

# Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland): 17 May 2010

Present:

Kirsty MacLachlan (Chair)	General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) (Head of Demography Division)
Alasdair Anthony (Minutes)	GROS (Population & Migration Statistics)
Jenny Boag	Falkirk Council
Dorothy Watson	GROS (Household Estimates & Projections)
Donna Hosie	GROS (Dissemination & 2001 Census Analysis)
Thomas Robertson	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 Outputs)
Alison Burlison	Health Information Services Division (ISD)
Ganka Mueller	GROS (Alternative Sources)
Karen Hawkes	GROS (Vital Events)
Iain Stewart	Renfrewshire
Heidi Goodship	Scottish Borders
Harvey Snowling	GROS (Population & Migration statistics)
Laura Murison	GROS (Processing, Surveys and Quality)
David Blue	GROS (Processing, Surveys and Quality)
Paul Boyle	St Andrews University
Ann Blake (by telephone)	Office for National Statistics (ONS) (Centre for Demography)

## 1. Introductions and apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from: David McPhee (Scottish Government: Communities Analytical Services), Ian White (ONS), Alistair Harvey (City of Edinburgh Council), Heather Smith (Highlands and Islands Enterprise), Esther Roughsedge (GROS, maternity leave), Peter Scrimgeour (GROS), Frank Dixon (replaced by Karen Hawkes), Roma Chappell (replaced by Ann Blake).
- 1.2 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## 2. Minutes of meeting held on 9 December 2009

- 2.1 The minutes were approved.

## 3. Update on action points from the previous meeting

- 3.1 Action 8.8 – Local Authorities were provided with more detail on communal establishments in their area. Previously information only provided aggregated by type of communal establishment and by age and gender. This time around information provided for individual communal establishments, where permissions allowed.

3.2 Updates for other actions were presented in paper PAMS (10) 02.

#### 4. 2011 Census progress report

- 4.1 Sandy Taylor spoke to paper PAMS (10) 03. He highlighted that the draft Census (Scotland) Order 2010 was re-laid before the Scottish Parliament on 14 April and approved. The draft Census (Scotland) Regulations will be laid by 21 May. Changes to questions on ethnicity and national identity, religion and long-term health conditions have been made and the household income question has been removed from the questionnaire; work to award contracts to support the 2011 Census continues.
- 4.2 Sandy noted that the formal consultation on plans for 2011 Census Outputs was well underway with a closing date for submissions at the end of May. Census Division will then consider responses received, along with other feedback and publish a summary analysis on the GROS website towards the end of the summer.
- 4.3 The Census Outputs Geography working group met on 13 May. Census output areas and Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) data zones were discussed. Next steps are for the working group to consider responses on geography related issues arising from the recent consultation.
- 4.4 Jenny expressed her disappointment at the loss of the income question. She reported that the road shows were generally well received though they might have been more helpful if they had taken place slightly earlier in the consultation period. She noted that there were still some people keen to discuss the wording of questions even though this had been decided some time ago. Jenny asked about the rehearsal evaluation and assessment of any prototype system for disseminating the 2011 Census results - some users had expressed an interest in helping with the latter.
- 4.5 Paul Boyle also expressed his disappointment at the loss of the income question. He suggested that it could be worth involving politicians at an earlier stage to give time to address their concerns. The general view was that the Census should be taken out of the political process as far as possible.
- 4.6 The issue was raised of what other sources of data may be available to compensate for the loss of the income question. It was noted that the Department for Work and Pensions has good data on benefits but that data on income is not so easily available. Ann Blake mentioned that ONS have previously published small area income estimates but she wasn't sure what areas were covered. Thomas Robertson said that Tom Spencer (Scottish Government) had been doing some work on household income and he would find out more.
- 4.7 **Action:** Thomas Robertson to find out what work Tom Spencer has done on household income.

4.8 **Action:** Sandy Taylor to write a paper reviewing the 2011 Census parliamentary process and considering what lessons could be learned for the future

4.9 **Action:** Chair to add sources of data on household income to the agenda for future meetings.

## 5. 2011 Census QA work

5.1 Laura Murison gave a presentation on Census QA work. The presentation will be made available on the GROS website with the other meeting papers.

5.2 There may be some legal issues to be considered around the release of data to those involved in Census quality assurance. The procedures would be harmonised with ONS. Jenny was supportive of local authority involvement and would be able to supply a list of at least one contact from each authority. For the core group of about ten, a mix of representatives from urban and rural authorities would be needed. Geographic Information System (GIS) experience might also be useful.

