

Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)
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**Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland):
11 May 2016**

Present			Organisation
Angela	Adams		Clydeplan
Jenny	Boag		Falkirk Council
Laura	Campbell		Information Services Division (ISD)
Esta	Clark		National Records of Scotland (NRS)
David	Duncan Fraser		Scottish Government (SG)
Jan	Freeke		Glasgow City Council
Jay	Gillam	minutes	NRS
Alastair	Harvey		Edinburgh City Council
Venetia	Haynes		NRS
William	Howes		NRS
Huw	Landrock		NRS
Kirsty	MacLachlan	Chair	NRS
Kirsty	MacLean		NRS
Luke	Main		NRS
Cecilia	Macintyre		NRS
Sarah	Mohammed		NRS
Fiona	O'Hanlon		Bord na Gàidhlig
Julie	Ramsay		NRS
David	Readhead		ISD
Steve	Smallwood	by phone	Office for National Statistics (ONS)
Nicholas	Sobey		Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iain	Stewart		Renfrewshire Council
Sandy	Taylor		NRS
Sara	Townsend Cartwright		Scottish Water
Fiona	Tweedie		Church of Scotland
Amy	Wilson		NRS

1. Introduction and apologies

- 1.1 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed the group and everyone introduced themselves. Apologies were received from Esther Roughsedge, Debbie Amabile, Chris Carr, Jill Ireland, Jay Lindop, Garrick Smyth, Lorraine Cook, Laura Kate Campbell, David McPhee, Chris Dibben, Paul McNamara, James Reid, Ilse Mackinnon, Hervey Gibson, John McGurk, Dave Bisset, Garnett Compton, Alex Stannard, Tom Wallace.

2. Minutes of previous meeting (PAMS (15) 14)

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Update on action points from previous meeting

Action point 2015.02 – Local authorities to send a joint request to Kirsty MacLachlan for common commissioned tables – **closed**

Action point 2015.03 – Local authority contacts who wish to use transport flow data should e-mail Cecilia MacIntyre - Celia did not receive any emails as a result of this action point, but does have a list of those who have previously requested transport flow data through other channels than PAMS, and is meeting with Transport Scotland in a month. Celia welcomed PAMS to get in touch with her about transport issues at a local area prior to this meeting. - **closed**

Action point 2015.05 – All to send suggestions for local authority contacts for communal establishment information to Tricia Couper - **on-going**

Action point 2015.10 – All to send suggestions for local authority contacts who use transport flow data - **closed – see action point 2015.03 above**

Action point 2015.13 – Esta Clark to send the Sub-national Population Projections (SNPP) presentation to Amanda at ONS and to interested council contacts. - **closed**.

Action point 2015.15 – Esta Clark to invite Phil Rees and colleagues to give a presentation in Scotland about their population projections by ethnic group. - **on-going – possible that this will occur around August**.

Action point 2015.16 – Kirsty to ask Julie Ramsey about the possibility of monthly birth figures being published at a lower geography. - **closed - figures are now published at local authority level**.

Action point 2015.17 – Kirsty to ask Gerry to provide examples of how Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC)/ Scottish Informatics and Linkage Collaboration (SILC) was being used for the next PAMS meeting. - **on-going – this will possibly be at the next PAMS meeting**.

Action point 2015.18 – Jenny Boag to update re her replacement for Local Authorities (LA)'s PAMS Group - **on-going** – there has not yet been a decision about the replacement. The responsibilities will be separated out between several people. Jenny Boag will be the main contact until 1 September.

4. Scotland's Census 2021 - general update

- 4.1 Amy Wilson gave an update on progress and future plans, as detailed in Paper 8 PAMS (16) 08. She explained that progress was continuing to be made in identifying resource requirements, planning for Scotland's Census 2021 and preparing the business case for the spending review. The governance around the programme is continuing to be developed and they are in the process of growing the team.
- 4.2 She then talked through the main points of the update paper. Responses to the Topic Consultation have now been published. Data collection is moving to a primarily online system and away from hand delivery to more flexible delivery methods. There will be a different model of enumeration. They are considering the types of support that will be required for filling in census forms online, and working with Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) to identify third sector organisations that might be best placed to help provide this support on the ground. They are working on prototyping suitable processing systems for 2021, and are benefitting from staff who have experience of the systems from Census 2011. Outputs and statistical disclosure control will be linked, and they are working closely with ONS and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) to

research various disclosure methods. These are discussed separately later in this meeting. Geography have recently launched a new postcode system. Sourcing and procurement strategy is continuing to be defined. Work has begun to draft an initial Privacy Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment. They are expecting to publish the Topic Consultation, Privacy Impact Assessment and a draft 2021 Census design in the middle of this year.

