to be available in March 2020. A more detailed outline of the proposed outputs and timelines can be found in Annex A. **Feedback from PAMS members is welcomed to ensure the outputs best meet user needs.**

Mid-Year Population Estimates

10. Work to produce the Mid-2019 Population Estimates has started.
11. The development and testing of a new internal migration processing system to replace the previous Excel-based system is complete. The new system will be used in the mid-2019 population estimates.
12. NRS now have access to GP details on extracts of anonymised records from the NHS Central Register (NHSCR). Work is beginning to review the process for estimating within UK migration using the NHSCR extract for more accurate migration data at council and small area level. We are in the early stages of planning this work and will keep the group updated on progress.

Small Area Population Estimates

13. The mid-2018 Small Area Population Estimates (SAPE) were published on 22 August. Alongside this, [time series](#) of re-estimated small area population estimates from 2001 to 2010 were published on the latest data zone boundaries.

Migration Statistics

14. Population by country of birth and nationality for July 2018 to June 2019 will be published for Scotland and council areas on 28 November 2019. This will be an update to the data tables only, no statistical bulletin will be produced.
15. In August 2019, we released an [interactive visualisation](#) for all migration related statistics at council and health board level. Thanks to all PAMS members who submitted feedback on the draft version. If you have any comments regarding the tool, please send these to statisticscustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk.
16. The Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) published each quarter by ONS has been reclassified from National Statistics to Experimental Statistics. The MSQR provides the headline UK and Scottish net migration estimates. ONS have been

undertaking a programme of work to transform migration statistics by making greater use of administrative data held across government to get a richer and deeper understanding of migration. This has led to preliminary adjustments to the headline migration estimates at UK level and further research will take place as new data sources become available. Ceasing to publish as National Statistics and reclassifying the release as experimental statistics provides a clear statement of the development status of the estimates. ONS expect their programme of work to be complete by August 2020, and will seek re-designation to National Statistics status at that point.

17. NRS are exploring options around developing a new quarterly summary of migration statistics for Scotland that could be made available on the same day as the ONS release (MSQR). This aims to present all the latest migration data for Scotland, alongside the UK data, to tell a story of what's happening to migration in Scotland. Currently it can be difficult to get a quick overview as the data is published by different departments (NRS, ONS, Home Office, DWP) and much of it is available only in datasets with limited or no commentary. This comes after work done in the summer by a student from the DataLab to develop code in R that quickly summarises all of the latest trends for Scotland and the UK.
18. The Migration Observatory (at Oxford University) have developed a Local Data Guide which aims to help users understand the range of migration data at local level. NRS provided input during the development of the guide to ensure it promotes the range of Scottish local migration data available. You can access the guide at: <https://dataguide.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/>

New developments - Population programme

19. The Scottish Government (SG) has recently established a [Ministerial Population Task Force](#) to consider Scotland's future population challenges and develop new solutions to address demographic change. This will include work to understand and tackle important policy challenges around areas such as population decline, low birth rates, ageing populations. The Ministerial Task Force is supported by a Director-level Programme Board and includes representation from various external partners including COSLA, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. Recent developments include the [signing of an agreement between the SG and the Convention of the Highlands and Islands \(CoHI\)](#) to support the aims of the programme. **PAMS members are encouraged to promote the population programme across their organisations and consider collective action that might be feasible.**
20. NRS are providing analytical support to the population programme and are very happy to visit organisations and help promote the range of demographic evidence available to understand how local populations are changing. We recently visited East Dunbartonshire council who were keen to understand more about the data available to help inform their next budget review. **Please let us know if there is interest in understanding more about the range of demographic data available and/or how your organisation might get involved in the population programme and we can consider opportunities for visits or sharing of information.**

NRS: Population and Migration Statistics branch
November 2019

Annex A: Improvement Service: Sub-Council Area Population Projections

1. Introduction and Overview

Currently, sub-council area population projections are not regularly produced by the National Records of Scotland (NRS) or any other statistical agency in the UK.

In 2016 the NRS produced a national set of 2012-based sub-council area projections as a one-off research project. Given the ongoing demand, the Improvement Service and NRS have agreed to collaborate on the production of updated sub-council area projections.

