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# Centenarians in Scotland, 2002 to 2012

Including mid-year population estimates for those  
aged 90 & over

(using the revised population estimates for 2002 to 2010 in the  
calculation process)

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## Main Points

The main points in this report are:-

- In Scotland, the number of centenarians (people aged 100 and over) increased from 520 in 2002 to 800 in 2012, an increase of 54 per cent.
- The number of male centenarians more than doubled between 2002 and 2012 (from 50 to 120) while the number of female centenarians increased from 470 to 680 during the same period.
- The number of people aged 90 to 99 increased from 26,190 in 2002 to 36,110 in 2012, an increase of 38 per cent.
- The number of men aged 90 to 99 increased from 5,490 to 9,720 between 2002 and 2012. The number of females aged 90 to 99 increased from 20,700 to 26,390 during the same period.
- In 2012, women made up 73 per cent of the 90 to 99 age group and 85 per cent of centenarians.
- A larger proportion of centenarians are now male.
- The ratio of male to female centenarians has increased to 18 men per 100 women in 2012 compared to 11 in 2002.
- Centenarians are still rare. But the number of centenarians in the total population increased from 1.0 per 10,000 in 2002 to 1.5 per 10,000 in 2012.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 This report details the numbers of people by sex aged 90 to 104, by single year of age, and the number of people aged 105 and over in Scotland, for 30 June 2002 to 30 June 2012. For ease of presentation, 30 June 2012 is referred to as 2012 in this report as are other mid-year points.
- 1.2 The data in this report uses the revised mid-year population estimates for 2002 to 2010 published on 17 December 2013 which take into account the 2011 Census results.
- 1.3 The 2011 Census based mid-year estimates for 2011 estimated 35,170 people aged 90 and over. This was 2,630 fewer people than the estimate of 37,800 people aged 90 and over which had previously been published using the 2011 mid-year estimates rolled-forward from the 2001 Census. Therefore the estimates published in this report for 2002 to 2010 are lower than those previously published. Estimates for 2011 and 2012 are the same as those published in October 2013 as they took account of the 2011 Census results.
- 1.4 The number of centenarians (people aged 100 years and over) across the industrialised world has been growing at an increasing rate since the 1950s<sup>1</sup>. At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Scottish centenarians were extremely rare, but by the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there were estimated to be over 500 people aged 100 or over in Scotland. Since the 1950s, centenarians have been growing at a faster rate than any other age group.
- 1.5 This increase in centenarians has been largely driven by increased survival rates of older people, as the result of improvements in hygiene, sanitation, medical treatment, housing and living standards in general.
- 1.6 In recent years, there has been an increased interest in estimating the population of very elderly people in Scotland, as survival rates are expected to carry on increasing in the foreseeable future and reflect the general trends seen in today's ageing societies. These statistics therefore give an important insight into the most rapidly growing age-group of Scotland's population. In addition, these estimates are used in the calculation of life expectancy statistics for Scotland.
- 1.7 Similar estimates for Northern Ireland and England & Wales are available on the [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#) and the [Office for National Statistics](#) websites respectively. The Office for National Statistics have also published estimates for the UK as a whole.

### Footnote

1) Kannisto, V 1997 The Advancing frontier of survival. Odense Monographs on Population Aging 3. Odense University Press.

## 2. Methodology

- 2.1 The National Records of Scotland (NRS) produces population estimates by single year of age from 0 to 89 using the 'cohort component' method. Starting with the census, each year the population of a given area is aged on by one year, births in the area are added to the population, deaths in the area are subtracted and estimates of migration are used to allow for people moving in and moving out. More information on the cohort component method can be found in the [Mid-Year Population Estimates methodology guide](#) on the NRS website.
- 2.2 However this method is not currently reliable for single year of age populations for the very elderly because the census itself is less reliable for populations aged 90 and over (as it becomes harder to establish firmly someone's age the older they get). So, in the standard NRS Mid-Year Estimate of the Scottish population, people aged 90 and over are aggregated together into one group.
- 2.3 To produce single year of age estimates of the population aged 90 and over, NRS uses the Kannisto-Thatcher<sup>2</sup> (KT) method. This method has also been adopted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to produce estimates for the elderly in England and Wales. These estimates can be found in the [Population section](#) of the ONS website.
- 2.4 The KT method uses 'age at death' data to build up distribution profiles of the numbers of elderly people in Scotland in previous years. For example, if someone dies in 2006 aged 105, then this means that they were alive and aged 104 in 2005, 103 in 2004, and so on. By collating 'age at death' data for a series of years, it becomes possible to make an estimate of the number of people of a given age alive in any particular year and so create age distribution profiles, assuming that migration at these oldest ages is minimal.
- 2.5 To make estimates for 2012, it is not possible to use death data, as we are interested in the population who are currently or very recently alive. So the KT method uses an average of the last five years of age at death information to produce an estimate of the number of survivors for the most current year. Estimates are then made consistent with the NRS Mid-Year Estimate of people aged 90 and over.
- 2.6 One consequence of this method is that each year the estimates for earlier years become more accurate as more death data become available to inform the age profiles. For example, the current estimate of the number of centenarians in 2012 will differ from the future estimate of centenarians in 2012 to be produced for next year's publication.
- 2.7 Population estimates calculated using the KT method for single year of age from 90 to 99 and the 100 plus age group were found to be broadly similar to comparable data available from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and broadly consistent with data published from the 2011 Census.

### Footnotes

2) Thatcher, R, 1999, The demography of centenarians in England and Wales. Population Trends 96.

- 2.8 The increase in the number of centenarians reflects an increase in life expectancy. The ONS produces annual estimates of life expectancy for Scotland on behalf of NRS<sup>3</sup>. The latest figures (for the period 2010 to 2012 based on population estimates rolled forward from the 2011 Census) show a life expectancy at birth of 76.5 for males and 80.7 for females, which is an increase of 3.2 years for males and 1.9 years for females over the last 10 years (since the period 2000 to 2002).
- 2.9 With new data available from the 2011 Census, NRS are working to improve the methodology for estimating the population at elderly ages. We will also be working with the ONS on a review of the method to produce the current estimates.
- 2.10 We are also exploring methodological options for extending our mid-year estimates at single year of ages up to 94 and aggregating to 95+ for Council and NHS Board areas.