- 4.3 Jenny Boag asked if there was a plan to move towards individual enumeration rather than household collection. Amy Wilson highlighted that it was possible for individuals to respond in 2011, but not online, and that there are pros and cons to both types of enumeration, with considerations around quality of the data. However, the aim is still to enumerate by household. Steve Smallwood added that it is unlikely that we would move to an entirely individual census, which would require fundamental changes to legislation.
- 4.4 Jenny Boag mentioned the ONS output working group from 2011, and the short-lived Scottish output working group. She highlighted that it would be beneficial to have a semi-informal output working group for 2021. Amy Wilson stressed that is their intention to keep users informed and that this will be picked up under the discussions about outputs later on the agenda.

5. Topic Consultation – oral update

- 5.1 Cecilia Macintyre and Kirsty MacLean gave an update on the result of the Topic Consultation and an overview of the results obtained through Citizenspace, the Scottish Government's online consultation tool. The Topic Consultation contained NRS's initial views on census topics and in July they plan to publish the Topic Consultation Report containing updated views on topics. Kirsty Maclean gave some highlights from the responses to the consultation. Kirsty Maclean also emphasized that the move to a primarily online census presents opportunities with respect to data quality, but the respondent burden will need to be considered in deciding the number of questions, along with the need to produce a paper version. The coming report will highlight the process used to come to the updated view, and given a high level summary of the next steps that will be taken.
- 5.2 Steve Smallwood asked if there was a prompt in the consultation around the inclusion of reason for migration. Kirsty Maclean answered that there was a migration topic question in the consultation and that the Home Office were one of the few respondents about this topic. Steve Smallwood mentioned that although they have not yet finished obtaining responses to their Topic Consultation, they have received some local authority interest in citizenship. He asked if it was possible that the lower interest in Scotland is because this data has not been previously available. Kirsty Maclean explained that there was no large demand for this data pre-2011, which is why it was not previously included.
- 5.3 Jenny Boag stressed that citzenspace is not easy to use to collect responses, with problems that have also applied to the recent Scottish Household Survey consultation. In particular that if you send out a link to multiple people you cannot tell who sends a response, the only way to do this is to send each person an individual link, Jenny also mentioned that the Word versions often do not match up with the information on citzenspace. Kirsty Maclean acknowledged that citzenspace is not user friendly for this type of consultation, and indicated that they have been feeding back to colleagues at citzenspace. Kirsty explained that

Citizenspace is in its infancy, and encouraged everyone to give them feedback as they would welcome it.

- 5.4 Jenny also noted that some respondents found that their comments did not fit into the available categories, and as a result they filled in the consultation and sent separately (not on citizenspace).