5.3 Laura was keen to start the quality assurance group as soon as suitable members had been identified as cuts of data would need to be taken as close to Census day as possible. Jan suggested it would be useful to have a person specification describing who would be suitable for the quality assurance group. Laura agreed to circulate a paper.

5.4 **Action:** Laura to circulate a specification of the type of person needed for the Census quality assurance group.

## 6. UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) assessment and role of stakeholders

6.1 Kirsty described the functions of the (UKSA) and its role in ensuring that the Code of Practice for Official Statistics is adhered to. Most demography division statistics (vital events, household, population and migration) would be assessed together in the autumn. As part of the assessment process UKSA will want evidence from stakeholders as well as producers. This is likely to take the form of written questions followed up by face to face interviews or focus groups.

6.2 The PAMS committee has been put forward as one of the key user consultation groups. In discussion it was felt that any of the PAMS or Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) members would be appropriate for UKSA to approach, rather than going to the same people every time.

6.3 **Action:** Kirsty to send a list of people suggested to UKSA as key users to Jenny for comment.

6.4 Ann spoke briefly about her experience of assessment of migration statistics by UKSA.

## **7. Population definition issues including update from UK-wide population theme group**

- 7.1 There are two main issues; moving from 6 month (Census) to 12 month (estimates) population base and maintaining consistency of where certain groups (especially armed forces) are located. These issues are hard to tackle because there are no second residence or intention to stay questions in the Census in Scotland.
- 7.2 It was noted that ONS have committed to help GROS develop methodology to deal with these issues and discussions are underway with Owen Abbott. An intention to stay question will be included in the Census coverage survey in Scotland which should help.
- 7.3 The change in wording on the Census questionnaire means there is the possibility that there is discontinuity in how and where members of the armed forces are counted between the last Census and estimates and the 2011 Census. This issue may affect household structure as well as population numbers.
- 7.4 Prisoners will be counted as before using information on length of sentence.
- 7.5 Kirsty reported that the Population Theme Group had published their workplan and as part of this was intending to hold a stakeholder event with local authorities that had previously had problems with Census results.

## **8. GROS strategic review update**

- 8.1 Kirsty reported on the GROS strategic review which several PAMS members were involved in. The review noted that:
- migration was a key issue,
  - data was being more widely used and therefore needed greater clarity,
  - local authority capacity is very variable,
  - a stronger line on getting access to local data and overcoming data sharing barriers is needed,
  - need for more flexible geographies,
  - need to change view that data linkage is bad,
  - more road shows outside the central belt needed.
- 8.2 The strategic review report is to be discussed within GROS and then disseminated more widely.

## **9. Alternative Sources**

- 9.1 Ganka spoke to paper PAMS (10) 04. Work on census alternatives is focussed on constructing a demographic spine based around the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR). Initial work suggests that the number of records in National NHSCR exceeds the estimated population by around 16%. Future work aims to use record linkage with other data sources.

- 9.2 A key recent development was the conclusion of work on the potential for onward disclosure of administrative data acquired by ONS. It has been agreed that ONS will share extracts of Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record data and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) migrant worker scan data with GROS. There has been no progress on sharing data with local authorities as powers to share the data still require clarification.
- 9.3 Jan asked about the migrant survey mentioned in the paper. This is a survey run by the UK Border Agency and is focussed on migrant's views of life in the UK and the migration system. Alternative sources branch provided some data to help in defining a sampling frame for Scotland.
- 9.4 **Action:** Leaflet on the migrant survey to be circulated to PAMS.
- 9.5 Jan said that he was keen to see the development of data sharing. Paul asked what access to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC data was allowed for. Access is only for producing population statistics. Only migrant worker scan data from HMRC (based on National Insurance numbers) is available.

## 10. Dissemination and Census analysis – website improvements

- 10.1 Donna gave a demonstration of the new and planned features of the GROS website. She noted that changes to the structure of the website mean that certain links may not work anymore, although the main pages could be made to forward on to the appropriate page.
- 10.2 Alison noted that it is useful to be able to go from summary data to actual publications.

