

Minutes Of The Population And Migration Statistics (Pams) Committee (Scotland): 9 Dec 2009

Present:

Kirsty MacLachlan (Chair)	General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) (Head of Demography Division)
Alasdair Anthony (Minutes)	GROS (Population & Migration Statistics)
Frank Dixon	GROS (Vital Events)
Jenny Boag	Falkirk Council
Heather Smith	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Dorothy Watson	GROS (Household Estimates & Projections)
Donna Hosie	GROS (Dissemination & 2001 Census Analysis)
Esther Roughsedge	GROS (Household Estimates & Projections)
Keira Murray	GROS (Population & Migration Statistics)
Jan Freeke	Glasgow City Council
Esta Clark	GROS (Population & Migration Statistics)
Chris Carr	Argyll & Bute Council
Sandy Taylor	GROS (Census Questionnaires and Outputs)
Alistair Harvey	City of Edinburgh Council
Alison Burlison	Information Services Division (ISD)
Peter Scrimgeour	GROS (Head of Census Division)
Lisa Dammelhart	Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Sheena Stevely	Renfrewshire Council
Ganka Mueller	GROS (Alternative Sources)
Claire Boag	GROS (Alternative Sources)

1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: David McPhee (Scottish Government (SG): Communities Analytical Services), Paul Boyle (University of St. Andrews), Kateryna McKinnon (Highlands and Islands Enterprise, replaced by Lisa Dammelhart and Heather Smith), Paul McNamara (Stirling Council).
- 1.2 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed everyone and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Jan Freeke asked that we thank Andrew White and Celia Macintyre for their service to PAMS over the years.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 20 May 2009

- 2.1 The minutes were approved.

3. Update on action points from the previous meeting

- 3.1 Action 3.2 – It was agreed that future meetings would start at 1.15 pm.
- 3.2 Action 3.2 – Jenny said that Forth Valley may ask GROS to visit them.
- 3.3 Action 7.3 – Staff for the Centre for Population Change are expected to start around March 2010. Scottish Government researchers are assessing current demography research.

- 3.4 Action 8.12 – It was thought that this action point referred to access to census data. The 2011 census output consultation would cover this aspect of data access.
- 3.5 Action 9.10 – Kirsty informed the meeting that a UK-wide population working group was looking into the issue of the population base for the 2011 census.

4. Format and membership of PAMS

- 4.1 It was noted that there is a lack of representation from academics and Health Boards. It was felt that Health Boards may not be able to spare the time to get involved and Alison felt that she could cover their interests. Alison also mentioned that Robert Murdoch had now left ISD and should be removed from the list of PAMS members. It was agreed that the membership should stay as it is.

Action: PAMS secretary to ask PAMS members to send a substitute to meetings if they can't make it personally.

5. 2011 Census progress report

- 5.1 Peter outlined the main points from the paper. The rehearsal evaluation report will be published on 14 January. The Census Order has been laid before the Scottish Parliament and following parliamentary debate, it is expected to be approved by the 22 January. The Scottish Census Steering Committee is working well and Jenny Boag has now joined. A gateway review will be held in January 2010. In addition, the UK Statistics Authority has begun its own assessment of the census programme. Work is underway to build up case studies of usage of census data to help with local publicity of the 2011 Census. Peter would welcome any suggestions to aid this work.
- 5.2 Plans for quality assuring the census results are being developed along with Office for National Statistics (ONS), for example comparison with rolled forward population estimates. PAMS and/or local authorities will be consulted further about this work.
- 5.3 Sandy gave an update on a number of items related to work on census outputs. A formal user consultation will run for 12 weeks from February 2010. This will seek feedback on an initial set of proposed pre-defined tabular outputs for the 2011 Census, as well as comments from users on a number of other outputs-related issues. It was planned to supplement the consultation with a number of roadshow events (similar to those held in previous consultation rounds). The Census Outputs Geography Working Group had held a useful first meeting at the end of August and it was planned to hold a further meeting in early spring. The UK census offices continued to work together in order to meet demand for UK-level outputs, for example in relation to meeting the requirements of Eurostat.
- 5.4 Jenny indicated that she was supportive of the work of the Census Outputs Geography Working Group. She suggested holding consultation roadshows in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness/Aberdeen.