6. Outputs and Statistical Disclosure Control

- 6.1 Venetia Haynes gave an overview of the planning work that has begun for the 2021 outputs. She stressed that this is at a very early stage and they are keen to get early views about what people want to see in terms of outputs. She then talked through the main points of the Paper 2 PAMS (16) 02.
- 6.2 Venetia discussed flexible table design, where built in disclosure control results in different values for the same variables in different tables. She emphasized that this is why outputs and statistical disclosure control will be designed together, that they do not have their first specifications yet and that they will be consulting with stakeholders soon. She indicated that she would be keen on having an outputs working group. She explained that currently they are in monthly talks with ONS discussing methodologies, and that ONS's current preferred method is targeted record swapping, as used in 2011, and the cell key method. However, there are issues with variable totals when using the cell key method. She discussed the advantages, which include extra disclosure control, speed and automation, and the disadvantages which include variable output for totals and the difficulties in explaining this. An example is provided in Paper 2 PAMS (16) 02. She explained that there are other options that are also being considered along with ONS. These include doing the same as in 2011, which would be likely to impact on the timing of outputs, require manual intervention and lots of staffing, and limit table design and therefore the outputs to users. Another option is to have a similar system to 2011 but with more record swapping, which may reduce the workload. Alternatively, a combination of the approach in 2011 with standard tables produced only using targeted record swapping for disclosure control, and with cell key methods used for lower geographies and more detailed tables could be used.
- 6.3 Venetia stressed that these methods are currently being investigated and that no decisions have yet been made. This (the May 2016 PAMS committee meeting) is the first engagement with users, and she had already received some feedback at the morning PAMS meeting. She relayed that cell key methods were not found to be popular at the morning PAMS meeting and the method was thought to provide unsatisfactory disadvantages for local authority users.
- 6.4 Venetia emphasized that she was keen to get a list of key outputs that users would like to be produced, and the timescale for these key tables. She welcomed setting up an outputs working group and would like volunteers to help build the list of key outputs and to test the output system.
- 6.5 Jan Freeke reiterated the importance of numbers adding up to reproducible totals for local authorities. He stressed that this is an essential requirement for univariate tables, but that he would be interested in using cell methods for multivariate tables, for example ethnicity and economic status where more noise may be acceptable if this allows users to obtain more detailed data. Venetia highlighted that ONS have found that with a mix of univariate and multivariate data in this way

it could be possible to work out the noise and determine the method used to apply it, especially on small tables.

- 6.6 Jenny Boag enquired about the use of more record swapping, which was previously applied mostly for unusual households. Venetia Haynes responded that there is a good question about how much uncertainty you need to add into the data in order to prevent or substantially reduce the need for doubt checks, table redesign and differencing checks, and that this has yet to be determined. Amy Wilson added that there is a combination of how much swapping is necessary and also how much doubt you need to introduce into the data.
- 6.7 Cecilia Macintyre highlighted the problem of making people understand that tables may not add up in a new platform. Jenny expressed that while this would not be a problem for those familiar with the data, it will present a problem for those with no conception of the methods and why this may be the case. Cecilia stated that there needs to be a discussion and consideration about the implication of this for users. Amy Wilson enquired how much of an issue this is given the flexibility that this would add in producing all the outputs that users may require. Jenny Boag suggested that there may also be reputational issues, with the data seen as unreliable because totals do not agree, and highlighted the problems of assumed lack of disclosure. Amy Wilson responded that they are very conscious of the costs and time that are involved with creating commissioned tables, and that they are considering how to weigh up the pros and cons in output design.
- 6.8 Venetia reiterated the idea of having a set of standardised (no cell key method) tables and a set of more detailed tables with disclosure control via the cell key method to provide information for more unusual requests. Jenny stated that she definitely thinks this is worth exploring, with standard univariate tables and then more complicated tables for the more expert users. This would provide agreed totals based on those in the standard tables. She added that it would seem like a step back to lose the one number census and go back to 91 where numbers did not add up.
- 6.9 Angela Adams highlighted that at the morning meeting PAMS members offered to look at key tables and feed this information back to the census team. Jenny added that it would also be good to get input from academia and wider users.

Action: Fiona O'Hanlon and Fiona Tweedie to contact users within their areas of work for their views on census table design and find out who would like to be involved in discussion/feedback as part of an outputs working group. Responses with expression of interest for the working group should be sent to Dylais Mattison.

7. Branch update: Dissemination and Census Analysis

- 7.1 Sandy Taylor gave an update on the work of the dissemination and census analysis team. He talked through the main points of the update Paper 7 PAMS (16) 07.
- 7.2 Sandy highlighted that the branch is continuing to experience a period of transition with respect to staffing changes. Despite this they have recently produced a number of outputs, summarised in the PAMS paper, they have been developing the Scotland Census website, they have published Parliamentary constituency profiles and a report on the comparability between the 2001 and 2011 census questions.

- 7.3 Sandy invited the views of PAMS on work priorities. Jenny Boag replied that PAMS would prefer 1991 data before additional charts and graphs are produced, because users typically extract data to other software to produce their own visualisations. Jenny also indicated that functionality similar to the NOMIS website would be welcomed, in particular the ability to select and compare data for different levels of geography.
- 7.4 Fiona Tweedie enquired about the publication of workplace/daytime population, and the timescale for publication of this data.