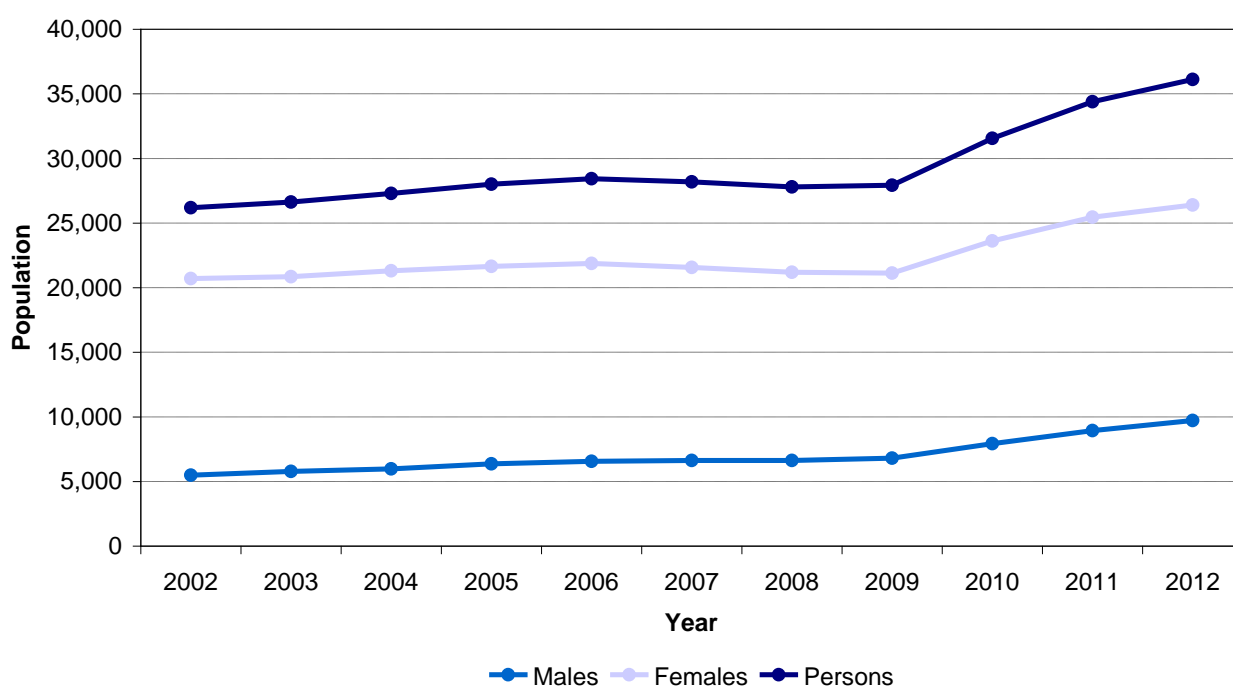
**Footnote**

3) [Life expectancy at Scotland level](#) – available on the NRS website.

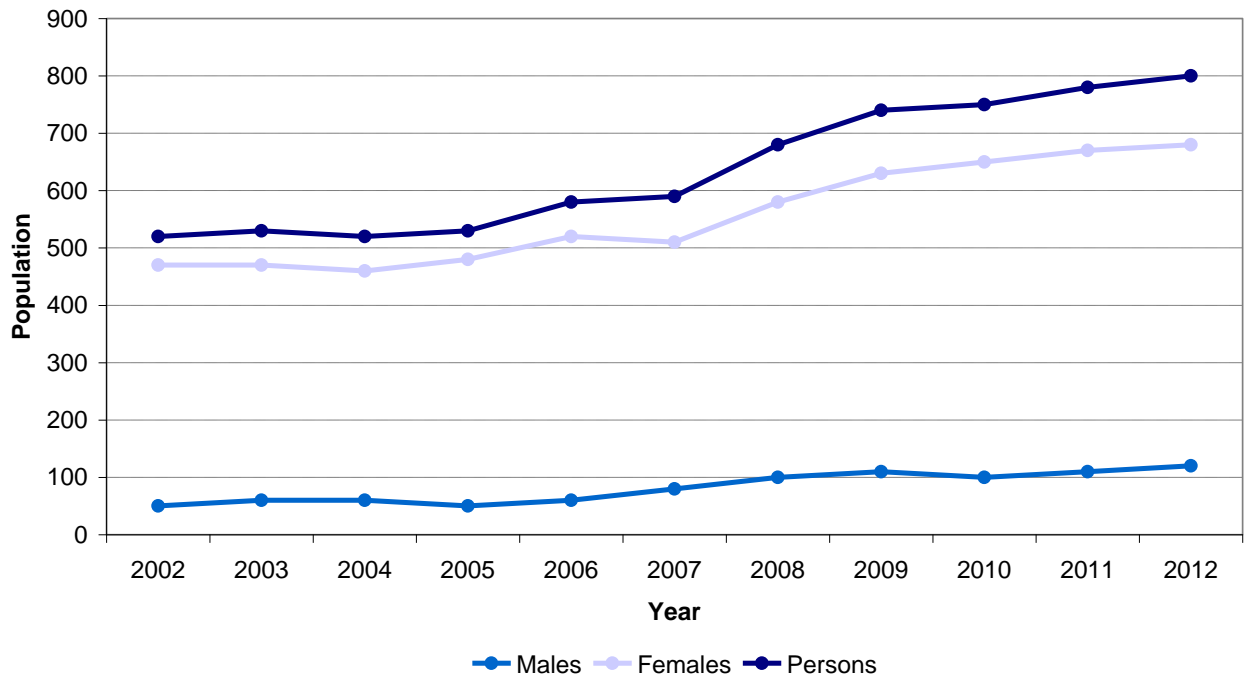
### 3. Results

- 3.1 Population estimates by sex and age for the years 2002 to 2012 are shown in [Table 1](#). The population of age groups 90 to 99 and 100 and over were at their highest ever level in 2012.
- 3.2 Figure 1 shows the increase in the number of 90-99 year olds over the past decade while the increase in the number of people reaching the age of 100 can be seen in [Figure 2](#).
- 3.3 The small dip between 2006 and 2009 amongst the 90-99 year olds is a representation of the lower births during the Great War. While the increase from 2010 onwards is representative of the large number of births that followed the armistice. The overall increase in the number of people aged 90 and over can be attributed to a decrease in mortality amongst older ages.