The publishing of census rehearsal evaluation reports was welcomed. Jenny noted that she had trouble finding the census orders on the ONS and GROS websites. [The link to the Census Order for Scotland can be found on the GROS website:

<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm2011/policy-and-methodology/census-order.html>]

- 5.5 Jenny felt that there was some overlap and a lack of clarity about the remits of PAMS and the Scottish Census Steering Committee (SCSC), commenting that PAMS should function as the main census advisory group. She noted that a broad range of views is available through PAMS, while the SCSC may not have the right experience to offer detailed advice on the census. Jenny also made the general point that there was often too much emphasis on information provision rather than consultation. Peter advised that the SCSC had been established by the Registrar General to act as a stakeholder group, while PAMS was still seen as the main advisory channel for the census in Scotland. It was suggested that the title of PAMS might be changed to highlight its census advisory role more, perhaps to Population, Census and Migration Statistics. Kirsty MacLachlan said that future agendas could have a stronger emphasis on census work, for example on quality assurance work.
- 5.6 In response to a question from Jan, it was noted that the plan was to publish the 2011 mid-year population in autumn 2012 (taking into account the 2011 Census results), and that this will include estimates to local authority level. When asked about census outputs for intermediate geographies, Sandy said that output areas would continue to be the lowest level building blocks for all census outputs and that users will be consulted about which intermediate geographies they would like to have standard pre-defined outputs available for. Jan asked that boundaries be maintained wherever possible as it is very important that census outputs can be compared with those from previous years. Jenny asked if census outputs would be available through Saspac as it allows comparison of census outputs from 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001, and also allows Local Authorities (LA's) to combine geographies into areas which can be used and stored (e.g. school catchment areas). Sandy confirmed that the aim for 2011 Census outputs was to provide users with as much flexibility as possible, both in terms of defining their own tabulations (through making data available in extended tables or "hyper-cubes") and in terms of defining their own geographies. However, he noted that the amount of detail that could be made available in hyper-cubes for different levels of geography would depend to a great extent on disclosure control considerations.
- 5.7 Heather said that she uses SCROL to access census data and it would be very useful if queries could be saved so that the same geographies don't have to be built up repeatedly. Sandy noted this point, adding that one aim for 2011 was to provide a better interface between census results and the data available on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website. He said that GROS was currently considering how best to exploit the functionality offered by the software tools now available, for example the approach taken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to its census outputs:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/census+data>

6. Update from PAMS conference

- 6.1 Kirsty said that feedback forms had shown that most people rated the event as good or excellent and enjoyed the networking opportunity. There was perhaps a bit of information over-load and the start time was too early for some. Topics suggested for future events included a question and answer open forum, healthy life expectancy, administrative data/ quality checking.
- 6.2 Sheena said that the impression she got was that the content of the conference was good but that the early start and non-central venue were not so good. It was suggested that the start should be no earlier than 10am and Fridays should be avoided (as many people who have flexible working tend not to work Fridays), but that Oct/Nov was a good time of year. It would also be better to try and avoid clashes with ScotStat and SIMD publication and school holidays.

7. ScotStat Board meeting update

- 7.1 Jenny reported back from the ScotStat conference. The Statistics User Forum, which is part of RSS, may forge links with ScotStat. There was an update from the UK Statistics Authority. There was also a summary of stakeholder engagement across the SG statistics group. Esther noted that as GROS statistics were to be assessed next autumn PAMS members would likely be asked to provide feedback as stakeholders.

Action: Kirsty/Alasdair Anthony to add UK Statistics Authority assessment and the role of stakeholders to the agenda for the next meeting

8. Non-Census

(a) Population and migration statistics

- 8.1 Esta highlighted the main points of the population and migration statistics branch update. There had been several staff changes, with Celia Macintyre, Andrew White and another member of staff all leaving and Esta Clark, Keira Murray and Bart Jaron joining the team. Harvey Snowling has taken over the work on POPGROUP small area projections. Alan Sloan has also joined and he is shared with the Household estimates and projections branch.
- 8.2 The main upcoming publication is the sub-national population projections. A consultation document was sent out to all Local Authorities, about 18 replies have been received. The aim is to write back to Local Authorities explaining how the assumptions have been changed.
- 8.3 The SAPE QA work is progressing, discussions are taking place with the data owners about gaining permission to share the data. Life expectancy methodology is being looked at, especially in relation to treatment of deaths of non-residents. Work to produce population estimates by ethnic group is nearly at the stage of producing a mid-year estimate for 2001. The Scotland level data will be analysed to see if it is feasible to produce smaller area data. An update and timescale for this work will be given at the next meeting.
- 8.4 Alistair Harvey reported that he had attended the POPGROUP user group meeting. This was chaired by Worcester Council and support was provided by the private sector. He found it very useful and thought that a Scottish

group, hosted by GROS, would be a good idea. Sheena agreed, saying that a lot of Local Authorities have POPGROUP but aren't sure of the best way to use it. It was explained that POPGROUP is currently available for a one-off payment but it may move to an annual licence funding model. The main investment is in time spent getting people to know how to use it effectively. A Scottish user group should also include HOUSEGROUP and could be a forum for training sessions.

Action: Esta/Harvey Snowling to facilitate a Scottish POP and HOUSEGROUP user forum.