Action: Sandy Taylor to add a note to the minutes for Fiona Tweedie about the publication timescale for workplace/daytime population. Post meeting note: Counts of workplace population and daytime population at output area level are planned for release in July. Cross-tabulations for these two population bases – similar to those published at council area level in November 2015 – are planned for publication later in the summer, provisionally in September.

- 7.1 Jan Freeke enquired about the geography for the 1991 data. Sandy responded that the data will likely be made available for a range of 2011-based output geographies down to electoral wards/postcode sectors.

Action: Sandy to add the detail of the geographies for 1991 to the minutes. Post meeting note: It is currently planned to make tables of 1991 Census data available for the following (2011-based) output geographies: Scotland, council area, health board area, Scottish parliamentary constituency, Scottish parliamentary region, UK parliamentary constituency, electoral ward, postcode sector, settlement, locality.

8. Sub-national Population Projections update

- 8.1 Luke Main gave an update about progress with the Sub-national Population Projections for Scotland. He reported that the new projections system is undergoing a phase of testing where the 2012-based results of the new system are being compared to the published 2012-based projections. He indicated that they are aiming to publish in July, and that a comparison report with the 2012-based projections will be circulated in June. He went on to discuss the changes to the method, the geographies and the details of the testing as covered in the presentation slides. He also highlighted that all variants will be produced for National Parks and Strategic Development Plan areas in the new projections, where previously only the high and low migration variants were produced. Luke discussed some preliminary findings from the comparisons with the published 2012-based projections. He then enquired what PAMS would like to see included in the comparison paper.
- 8.2 Alastair Harvey asked about the difference between the constrained and unconstrained outputs. Luke Main explained that the constrained outputs are those that have been constrained to the results of the National Population projections. Alastair stated that he would like to see both included in the comparison paper.
- 8.3 Jenny Boag enquired about how the new method dealt with the small number of part council areas that fall within the National Park boundaries. Luke Main responded that they investigated the trends in the population of the national parks between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses and found that the population proportions

for these areas were similar. It therefore looked like a better fit to proportion these areas compared to the limitations of projecting the population for smaller areas. Jenny expressed concern that while this will be acceptable for the total population, it may not capture the correct age structure. Luke responded that the proportions are split by age group. Jenny indicated that the National Parks may be concerned about the methodology. Esta Clark highlighted that they intend to talk to National Parks separately to get their views and feedback on NRS's suggested improvements, and Luke Main reiterated that the new methodology appears to give a better fit which addressed the concerns the national parks had expressed about the existing projections.

- 8.4 Jan Freeke asked about the estimation of special populations. Luke Main responded that an average of the estimated populations is taken, and no changes are assumed for the projection period. Jan Freeke then enquired whether NRS plan to treat students as a special population. Luke responded that this is not possible due to a lack of data to identify students, and Esta Clark added that at council area level the population size is such that effects are small. Jenny Boag expressed concerns about the methodology for students, and emphasized the large number of students, which may be a concern for Stirling where they represent a large proportion of the population. Although it will be more difficult to treat students as a separate group in Edinburgh and Glasgow. She indicated that she would support treating students as a special population. Esta explained that the problem NRS face is the data source availability for students. For the sub-council area projections 2001 census data was used to estimate the student population, but there are concerns about how changeable the student population may be between censuses. Jenny highlighted that changes also happen to the prison populations for example, and that some attempt to account for these changes would be included. Esta emphasized that in the sub-council area projections treating the students as a special population worked well in some areas, but not in others.
- 8.5 Jan enquired about how special populations were treated in the previous projection method. Esta responded that there was a miscellaneous adjustment that covered special populations, in which they were not aged on. Jan added that he had no strong feelings about whether students should be considered as a special population or not.
- 8.6 Esta went on to give an update on the next steps for the project, including getting comparison data and the comparison paper out for comment by the end of May/early June, and enquired whether PAMS would prefer to receive data or a summary of the impact of the methodology change. Jenny suggested that the data should also be sent, because a few respondents may have time and be interested in analysing this.
- 8.7 Jan mentioned that it would good to have an event for open discussion as well as sending out a comparisons paper. Jenny agreed that this worked well for the sub-council area projections. Esta stressed that this may require more preparation by NRS, and might push the final publication date back to August. Jenny suggested that it need not be a large event, with emphasis on discussion rather than presentation of the result in the paper. Esta reiterated that this would still push the publication date back but she was happy to do this to give the opportunity to discuss the changes.