**Figure 1: Persons aged 90-99 by sex, Scotland 2002 to 2012**



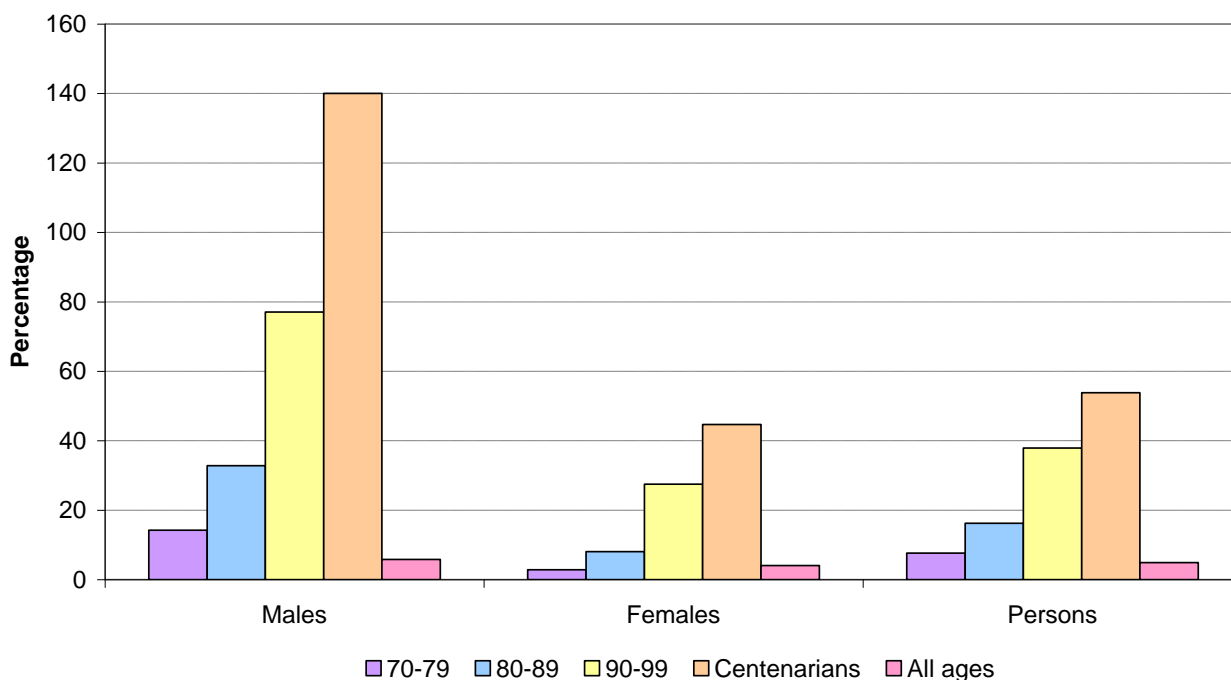
**Figure 2: Centenarians by sex, Scotland 2002 to 2012**





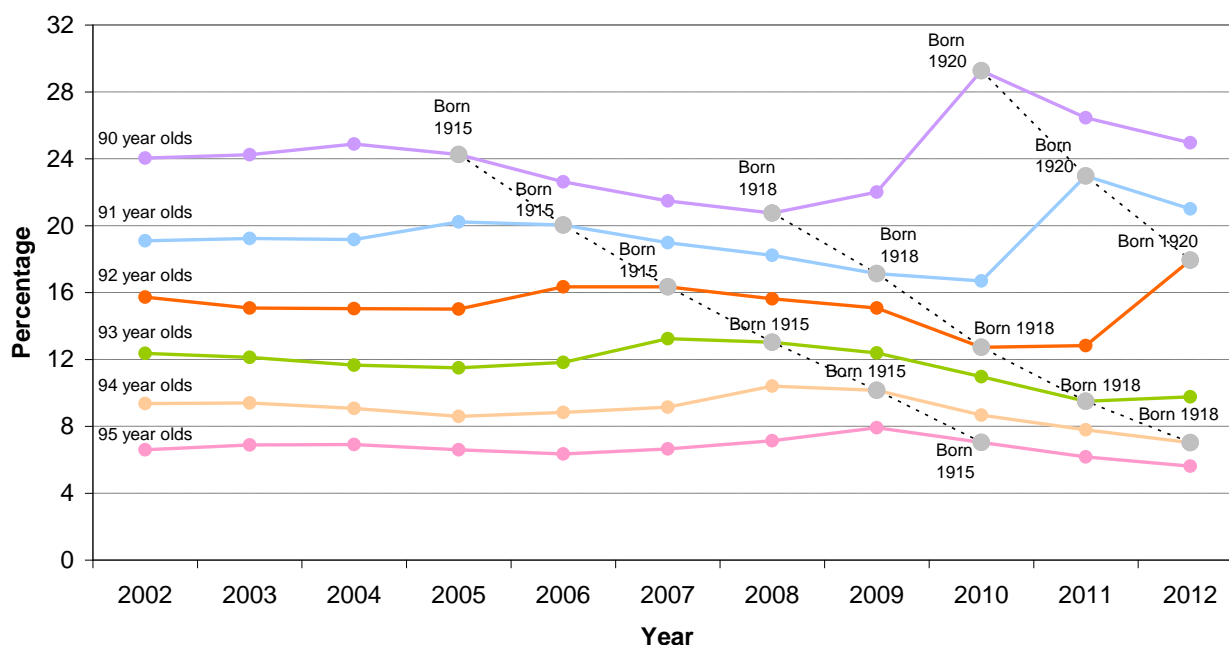
- 3.4 In the period 2002 to 2012 the population aged 90 to 99 increased by 38 per cent from 26,190 to 36,110; a 77 per cent increase for males (from 5,490 to 9,720) and a more modest 27 per cent increase for females (from 20,700 to 26,390).
- 3.5 The population aged 100+ (the centenarian population) increased by 54 per cent (from 520 in 2002 to 800 in 2012). The male centenarian population more than doubled (from 50 in 2002 to 120 in 2012), while the female population increased by 45 per cent (from 470 in 2002 to 680 in 2012).
- 3.6 As Figure 3 shows, the percentage increase for males is consistently higher than females at older ages. It is also clear that, over the decade, the number of people aged 80-89, 90-99, and 100+ has increased at a rate higher than the population of Scotland as a whole, an indication of the ageing population.

