

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (PAMS) (SCOTLAND)
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**Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland):
13 October 2010**
Present:

Kirsty MacLachlan (Chair)	General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) (Head of Demography Division)
Andrew Craik (Minutes)	GROS (Processing, Surveys and Quality)
Donna Hosie	GROS (Dissemination & 2001 Census Analysis)
Thomas Robertson	GROS (Household Estimates & Projections)
Esta Clark	GROS (Population & Migration Statistics)
Sandy Taylor	GROS (Census Outputs)
Laura Murison	GROS Processing, Surveys and Quality
Debbie Amabile	GROS (Household Estimates & Projections)
Frank Dixon	GROS Vital Events
Jenny Boag	Falkirk Council
Alison Burlison	NHS Information Services Division (ISD)
Alistair Harvey	Edinburgh City Council
Paul McNamara	Stirling City Council
Suzanne Dunsmith	Phoned in from Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Jan Freeke	Glasgow City Council
Chris Carr	Argyll & Bute Council

1. Introduction and Apologies

- 1.1 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed the group, noting apologies from Kateryna McKinnon. She noted that, due to a change of job, Paul Boyle was standing down from PAMS.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Paper 16 PAMS(10) 16)

- 2.1 Jan Freeke raised a query about section 5.3 from the previous minutes regarding the wording of person specification. Jan had intended his previous comment to mean that the position of people within Local Authorities should be considered in terms of them being able to provide data and information for Census quality assurance (QA) and being given access to Census figures rather than their personal attributes.
- 2.2 Subject to the above amendment the minutes were agreed.

3. Update on Action Points from Previous Meeting (Paper 2 PAMS(10) 17)

- 3.1 **Action 4.8** - Sandy Taylor reported that GROS had been reviewing, with staff from the Scottish Parliament, the lessons learned from how the parliamentary process for the 2011 Census had gone. A summary evaluation will be prepared in the form

of a paper for a future meeting of PAMS, probably in spring 2011. Sandy added that a paper will be placed on the GROS website shortly which will summarise the eventual changes made to the proposed census question set which was included in the Scottish Government statement on the 2011 Census in December 2008.

- 3.2 Jenny Boag commented that there was a feeling that census should be taken out of the political sphere if possible in order to mitigate against last minute changes to proposals for particular questions which had been grounded firmly on evidence-based demand from users.
- 3.3 **Action 9.4** Update on UK migrant survey to be included in minutes – Kirsty said that due to the level of funding required to provide robust estimates we will not be able to get detailed breakdowns at sub-Scotland level.

Migrant Survey update: The Feasibility Study report is ready to be published but the UK Border Agency (UKBA) has not yet agreed a publication date with their press office. The UKBA is not going ahead with the research at the moment and it's uncertain whether they will do that in the future.

- 3.4 All other action points have been closed.

4. 2011 Census Progress Report (Paper 3 PAMS(10) 18)

- 4.1 Sandy highlighted a number of key recent achievements in the preparations for the 2011 Census. These included the recruitment of the Census Regional Managers (CRMs) and their deputies, kitting out of the network of regional field offices, printing of all the 'non personalised' census print products and the commissioning of the processing site in Livingston. He also noted that downstream processing work was generally progressing well, though some methodological work was still under development, particularly in relation to statistical disclosure control. An analysis of the findings from the spring 2010 consultation on statistical outputs from the 2011 Census was due to be published on the GROS website later in October, which will lead into further iterations of consultation with users. (Post meeting note: the [consultation analysis](#) was published on 20 October.)
- 4.2 Jenny Boag reported positive feedback (from the local authority pre-PAMS meeting) about the way CRMs had been engaging with local authorities. She said Duncan Macniven's letter to local authority chief executives had been helpful in facilitating access and support for CRMs.
- 4.3 Jenny asked about the ramifications for Scotland of the UK Government announcement 2011 would be the last 'traditional' census, noting that this had huge implications for future work on census alternatives on which there would be a need to develop proposals relatively quickly. Sandy replied that the census in Scotland remained a devolved issue and that no formal decisions about its future after 2011 had been taken.
- 4.4 Kirsty agreed that there will be a need to up the ante on census alternatives work, noting that a bid for funding would be made shortly to Ministers. She mentioned that work is already underway in this area, e.g. testing matching software, but that some legal barriers need to be overcome in terms of access to data.