- 8.8 Steve Smallwood added that population are only considered to be special if they cannot be captured by the methods used to estimate population and components of population change. Students are not typically a special population because they are captured in migration for example. Esta agreed with Steve but noted that the treatment of students as a special population was applied in the sub-council area projections because it was clear that student populations were being aged on where they should not have been and this was particularly noticeable for small populations. She also agreed that trying to untangle student moves from the migration data and using other sources was problematic and the approach used in the sub-council area projections probably wasn't appropriate for these projections.
- 8.9 Steve also enquired about how users see the usage of sub-national projection variants, because ONS are considering developing them for England, do people find them useful or confusing? Jenny highlighted the use of variants by Falkirk council. For the 2010-based projections the principal variant was not found to be a good fit for planning purposes and therefore the high migration variant was used. For the 2012-based projections the principal projection was used as the fit was better. Jan Freeke emphasized that the variants are useful, sometimes they are considered more realistic, and they are useful in conveying the uncertainty of population projections. Angela Adams agreed, and highlighted the use of multiple variants for scenario testing in the planning process. Steve Smallwood thanked PAMS for their response that he will feed back to the projection team at ONS.

9. **Statistics.gov.scot update**

- 9.1 David Duncan-Fraser gave an update on progress with the Statistics.gov.scot beta site. He stressed that Statistics.gov.scot is not trying to be an exact replica of Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), and that they are aware that this is not the final product, and need to do more work to meet user needs. He indicated that a lot of the functionality of SNS was not regularly used, because it was not easy to find, and some of these functions were not considered necessary in the new system because they only met the requirements of a small number of users. The new site will be built around other tools for adding functionality. He stressed that the website is still 'beta' to ensure that users are aware that work is on-going. David also explained that the new site was required quickly to replace the SNS site because that site was going out of contract. He emphasized that they welcome any feedback on the new site, and have an on-going communications project to ensure that users are aware of the on-going improvements and current 'beta' status. He highlighted that they are aiming to bring back interactive mapping, which was well used on SNS, and that the site aims to be a location for all official statistics rather than just small area statistics. He then gave a demo of the website's current functionality, and talked through the planned improvements to the usability and functionality of the site.
- 9.2 Nicholas Sobey asked if it was possible to save or export the visualisations (maps and graphs). David Duncan Fraser responded that this is not currently possible, but they are building in the possibility of embedding visualisations into other websites that will automatically be updated with the most recent data, as well as looking into the functionality for exporting graphs and images.
- 9.3 David emphasized that they are aware they are not currently meeting local authority analyst needs for those that wish to use interactive mapping, and they are aiming to fix how this works for navigation to lower geographies, with updates to come in the next few weeks. He also gave a demonstration of the staging

platform that is used for testing new functionality, and highlighted some of the planned improvements currently in testing. He reiterated that the general message they would like to get across is for users to bear with them, that they are continuing to improve, and they would encourage feedback.

- 9.4 Jan Freeke indicated that training sessions would be really useful given the difficulties with the current site. David responded that they are currently running training sessions and improving online help, which will be designed for expert users. He indicated that they will be travelling out to local authorities to provide training.
- 9.5 Angela Adams asked when the revised version of the website will be launched. David responded that the site will be updated incrementally every two to four weeks to avoid disruption to users. They plan to improve geography functionality over the next few weeks, followed by improvements to searches by postcode.
- 9.6 Angela also enquired how users are going to be updated with information about changes that are made. David responded that updates will be detailed on the blog. Jennifer Boag stressed that blogs are blocked by most local authorities, so this is of no use to local authority users. David responded that they had moved to using the blog because they considered that it was the better way of reaching users, ScotStat was not considered to reach a wide enough audience. Angela asked if it was possible for users to be updated by contact on knowledgehub. David responded that if it would be useful to replicate the blog on knowledgehub then they would be happy to do that, and that if there are other platforms that it would be useful for them to interact with users on we should let him know.
- 9.7 Nicholas Sobey enquired how quickly newly published data will be available on the new site. David responded that the idea is for data to be made available as soon as data is published, but that they are currently working on ensuring current data sets are updated.
- 9.8 Post meeting note: David Duncan-Fraser has been in touch with local authorities since the meeting and has established that most of them can access the blog site.