**Figure 3: Percentage population change by age group, Scotland 2002 to 2012**



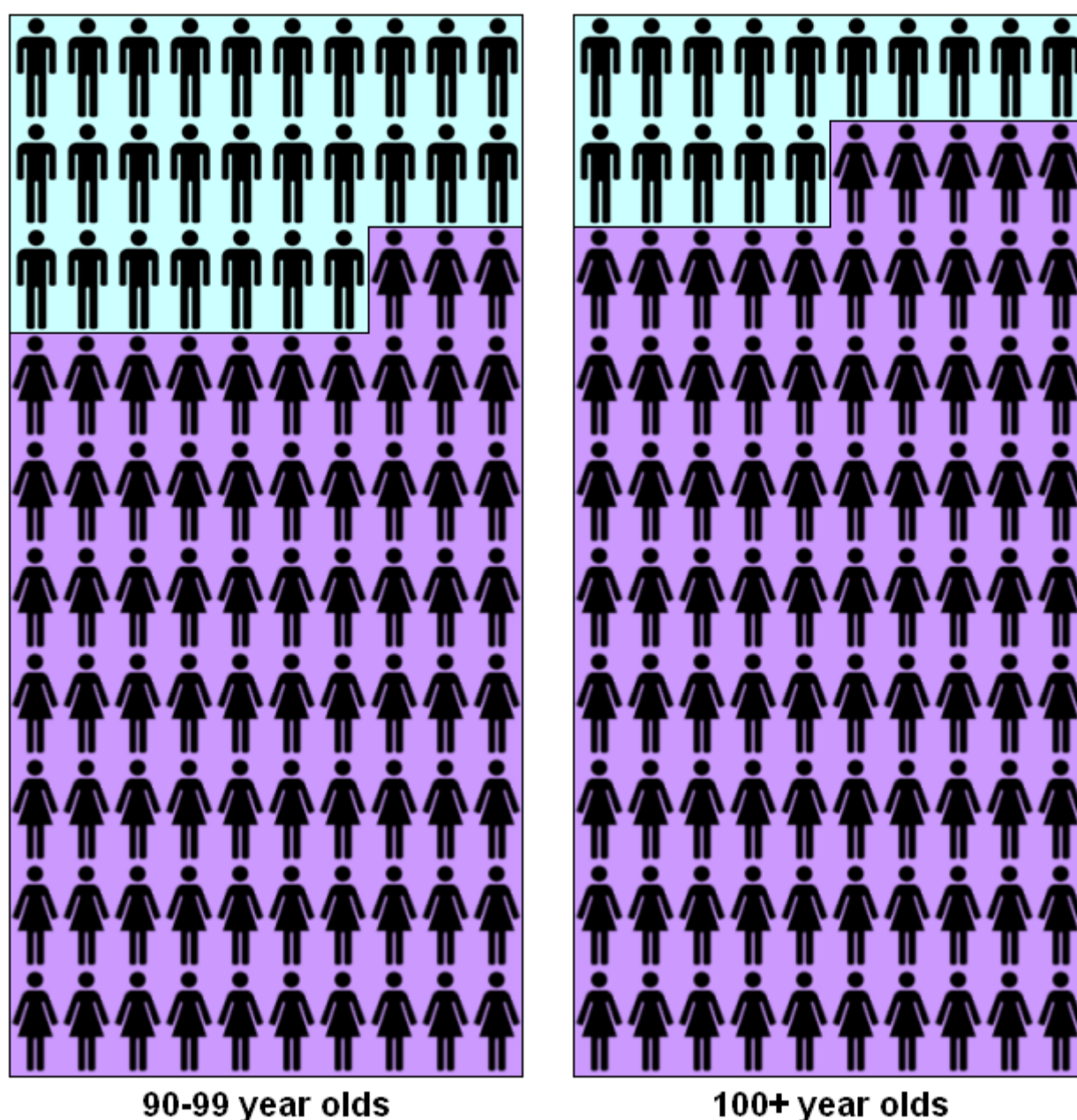
- 3.7 Between 2006 and 2009 there was a drop in the estimated number of 90-99 year olds (from 28,430 to 27,930). This is largely due to lower numbers of men and women at the lower end of this age-range. The small size of this cohort relative to previous years can be traced back to a lower number of births in the years 1915 to 1919, coinciding with the First World War. The recent relatively big increases in the 90 to 99 year old age-group can be associated with the population of 91 and 92 year olds who were born in 1920 and 1921 – the first birth cohorts after the First World War. Births recorded in 1920 were the highest since the introduction of national registration in 1855, while the number of births in 1921 was similar to the pre-war years.
- 3.8 These trends can be seen clearly in Figure 4 where the proportions at age 90 to 95 remain relatively constant until the cohort born in 1915 reaches 90 years old. From then until the cohort born in 1918, the proportion of 90 to 96 year olds declines. This is then contrasted by the cohort born in 1920 which sees an increase in the proportion of 90 year olds in 2010. The proportions for 90 year olds only return to more or less the levels seen before the 1915 cohort in 2012.