- 4.5 Jenny commented that one potential advantage from moving to an alternative census model would be the opportunity for more continuous analysis. She suggested that there will be a need to consult users about proposals, to obtain an understanding of their needs and to gain their backing for any recommendations that are eventually made to Ministers.
- 4.6 Alison Burlison raised the point that the census is the only data source that gives information at the small area levels needed, especially for the work on healthy life expectancy. Jenny mentioned that academics and genealogists are other groups that make a lot of use of census data.
- 4.7 Suzanne mentioned that Office for National Statistics (ONS) had submitted a bid for their Beyond 2011 work to identify alternatives for a Census, including options such as a rolling census and using administrative data sources. (Post meeting note: the ONS bid for funding for their Beyond 2011 project was successful.) Suzanne mentioned that the Improving Population and Migration Statistics (IMPS) programme would serve as a 'jumping off point' for the Beyond 2011 work. She added that ONS was seeking national statistics status for (England and Wales level) statistics on short-term migrants from the UK Statistics Authority.
- 4.8 Jan mentioned that it will be interesting to see how the mid-year estimates for 2011 compare with the census figures, for quality assurance reasons.
- 4.9 Kirsty mentioned the forthcoming GROS strategy review paper which mentions exploring alternatives to the census as a key area to progress.
- 4.10 Jenny asked that Beyond 2011 and census alternatives be kept on the agenda for future PAMS meetings, and noted that she intended to raise this topic at the forthcoming meeting of the Scottish Census Steering Committee.
- 4.11 Jenny mentioned the meeting of the UK Census Design and Methodology Advisory Committee (UK CDMAC) where Peter Scrimgeour had discussed a paper about producing 12 month population bases from a 6 month enumeration base. Esta updated the group on the work that is underway to see whether an adjustment should be made from 6 to 12 months. She mentioned that as well as Peter's paper, Alasdair Anthony is drawing together data on short-term migrants from various sources to see what the size of estimated stocks of short-term migrants are to allow a decision to be made on whether we should make an adjustment in Scotland. It was agreed that a paper would be provided for the next PAMS meeting.
- 4.12 Jan asked if GROS had responded to a letter from Peter Norris (on behalf of the SASPAC Advisory Council) regarding Census software, and whether there would be issues in terms of GROS providing data through an Applications Programming Interface (API) in the same way that ONS was proposing for England and Wales. Sandy confirmed that GROS had responded to this letter, noting its intention to provide Scottish data to ONS in order to enable UK-wide data to be made more easily accessible to users.
- 4.13 **Action:** Kirsty to put work on Beyond 2011 on the agenda for future meetings.

4.14 **Action:** Esta to arrange for a paper on population base for the 2011 Census for the next meeting.

5. Census Quality Assurance (QA) Work

- 5.1 Laura gave an oral update on the QA work being undertaken in census. Laura said a Census Data Quality Advisory working group had been set up. She mentioned that local authorities will be able to provide information in advance to inform the Quality Assurance and will be asked for further information should anomalies turn up. They have decided on templates for local authorities to complete and these will be circulated round the working group before wider circulation (before next meeting in January). It had been suggested at the working group that a record of contacts within local authorities would be useful and Laura is currently updating this.
- 5.2 Laura hopes to get timings for data to alternative sources as they've completed a list of the data sources that they wish to look at and will give a high level timetable to the group.
- 5.3 Alistair Harvey asked about the minutes from the first Census Data Quality Advisory Working Group that were agreed to be circulated round PAMS members. Laura agreed to send these minutes round the members.
- 5.4 There was a discussion surrounding sign off of quality assured Census figures. Laura is currently considering options for this including considerations around pre-release access for quality assurance. ONS are keen to know what input GROS would like them to have and this will be discussed at a quality assurance working group taking place at ONS on 27th October.
- 5.5 **Action:** Laura to distribute QA templates round group.
- 5.6 **Action:** Laura to distribute minutes from the first Census Data Quality Advisory Working Group