This work is intended to support local authorities who do not have the capacity to produce their own projections as well as users who are interested in a standard set of local area projections using a standard geography for all areas across Scotland. It is not intended to replace projections already being produced by some local authorities. However, there remains significant demand from users as outlined in the recent [survey](#) carried out by NRS so we hope this work will help fill the evidence gap and provide a number of benefits in terms of providing updated projections to understand the potential future size and make-up of local populations and inform forward planning by local authorities and other partners.

2. Previously Published Sub-Council Area Projections

In 2016 the NRS produced a standard set of sub-council projections. These were based on 2012 population estimates and covered the period 2012 to 2026. The [2012-based projections](#) included population projections by age and sex, as well as household estimates.

3. Proposed Outputs

The primary output will be [a set of population projections](#) for all 32 local authorities covering the period 2018 to 2030 and available disaggregated by sex and age. These will be constrained to NRS council level population projections. The projections will be made freely available through the IS website in Excel and CSV formats. In addition, these outputs will include the produced input and output files to allow interested users to produce their own variant projections using POPGROUP software.

For this initial data production process, we propose making use of Multi-member Wards as a standard geography for all local authority areas. Although we recognise that there are issues with this geography, we have chosen this for a number of reasons discussed below.

We will also produce [a cautions and caveats booklet](#) for each local authority area, which will allow us to flag up issues with the geographies, assumptions that may affect the projections, and adjustments for special populations i.e. students, prisons, and armed forces.

In addition to the data, we will provide a [short overview report](#) for each Council area summarising the projected figures.

4. Indicative Timescales

November – December 2019	Undertake initial set of projections for 2 local authorities Draft caveats and summaries for these areas.
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December 2019	Finalise project outputs and produce checklist to follow for each set of projections
January – mid-February 2020	Produce all standard sub-council area projections for each council area
February – mid-March 2020	QA of results, prepare cautions and caveats booklet Draft short summary report for each LA
March 2020	Publish results to website, communication of results, guidance for use

On an ongoing basis expert support and guidance will be provided from the NRS, as well as Professor Ludi Simpson and Dr Alan Marshall, to support the production of these figures.

5. Limitations and Issues

This is an experimental approach and the first attempt to produce these statistics by the Improvement Service, and we recognise that there will be a number of limitations. We would welcome feedback from users to improve the usability of the figures.

The projections will be standardised nationally and based on the trends identified within the official data published by NRS. They therefore won't take into account local developments, for example housing developments or investment projects. This is consistent with the national and sub-national population projections produced by NRS. It is important to remember that these will be projections based on past-trends; they are not intended to be forecasts. Nevertheless, they provide a useful baseline to understand how populations may change and provide an opportunity to apply local knowledge and consider developing or adapting local plans/policies if the projections are judged undesirable.

Multi-member Wards are understandably not the preferred geography for all local authorities. In some cases, they cover areas that do not fit within local plans or may not cover sensible geographical areas. However, to allow us to produce a standard set of projections and to allow the NRS to prepare population data for use in these projections we have decided to use these in the first instance. We are open to feedback on this, particularly any issues this causes and anything that we can include within the caveats we produce.

6. Future Opportunities

As mentioned above, these projections and this project are experimental, and should they continue in the future there will be scope for several additional improvements. These include alternative variants such as high and low migration, mortality, and fertility.

In addition, we would like to explore the feasibility of producing estimates for custom geographies other than Multi-member Wards. Local authorities may be able to advise on the most appropriate geographies for their area.

Lastly, we would like to explore additional ways to encourage use of these data, for example with an interactive web app.

7. Questions and Feedback

We would welcome any feedback and comments/suggestions from local authorities on the proposed outputs and to help populate a set of caveats for users. We recognise that these projections are a work in progress, and any feedback you can provide will help to ensure that the outputs provide as much value as possible.

If you have suggestions for custom areas that we could use in future projections or issues raised by the use of Multi-member Wards within your local authority, please let us know.

We'd also be interested in any work that you are doing locally to produce your own figures or to make use of the national set, and how we can ensure what we do is beneficial.

If there is interest in looking over the draft projections this would also be welcome.

Comments and feedback can be sent to research@improvementservice.org.uk.