**Figure 4: Persons aged 90 to 95 as a percentage of total persons aged 90 and over, Scotland 2002 to 2012**



- 3.9 Even with the substantial increase in the elderly male population, elderly women still greatly outnumber elderly men. In 2012, 27 per cent of the 90 to 99 age group and 15 per cent of centenarians were men.
- 3.10 In 2002, 21 per cent of the 90 to 99 age group and 10 per cent of centenarians were men. This represents a 28 per cent increase for the 90 to 99 age group and a 56 per cent increase for centenarians over the decade.
- 3.11 Figure 5 illustrates the 2012 data by looking at these ages as groups of 100 people. If we were to gather 100 90-99 year olds and 100 centenarians together then on average for the 90-99 year olds there would be 27 men and 73 women, while amongst centenarians there would be 15 men and 85 women.

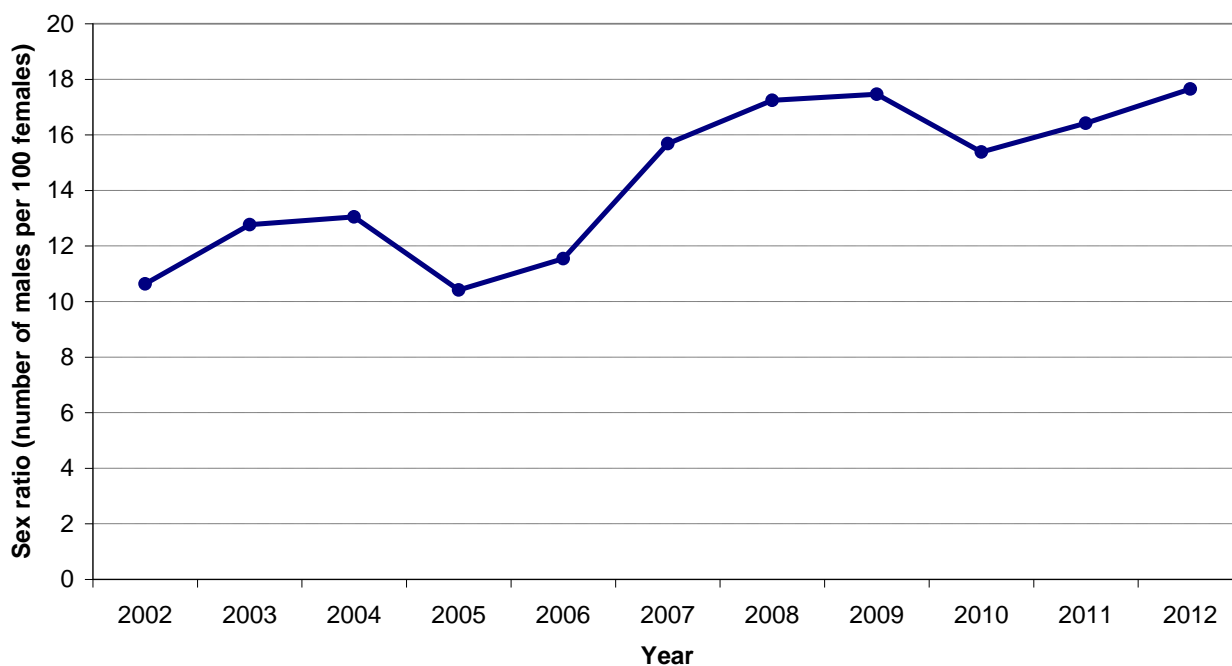
**Figure 5: Number of males and females per 100 90-99 year olds and per 100 centenarians, Scotland 2012**



3.12 The small number of male centenarians compared to female centenarians can affect the ratio of males to females in this age group for any given year. This can be seen in Figure 6 where small variations in the number of male and female centenarians may have affected the ratios in 2005, 2006, and 2010.

3.13 However, this has not affected the overall trend which, over the decade, has seen the number of male centenarians per 100 female centenarians increase from 11 in 2002 to 18 in 2012 indicating that the gap between men and women's mortality in this age group has decreased over the period.

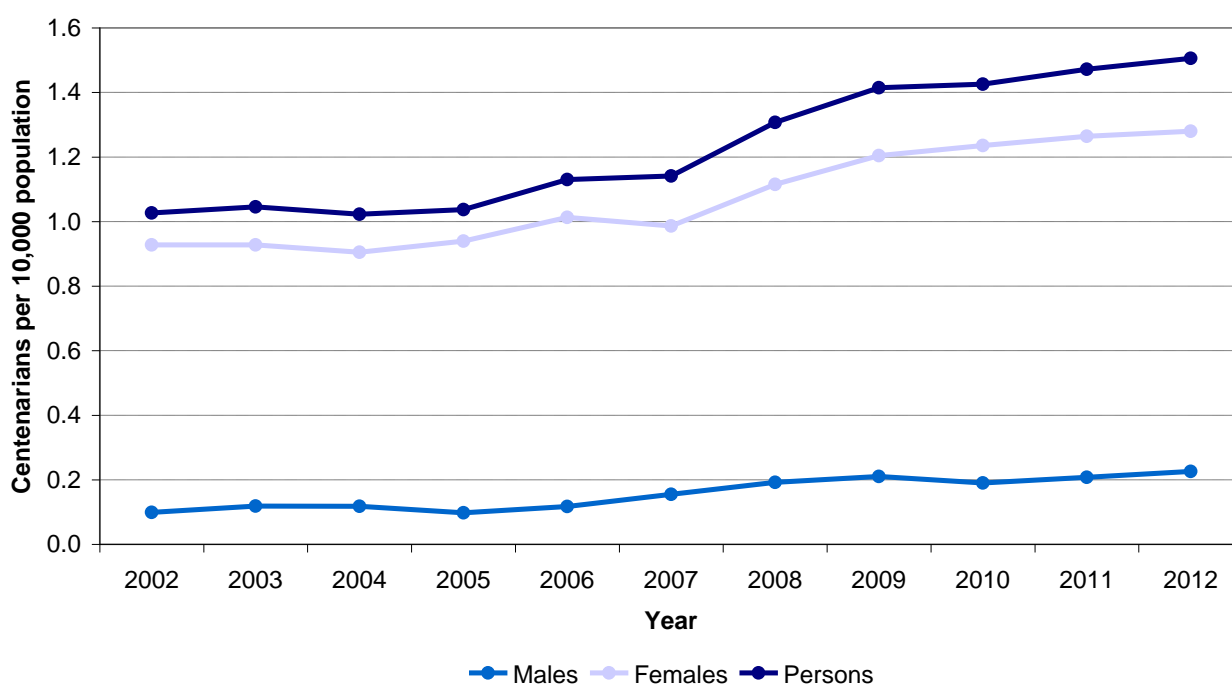
**Figure 6: Ratio of male centenarians per 100 female centenarians, Scotland 2002 to 2012**