## 11. Branch Updates

- 11.1 Jenny raised a general point about papers sent out under pre-release access arrangements. The limited access meant it was difficult to be able to do anything with the data and it wasn't clear what local authorities were supposed to be doing. It was felt that local authorities often weren't in a position to quality assure statistics where they hadn't contributed any data. It was pointed out that some useful presentational comments had been received following this type of access.
- 11.2 Members felt that they were happy to have pre-release access to for example, the mid-year population estimates, for the purposes of preparing briefing but were less happy to have to sit on data for month without being allowed to share it. Esta said feedback from local authorities was useful for improving the methodology but acknowledged that there may be other ways of doing this.
- 11.3 Jan pointed out that the Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) would be a useful forum for discussing the quality assurance of household statistics. Heidi suggested that more guidance could be given on what can be done with pre-release access data and what is expected.

- 11.4 Good advance notice of quality assurance access is very useful. In relation to the Small Area Population Estimates it was noted that quality assurance feedback will be incorporated into methodological changes in future years.
- 11.5 Jan and others noted their surprise at the size of the estimate of international migrants. Esta agreed that it was surprisingly high but analysis of the data showed no reason to believe that anything was amiss.
- 11.6 Thomas said that no further discussions with the Centre for Housing Market Analysis (CHMA) about the newly formed households report had taken place but he would update at the next meeting. PhD student Ashley McCormick would give a presentation at the next HARG meeting about his work.

## **12. Papers for information**

- 12.1 Births and deaths time-series – Jenny queried the decision to have local authorities in columns instead of rows as is usually the case. She also said that as with most statistics she would like as much data as possible, as far back as possible. Alison mentioned that scroll bar charts as used for life expectancy might be useful. It was suggested that mid-year births and deaths statistics would be useful as would time series of births by age of mother.
- 12.2 Ethnic population estimates - Concern was expressed that the method would rely on demographic rates recorded in the 2001 Census (paragraph 2.4 of PAMS (10) 10). There is still a significant amount of work to be done to create a mid-2008 estimate and no-one is currently in post to do it. There is also the possibility that there could be problems getting hold of the necessary data for the intervening years. Jan said that Glasgow City Council planned to publish 2008 population estimates by ethnicity in autumn this year. These estimates were prepared by applying the 'origin' database provided by Experian to the electoral registers in 2001 and 2008. Compared with 2001 Census data the 2001 results by data zone were reported to be excellent for established groups (e.g. Pakistani), but less so for newer groups (e.g. Black African and Other South Asian).
- 12.3 Northern Ireland migration – Paul asked where the data on Northern Ireland removals data comes from. Post meeting update: The Northern Ireland removals data is supplied to GROS by Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (NIHSC), and is the number of requests NIHSC have had from NHSCR Dumfries to send patient records to a Health Board in Scotland. GROS receives Northern Ireland to Scotland moves as separate feed of data from NHSCR Dumfries.
- 12.4 POPGROUP software – It was proposed that the first meeting of the user group take place in September, after people have had a chance to digest the guidance. Jenny reported that Fife council were very keen on the user group and there was general interest from some of the other local authorities. The data for use with POPGROUP is not available yet but it should be possible to release it at the same time as the Registrar General's Annual Report on 6

August. The plan is to invite Ludi Simpson or a colleague to attend the first meeting of the user group, so Ludi and users would dictate the agenda and GROS would have a facilitating role.

- 12.5 Population and migration statistics revisions – Jenny reported that people seemed generally happy with the proposals. She asked if household estimates would get revised and it was felt this was worth looking into. Alison pointed out that Community Health Partnerships (CHP) and local authorities would have to be revised at the same time as they are the same for some areas. It would also be worth checking how big a difference revisions would make before going through with them. Jan was keen to see revisions for migration flows as well as net figures. The timing of estimates and projections around the time of the Census is being looked into by the UK Population Committee.
- 12.6 Student adjustment to population estimates – Jan agreed with the conclusions of the report but asked if data on numbers of students and student moves (e.g. into Council areas) could be made available.

**Action:** Alasdair to investigate availability of data on student numbers from lifelong learning statistics.

### **13. Suggestions and comments on GROS statistical outputs**

- 13.1 There were no comments at this stage.

### **14. Any other business**

- 14.1 There no other business

### **15. Next meeting**

The next PAMS conference was discussed. It was felt that there wasn't a need to hold a conference every year but we should aim to hold one next year after the Census. The provisional date for the PAMS conference (13 October) could be used for the next PAMS committee meeting.

- 15.1 Possible items for next agenda were lessons from the Census process, Census quality assurance, household income data sources, Census geography and UKSA assessment.