6. Census Geography (Paper 4 PAMS(10) 19)

- 6.1 Sandy summarised the feedback that had been obtained on the geography-related points included in the spring 2010 consultation on statistical outputs from the 2011 Census. The facility within any census outputs dissemination system to allow users to define their own geographies and save for re-use had been a particularly strong message flagged up by users. Sandy also mentioned current work to set up an IT system to create output areas based on the 2011 Census data as part of downstream processing. Related to this users had, as part of the current Scottish Government consultation about Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) data zones, been asked to identify any specific output areas from the 2001 Census which were felt to have design limitations.
- 6.2 Chris raised her concern that the census was one of the few sources of data on inhabited islands, which was of particular importance to her local authority. Sandy confirmed that the current intention was to produce standard outputs from the 2011 Census for the same range of intermediate geographies (including inhabited islands) that were produced following the 2001 Census.

- 6.3 Jenny mentioned that national parks are also an important geography for those local authorities that have them and that she would strongly support the production of census statistics for these areas, even if this was just simple counts.
- 6.4 Jenny also sought confirmation on whether the 2011 Census statistics for different geographies will be on a best fit basis (from aggregations of output areas) or on an exact fit basis (as she thought had been the case for some intermediate geographies in 2001). Sandy replied that the plan was that all output geographies for the 2011 Census will be on a best fit basis, apart from output areas and local authorities which will be exact. He agreed to make this clear in the next iteration of consultation about statistical outputs from the 2011 Census fit from output areas. Sandy also raised the point that there is a national statistics publication that says best fit should be used.
- 6.5 Thomas mentioned that the best fit approach helps avoid major discrepancy issues. It was also noted that the best fit basis was consistent with the national statistics policy on statistical geography.
- 6.6 In relation to the current consultation about SNS datazones, Jenny mentioned her concern about changes to datazones resulting in a potential disconnect between these and census output areas. Sandy replied that GROS Census were in discussion with the SNS statisticians about the issues involved, and Kirsty added that GROS will itself be responding to the SNS consultation.
- 6.7 Sandy noted that there are no current plans for the census outputs geography working group to meet again in the near future, with any issues likely to be dealt with by correspondence.

7. Household Income Data Sources (Paper 5 PAMS(10) 20)

- 7.1 Thomas introduced PAMS(10) 20 and highlighted where Tom Spencer and his team are and what they are doing. Thomas mentioned that there is a statistics publication on income poverty which members of the group may be interested in, this can be found via the following link.
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/05/povertystats0809>
- 7.2 Jenny raised the point that we need to find a way to pursue small area income statistics and that this would be best done through Department for Work and Pensions and HM Revenue and Customs data.

8. UKSA Assessment

- 8.1 Kirsty updated the group on the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) assessment on vital event statistics, household estimates and projections, population and migration statistics. She mentioned that the UKSA will also be doing similar assessments on the statistics by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and ONS around the same time, and although different teams will be doing the assessments they will communicate their findings to each other. Vital statistics has already started and household and projection statistics will be started soon. Kirsty was unsure of when the assessment on population and migration statistics will start, but thought that it was November. Kirsty highlighted some of the

points from the UK Statistics Authority's (UKSA) letter and will cover details of the assessment at the next meeting.