3.14 Centenarians make up a slightly larger proportion of the population at UK level than in Scotland. Between 2002 and 2012 the rate of increase in the number of centenarians in the whole of the UK is greater than in Scotland for women. However, the rate of increase in the number of centenarians in the whole of the UK is less than the rate of increase in Scotland for men. This is another indicator of the narrowing of mortality between men and women at older ages.

3.15 Although centenarians are still rare, the number of centenarians in Scotland's total population has increased from 1.0 per 10,000 in 2002 to 1.5 per 10,000 in 2012, as shown in Figure 7. For males, the number of centenarians relative to the total population increased from 0.1 per 10,000 to 0.2 per 10,000 in this period. For females, there was an increase from 0.9 per 10,000 to 1.3 per 10,000.

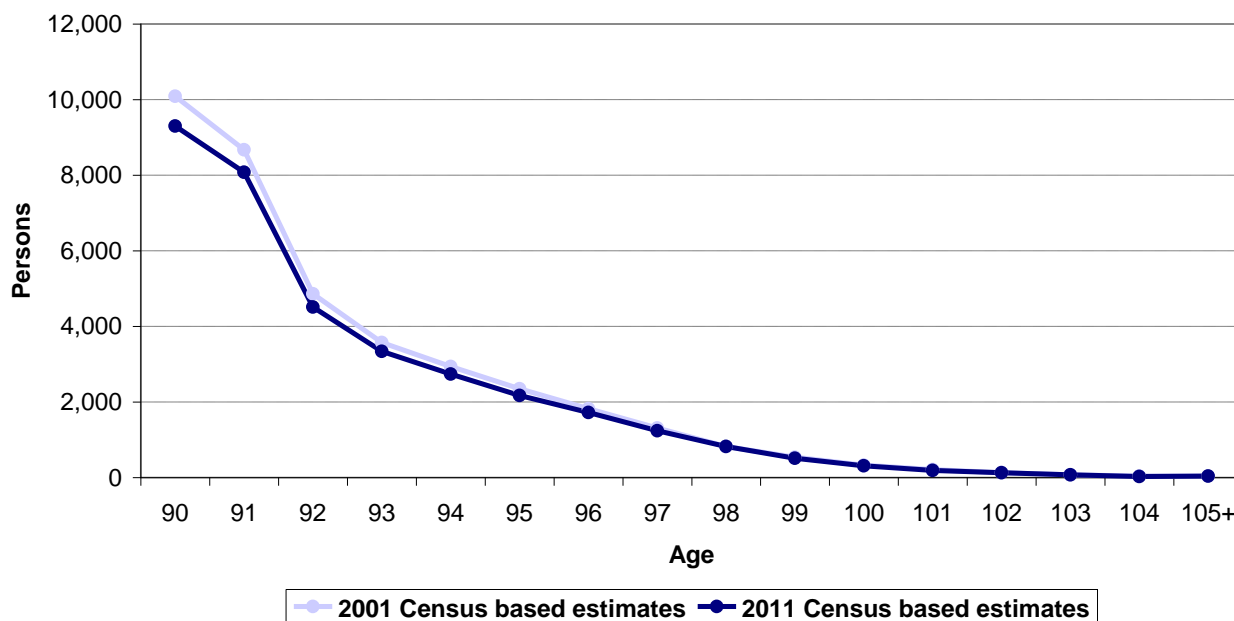
**Figure 7: Centenarians per 10,000 population, Scotland 2002 to 2012**



#### 4. Impact of using revised population estimates in the calculations

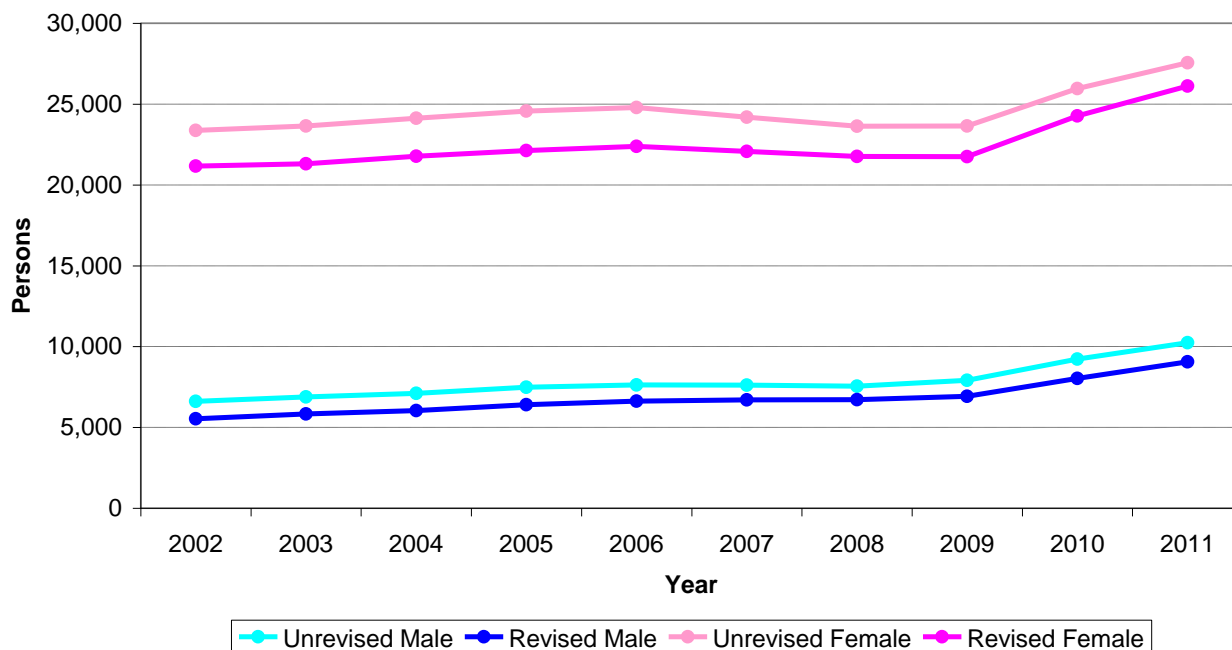
4.1 The 2011 Census based mid-year estimates for 2011 estimated 35,170 people aged 90 and over. This was 2,630 fewer people than the estimate of 37,800 people aged 90 and over which had previously been published using the 2011 mid-year estimates rolled-forward from the 2001 Census. As Figure 8 shows, the difference can mainly be attributed to 90 and 91 year olds with even older ages being less affected as the overall numbers are smaller.

