

Household Analysis Review Group (HARG)

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Trends in household composition

Introduction

This paper notes some work that NRS and others having been doing to analyse trends in household formation rates.

Analysis

From an initial analysis of census and Scottish Household Survey (SHS) data, we can see that household composition is changing over time, in some cases quite significantly. Major changes involve shrinking household size, more people living alone, and the effects caused by the aging of the population. The analysis work we have done in particular looked at the age/sex groups affected by the shift towards living alone. The shift towards living alone seems to be driven in large part by 30-65 year old males. Females from 60 years and older are now less likely to live alone due to the increased life expectancy of males. They are instead more likely to live in an elderly couple. We recently drafted a short paper on this topic for the Scottish Government 'Strategic Insights Unit'.

Analysis by NRS and others has also looked at a trend towards adult children living longer in the family home. For example, a [recent report](#) published by Civitas considered this as part of an analysis of changes over time in household formation rates, looking at correlations between the decline in the proportion of single-person households among younger adults and how the extent of that correlates with relative housing costs.

This is clearly a complex area for analysis. We plan to write up our work on this in more detail, to share with members of HARG and others.

Summary

Views from members of the Group on this topic are invited, in particular on any specific suggestions for further analysis that we should look at.

National Records of Scotland
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