- 8.2 Suzanne agreed that similar things had been happening at ONS regarding the UKSA assessment.
- 8.3 **GROS Demography Statistics Plan (Paper 6 PAMS(10) 21).**
- 8.4 Kirsty noted the importance of GROS consulting users about the range and content of statistics it produces in the context of potential budget cuts resulting from the current Spending Review.
- 8.5 In discussion, Jenny Boag commented that marital status estimates were likely to be low priority as these statistics were increasingly of limited value due to the number of people who live together in de facto marriages, or are married abroad and people that come to Scotland to get married. Frank Dixon mentioned that there was interest in the number of 'tourist' marriages in Scotland, and that the marital status estimates were used to produce age-specific birth rates, stillbirth rates and marriage (within Scotland) rates (all published in the Vital Events Reference Tables), but he did not know how important (or not) such figures were to users. Jenny said that there would still be interest in statistics on civil partnerships and demand for more statistics in relation to ethnicity.
- 8.6 It was suggested that 'Babies' First Names could be dropped. Frank Dixon pointed out that these statistics took only a few person-days to produce and wouldn't create a large saving. Post meeting note: press coverage and web hit analysis shows that these statistics are very popular.
- 8.7 Kirsty said that GROS, along with ONS, would perhaps consider producing population projections less frequently. She mentioned that Laura McConnell (who has since left) had started some work on population estimates by ethnicity but there was not currently the resource to pick this work up at the moment.
- 8.8 Jan Freeke asked about alternative ethnic estimates and projections produced by Leeds University. Esta replied that she thought that Leeds University was hoping to disseminate the findings more widely next year and that we may be able to get them to come to GROS to talk more about their work.

Action: Esta to invite LeedsUniversity to come to Scotland to talk about their projections.

- 8.9 Jan mentioned that Glasgow City have produced ethnic population estimates but with no information on age, up to 2008, using the electoral register and name identification software. Jan provided a link to a paper on population estimates by ethnicity on Glasgow City Council's website for the minutes:

<http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/ronlyres/71DD6403-ED21-4DB1-B31A-57D4BD46C098/0/Briefingpaperpopulationbyethnicity2008.pdf>

- 8.10 The group agreed the current statistics plan. Kirsty said that GROS aim to have a provisional 2011/12 plan available for the next meeting. Jenny mentioned that user consultation will be especially important due to the current climate.

9. Settlements and Localities (Paper 14 PAMS (10) 28)

- 9.1 Esta went through the history of population estimates for settlements and localities, highlighting a number of points for comment. She concluded by asking whether GROS should run a full consultation on locality boundaries for the 2011 Census results or whether to seek comments just from those local authorities which are flagged up by the extensive quality assurance processes that are carried out.
- 9.2 Jenny commented that the main interest in statistics in localities tended to be from middle-sized authorities and so they would be more likely to respond to any consultation. She added that she would make more use of these statistics if they were produced more frequently.
- 9.3 Jenny highlighted the example of East Renfrewshire where there was a lack of clarity around the boundaries for some areas – such as Clarkston, Giffnock and Busby - either for historical or geographical reasons. She added that the representative from East Renfrewshire would be happy to provide boundaries that would be well recognised in the area.
- 9.4 Paul mentioned the corporate address data which contains a locality field but that it was not currently complete.
- 9.5 Jenny suggested that there may be interest in producing census-like profiles for these areas. Jenny was unaware the shape files were available and suggested putting them on the website. Esta replied that they are available on request and that we were hoping to add them as a standard part of the next publication.
- 9.6 In a wider discussion about priorities, the group agreed that mid-year estimates at local authority and health board level are the key outputs.
- 9.7 The group concluded that they would prefer the option of a full consultation about boundaries for settlements and localities.

10. Branch Updates

10.1 Alternative sources: (Paper 7 PAMS(10) 22)

10.1.1 Kirsty highlighted some of the main points:

- GROS Strategy is being sent out soon
- A bid for the current spending review will be made to accelerate work on alternative sources

10.1.2 Kirsty said that she is having difficulty contacting the chair of Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators (SOLAR) regarding data sharing. Jan said that legal services may be slow to respond. GROS/COSLA paper was sent to SOLAR and this will be how GROS intend on moving forward with this.

10.1.3 Jenny said that asking local authorities to take snapshots of data at census date will be quite difficult for some authorities and will depend on individual co-operation in different departments. This was mirrored by experience of other

members of PAMS. Jenny mentioned that from Falkirk's housing department they may be able to get hold of:

- Register of social landlords (private)
- Council rented properly

But this wouldn't help them get information on owner occupied housing.

10.1.4 Thomas asked if it would be worthwhile contacting other Scottish Government colleagues (say in Education) about their contacts with local government and members agreed this may be helpful.

10.1.5 Kirsty will write to Census Liaison Officers (CLO) and PAMS representatives regarding data sharing. Jenny mentioned that CLOs tend to have good contacts within local authorities and that work should begin now.