**Figure 8: Comparison of population in the 2001 Census based estimates and 2011 Census based estimates for mid-year 2011, by single year of age 90 to 104 and 105+ for Scotland**



4.2 There were 9,050 men over 90 recorded in the 2011 Census based mid-year estimates which was 11.6 per cent lower than the rolled-forward estimate of 10,240. Similarly, for women there were 26,120 women over 90 recorded in the 2011 Census based mid-year estimates which was 5.2 per cent lower than the rolled forward estimate of 27,560. Figure 9 shows the effect that rebasing the mid-year estimates to take account of this difference, has had on the estimates of both men and women over the age of 90, over the decade.

**Figure 9: Comparison of the 2001 Census based and 2011 Census based population estimates of those aged 90+, by sex, Scotland 2002 to 2011**



4.3 The main cause of the difference between the estimates at this age group can most likely be attributed to over estimation during the 2001 Census. This is because migration is assumed to be minimal and the quality of deaths data is deemed to be high, limiting the scope for error to the base population from census results. A report explaining the differences between the 2011 Census and the rolled-forward mid-year estimates can be found on the National Records of Scotland (NRS) website<sup>4</sup>.

**Footnote**

4) [2011 Census Reconciliation Report - Population](#) - available on the NRS website

**Table 1: Mid-2002 to mid-2012 population estimates of the very elderly (including centenarians), by sex, single year of age, Scotland**