- 8.5 Jan asked about the response to the sub-national population projection consultation. Some Local Authorities thought that the projections were too high, other that they were too low. The aim is to publish a high migration variant (and other variants) in March but the exact type of variants is yet to be finalised. The household projection variants would probably align with the population projection variants. This will be discussed at a Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) meeting in the spring.
- 8.6 Impact of revisions – Esta outlined the main points of the revisions strategy paper. Jenny indicated that she would like more time to think about it but her immediate reaction was that it would need to be considered on a case-by-case basis. She also felt that the current figures were the most important but Alison pointed out that for some ISD work accurate historical figures were also important. Sheena said that revisions create a big workload for Local Authorities and would like revisions to be kept to a minimum. This was a view shared by most at the meeting. Jan questioned the need to revise figures so close to the 2011 census, after which all the figures would be revised anyway. He also pointed out that a distinction could be made between correcting errors and refining methodology. It was generally agreed that for most changes to methodology it would be preferable to continue with the new method from that point but not revise backwards. Sheena suggested having a separate page on the website listing what revisions have been made, so that this can easily be checked before using data.

Action: Donna to investigate the possibility of adding a page to the website that lists all revisions made to GROS statistics.

- 8.7 Northern Ireland migration problem – Jenny Boag indicated that this seemed to be a borderline case as to whether full revisions should be done. Jan and Alistair Harvey thought it would be best to apply the correct data from 2009 onwards but not to revise backwards. This would be in line with revisions applied as a result of the IMPS project which applied a new method from 2004/05 onwards but not retrospectively.

(b) Household estimate and projections

- 8.8 Esther went through the main points of the update paper covering her branch. Alan Sloan has joined the branch as a replacement for Lisa. Esther will be going on maternity leave in February and her post will be covered on a temporary basis. Small revisions have been made to the 2006-based projections for Scotland, Fife and the SESplan and TAYplan SDP areas. The 2008-based projections will be released in May. Work investigating the use of alternative sources such as the Corporate Address Gazetteer is continuing. A

paper on estimation of newly formed households was presented to the Centre for Housing Market Analysis. Esther asked that Dot Watson and Martin Macfie are copied-in to any correspondence with her as she has been off work quite a lot recently.

- 8.9 Sheena pointed out that George Moody from GROS geography was working on communal establishments, Dot indicated that she was aware of this work. Sheena asked if she could be given a list of premises regarded as communal establishments so that they can be checked by the Local Authority. Information on number of bed spaces would also be useful. Alistair Harvey said that it would be useful to be given as much information as possible rather than aggregate data on communal establishments.

Action: Dot to provide Local Authorities with more detail on communal establishments in their area.

Sheena asked about what geography the estimates of newly formed households would be at. Esther said that the work would initially be done at Local Authority level but other geographies such as Housing Market Areas would be considered.

Jan commented that there appeared to be inconsistency between projected household headship rates by household type from GROS and the Scottish Household Survey data for 2001 to 2008 and asked if more up to date survey data could be used to improve the household estimate methodology. Esther said that this would be looked into.

(c) Alternative Sources

- 8.10 Ganka summarised the update paper which covers her branch's activities over the past year. Part of the census quality assurance work has involved creating a 'hard to count index' of data zones which was used in the design of the census coverage survey. This will be assessed using the census rehearsal data. The branch has also been involved in linkage work using, for example, the NHS Central Register. This allows duplicate and missing records to be identified.
- 8.11 Jenny said it would be useful to have an Alternative Sources branch update for every PAMS meeting. She would also like to hear more about the longer term aims of the work. Ganka said that goal of the work was ultimately to replace the census but to produce short-term outputs along the way. The plan was to be able to be in a position to make a decision in 2013/14 about replacing the 2021 census.

Action: Provide a more comprehensive update on Census QA for future PAMS meetings.

(d) Dissemination and 2001 Census Analysis

- 8.12 Donna introduced herself as she had just taken-up post. The GROS website has recently been improved and this work was on-going. A lot of the ideas for improvement came from feedback from the 2008 PAMS conference. A website focus group was being set-up and PAMS members should get in touch with Donna if they would like to be part of it.

Action: Donna to remove the erroneous 2008-based population projections entry from the list of forthcoming publications.

9. Proposed changes in arrangements for publishing divorce statistics

- 9.1 Frank outlined the main points from the paper on the proposed changes in arrangements for publishing divorce statistics. The meeting attendees indicated that they had no strong views and were happy to accept the proposals.

10. Any other business

- 10.1 Kirsty noted that the UK-wide population theme group was becoming more stakeholder based. The Terms of Reference of the group are to provide advice to the National Statistician on population statistics, horizon scanning and planning. The group is looking for a representative from ScotStat. Jenny mentioned that CLIP have a population group and it might be better to get representation from there. As there were no volunteers for the representative it was suggested that PAMS members could become email-only representatives. In the meantime Kirsty will feedback to PAMS.

Action: Kirsty to feedback to PAMS following 8th Feb meeting.

- 10.2 Agenda for next meeting: More on the 2011 Census, how the Census are planning to use admin data for developing the Census QA system, Alternative Sources current work and long term plans, UK Statistics Authority feedback and communications.

11. Date of next meeting

- 11.1 It was felt that there may be a need to increase the frequency of meetings slightly in the run up to the 2011 Census. Aim to hold the next meeting early May.