10.1.6 Suzanne mentioned that most of the work on data sharing at ONS is happening through departments rather than the councils.

10.2 **Household Estimates and Projections (Paper 8 PAMS(10) 23):**

10.2.1 Thomas highlighted some of the staff changes that have taken place with Alan Sloan being replaced by David Campbell and Debbie Amabile joining in August.

10.3 Jan said that he would like communal establishment annual total split by data zone. Kirsty said it could be added to the Demography stats plan. Jan also asked about a paper on newly formed households. Thomas Robertson said he has started looking at this again and will report at the next PAMS meeting.

10.4 **Dissemination and Census Analysis (Paper 9 PAMS(10) 24):**

10.4.1 Donna demonstrated the revised GROS statistics site (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/index.html>) and asked members of the group for feedback. Donna highlighted some of the changes, e.g. 'revisions and corrections' were now easy to find and grouped together, as well breaches. Donna mentioned that Geography will be working on their own section of the site which is currently out of date. She said that she hoped that the new layout would make navigating the site easier. Donna highlighted the fact that many hyperlinks will be broken due to the changes in address and to be careful. There will be the possibility of limited re-directs being added to some sections, such as mid year estimates. Donna invited members of the committee to contact her if they have any problems.

10.4.2 The group suggested the name 'Council Area Profiles' for the current 'Summary Statistics for Council Areas' and were very positive about them, especially the format as it was quick and easy to access.

10.5 **Population and Migration (Paper 10 PAMS(10) 25):**

10.5.1 Esta highlighted the staff changes including David Campbell starting at the beginning of June. She said that the population and migration branch did not get two summer student placements as they do usually. It was agreed that as the majority of the work the Population Projection Working Group (PPWG) was set up

to do was complete it was sensible to take the remaining items forward through PAMS. The group met for the last time on 4 October 2010.

- 10.5.2 Jenny asked if she could send on the additional variant projections tabled at the PPWG meeting, to those not on that group. Esta said that they would be available in the feasibility paper for the PPWG group on the GROS website and she would send an appropriate form of words to Jenny for onward dissemination.
- 10.6 Kirsty presented the remaining two papers for discussion; PAMS(10) 26 and PAMS(10) 27. No one in the group had anything to discuss on them at that moment.
- 10.7 **Action:** Kirsty will write to CLOs/PAMS representatives regarding data sharing.
- 10.8 **Action:** Kirsty to add update of newly formed households to agenda for next meeting.
- 10.9 **Action:** Kirsty to add communal establishments at data zone level to Statistics Plan draft.
- 10.10 **Action:** Esta to send a form of words to Jenny for the additional variant projections.

11. Any Other Business

- 11.1 Jenny opened this section by covering the ScotStat board meeting that was on the 27th of May 2010. She covered the main points from her notes.
- Scottish Government engaging with Crown and other public bodies to establish what statistics should become National Statistics that are currently Official statistics.
 - Generally positive comments regarding UKSA assessments.
 - They commented on the fact there were common recommendations for recording user engagement and providing UK comparable data.
 - UKSA have funded Liam Murray to work with Royal Statistical Society (RSS) on user engagement and he was keen to work with ScotStat.
 - Rob Wishart was to contact heads of profession regarding the misuse of statistics and to make sure that it is reported.
 - There was concern about some groups (or stats areas) that have not had much activity recently.
- 11.2 Jan mentioned that the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) do work on demographic research and he would like more information for PAMS. The latest Centre for Population Change (ESRC funded) newsletter can found at <http://www.cpc.ac.uk>. Kirsty mentioned that researchers are to be housed in Ladywell House and an update will be included in next agenda.
- 11.3 **Provisional items for the next agenda that members of group agreed:**
- Census Progress so far
 - Work on QA
 - Beyond 2011
 - Update on population base

- Newly formed households
- ScotStat board update, if applicable
- Centre for population change update
- Demography 2011/12 statistics plan
- Ask if Chris Dibben, the new head of the Scottish Longitudinal Study, could attend in place of Paul Boyle

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The group agreed to meet again on **Monday 6th of December 2010**.