Rounded to the nearest ten

Mid-year population	Persons 90-99	Persons 100+	Persons 90	Persons 91	Persons 92	Persons 93	Persons 94	Persons 95	Persons 96	Persons 97	Persons 98	Persons 99	Persons 100	Persons 101	Persons 102	Persons 103	Persons 104	Persons 105+
<b>2002</b>	<b>26,190</b>	<b>520</b>	6,420	5,100	4,200	3,300	2,500	1,760	1,250	800	510	350	240	120	80	40	20	20
<b>2003</b>	<b>26,620</b>	<b>530</b>	6,580	5,220	4,090	3,290	2,550	1,870	1,270	880	550	330	230	140	70	50	20	20
<b>2004</b>	<b>27,290</b>	<b>520</b>	6,920	5,330	4,180	3,240	2,520	1,920	1,360	860	590	370	220	140	80	40	30	20
<b>2005</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>530</b>	6,920	5,770	4,280	3,280	2,450	1,880	1,400	1,020	590	410	230	120	90	50	20	30
<b>2006</b>	<b>28,430</b>	<b>580</b>	6,560	5,810	4,740	3,430	2,560	1,840	1,390	1,020	680	400	260	140	80	40	30	20
<b>2007</b>	<b>28,180</b>	<b>590</b>	6,180	5,460	4,700	3,810	2,630	1,910	1,340	980	710	470	250	180	80	40	30	30
<b>2008</b>	<b>27,800</b>	<b>680</b>	5,910	5,190	4,450	3,710	2,960	2,030	1,410	970	680	480	310	160	100	50	20	40
<b>2009</b>	<b>27,930</b>	<b>740</b>	6,310	4,910	4,320	3,550	2,910	2,270	1,520	1,010	680	470	320	200	100	70	20	30
<b>2010</b>	<b>31,550</b>	<b>750</b>	9,450	5,390	4,110	3,540	2,800	2,270	1,680	1,130	720	460	310	200	130	60	40	20
<b>2011</b>	<b>34,390</b>	<b>780</b>	9,300	8,080	4,510	3,340	2,740	2,170	1,720	1,240	820	510	310	190	130	70	30	40
<b>2012</b>	<b>36,110</b>	<b>800</b>	9,210	7,750	6,620	3,600	2,590	2,070	1,630	1,230	880	530	330	200	130	70	40	30
	<b>Males 90-99</b>	<b>Males 100+</b>	Males 90	Males 91	Males 92	Males 93	Males 94	Males 95	Males 96	Males 97	Males 98	Males 99	Males 100	Males 101	Males 102	Males 103	Males 104	Males 105+
<b>2002</b>	<b>5,490</b>	<b>50</b>	1,540	1,170	900	670	480	310	200	110	70	40	20	20	10	<5	<5	<5
<b>2003</b>	<b>5,780</b>	<b>60</b>	1,710	1,200	900	660	500	360	210	140	70	40	30	10	10	10	<5	<5
<b>2004</b>	<b>5,980</b>	<b>60</b>	1,700	1,340	920	680	480	350	260	130	80	40	30	10	10	<5	<5	<5
<b>2005</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>50</b>	1,830	1,400	1,030	690	490	330	250	200	90	50	20	10	10	10	<5	<5
<b>2006</b>	<b>6,560</b>	<b>60</b>	1,700	1,480	1,130	820	510	340	240	170	120	60	30	10	10	<5	<5	<5
<b>2007</b>	<b>6,620</b>	<b>80</b>	1,680	1,380	1,140	850	610	360	250	150	120	80	40	30	10	10	<5	<5
<b>2008</b>	<b>6,620</b>	<b>100</b>	1,580	1,370	1,080	860	660	460	250	170	100	80	50	30	10	10	<5	<5
<b>2009</b>	<b>6,810</b>	<b>110</b>	1,750	1,310	1,140	810	650	470	330	170	120	70	50	30	20	10	<5	<5
<b>2010</b>	<b>7,930</b>	<b>100</b>	2,650	1,440	1,050	910	630	480	340	230	110	80	40	30	20	10	<5	<5
<b>2011</b>	<b>8,940</b>	<b>110</b>	2,740	2,230	1,160	840	660	490	360	230	170	80	50	20	20	10	<5	<5
<b>2012</b>	<b>9,720</b>	<b>120</b>	2,780	2,250	1,810	910	630	480	350	240	160	110	50	30	20	10	10	<5
	<b>Females 90-99</b>	<b>Females 100+</b>	Females 90	Females 91	Females 92	Females 93	Females 94	Females 95	Females 96	Females 97	Females 98	Females 99	Females 100	Females 101	Females 102	Females 103	Females 104	Females 105+
<b>2002</b>	<b>20,700</b>	<b>470</b>	4,880	3,930	3,300	2,630	2,020	1,450	1,050	690	440	310	220	100	70	40	20	20
<b>2003</b>	<b>20,840</b>	<b>470</b>	4,870	4,020	3,190	2,630	2,050	1,510	1,060	740	480	290	200	130	60	40	20	20
<b>2004</b>	<b>21,310</b>	<b>460</b>	5,220	3,990	3,260	2,560	2,040	1,570	1,100	730	510	330	190	130	70	40	30	20
<b>2005</b>	<b>21,640</b>	<b>480</b>	5,090	4,370	3,250	2,590	1,960	1,550	1,150	820	500	360	210	110	80	40	20	30
<b>2006</b>	<b>21,870</b>	<b>520</b>	4,860	4,330	3,610	2,610	2,050	1,500	1,150	850	560	340	230	130	70	40	30	20
<b>2007</b>	<b>21,560</b>	<b>510</b>	4,500	4,080	3,560	2,960	2,020	1,550	1,090	830	590	390	210	150	70	30	30	30
<b>2008</b>	<b>21,180</b>	<b>580</b>	4,330	3,820	3,370	2,850	2,300	1,570	1,160	800	580	400	260	130	90	40	20	40
<b>2009</b>	<b>21,120</b>	<b>630</b>	4,560	3,600	3,180	2,740	2,260	1,800	1,190	840	560	400	270	170	80	60	20	30
<b>2010</b>	<b>23,620</b>	<b>650</b>	6,800	3,950	3,060	2,630	2,170	1,790	1,340	900	610	380	270	170	110	50	40	20
<b>2011</b>	<b>25,450</b>	<b>670</b>	6,560	5,850	3,350	2,500	2,080	1,680	1,360	1,010	650	430	260	170	110	60	30	40
<b>2012</b>	<b>26,390</b>	<b>680</b>	6,430	5,500	4,810	2,690	1,960	1,590	1,280	990	720	420	280	170	110	60	30	30

Please note these figures are provisional estimates. The survivorship rate methodology used in these estimates means that previous years' estimates may change when a new year of data is added. Although these figures are quoted to the nearest ten people they may not be accurate to the level that might otherwise be inferred by rounding. Figures may not add exactly because of rounding.



## 5. Notes on statistical publications

### National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority (UKSA) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in line with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website).

This can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified needs of users;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to reliable methods, and
- are managed in a fair, independent and unbiased way in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics, the Code of Practice for Official Statistics must continue to be followed.

### National Records of Scotland

We, the National Records of Scotland ([www.nrscotland.gov.uk](http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk)), are a non-ministerial department of the Scottish Government. Our aim is to provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland. We do this by:

- Preserving the past – We look after Scotland’s national archives so that they are available for current and future generations, and we make available important information for family history.
- Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.
- Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the [Statistics](#) section of our website. Statistics from the 2001 Census are on [Scotland’s Census Results On-Line \(SCROL\)](#) website and the 2011 Census results are held on the [Scotland’s Census](#) website.

We also provide information about future publications on our website. If you would like us to tell you about future statistical publications, you can register your interest on the Scottish Government [ScotStat](#) website.

## Enquiries and suggestions

Please visit our [enquiries](#) page if you need any further information.

Email: [customer@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customer@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our standards of service, please contact:

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## 6. Related organisations

Organisation	Contact
<p>The Scottish Government (SG) forms the bulk of the devolved Scottish Administration. The aim of the statistical service in the SG is to provide relevant and reliable statistical information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland.</p>	<p>Office of the Chief Statistician            Scottish Government            3WR, St Andrews House            Edinburgh            EH1 3DG</p> <p>Phone: 0131 244 0442</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk">statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics">www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics</a></p>
<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing a wide range of economic and social statistics. It also carries out the Census of Population for England and Wales</p>	<p>Customer Contact Centre            Room 1.01            Office for National Statistics            Cardiff Road            Newport            NP10 8XG</p> <p>Phone: 0845 601 3034            Minicom: 01633 815044</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk">info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/">www.ons.gov.uk/</a></p>
<p>The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is Northern Ireland's official statistics organisation. The agency is also responsible for registering births, marriages, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland, and the Census of Population.</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency            McAuley House            2-14 Castle Street            Belfast            BT1 1SA</p> <p>Phone: 028 9034 8100</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:info.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk">info.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.nisra.gov.uk">www.nisra.gov.uk</a></p>

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