10. Scotstat Board Report

- 10.1 Jenny Boag gave a final update from the ScotStat board, which has now been disbanded and gave an overview of the main points from the meeting as detailed in Paper 3 PAMS (16) 03.
- 10.2 Jenny highlighted that there will be a two-tier replacement system for the ScotStat Board. There will be a smaller group, advising on strategy for official statistics in Scotland which will be by invitation only. There will also be a much larger group, similar to the England and Wales statistics user forum, and there are plans for a meeting of this group in the near future. Jenny recommended that PAMS keep an eye on the succession groups to the ScotStat Board..

Action point: Kirsty MacLachlan to feedback to PAMS about the progress of the successors to the ScotStat Board.

11. Statistics Plan

- 11.1 Kirsty MacLachlan introduced the draft Statistics Plan, and invited comments from PAMS on the plan, which is due for publication next month.

- 11.2 Jenny Boag highlighted that PAMS are keen that NRS should investigate the possibility of repeating sub-council area projections. The project received a lot of positive comments, even if the data does not end up being widely used. She indicated that local authorities may also like to be able to do their own projections in POPGROUP, and that they are very supportive of sub-council area projections and would like to see further investigation of this in the Statistics Plan.
- 11.3 Jan Freeke commented that on page 10 of the plan continued collaboration with the Centre for Population Change is highlighted, and that on page 13 events and seminars are highlighted. He indicated that it would be useful to have events passing on some of the work of the Centre for Population Change to a wider audience. Kirsty MacLachlan mentioned the 'brown bag' seminars that are held at Ladywell House on a monthly basis. Jenny expressed that there may be local authority interest in attending these events, and that local authority members may be willing to travel for those that are of particular interest.

Action point: Kirsty MacLachlan agreed to pass on the invitations to these seminars to Jenny Boag to circulate more widely to interested parties.

12. Branch update: Population and Migration

- 12.1 Esta Clark gave an update for the Population and Migration Statistics branch and talked through the main points of the update Paper 5 PAMS (16) 05.
- 12.2 Esta highlighted the recent staffing changes and noted that the Population and Migration Branch have gained responsibility for electoral statistics following Neil Bowie's retirement. She also mentioned the publications since the last PAMS meeting, including the improvements that were made to migration estimates which were previously detailed in Paper 10 PAMS (15) 10. She also mentioned the result of the ONS consultation, including the continued production of population projections every two years. She reiterated, that there would be an event to discuss the sub-national projections methodology changes over the next few months as requested and that a survey will be sent out to get feedback from users of the sub-council area projections which will be useful for exploring potential funding streams. Esta also asked that people didn't wait to get in touch with feedback on the sub-council area projections project and encouraged them to get in touch with specific examples of how you use these statistics, which would be useful in creating a business case for further work in this area. Esta also offered to come out and talk to local authorities and others if this would be useful. Esta also welcomed feedback on the new centenarians publication at council area level. She indicated that NRS have not received a lot of feedback from users of the new 90+ and centenarian data at this level, and she would like to hear about how these statistics are being used. She also highlighted some of the on-going improvement work, including the replacement of some systems that will be necessary as a response to changes in data sources in England and Wales, and that final requirements from the UK Statistics Authority are being completed, with the aim of meeting the June assessment board.
- 12.3 Esta asked for PAMS preferences for the publication of settlements and localities statistics. Jenny Boag responded that the preference would be for publication of 2015 settlements and localities. Luke Main asked whether PAMS would then prefer to move to 2017 publication (and continuing two year periods) or have the following publication for 2016 (and continuing two year periods). Esta Clark added that they will be emailing out and asking for wider user feedback about what would

be preferred but a view from PAMS would be helpful. PAMS were in agreement that they should be produced for 2015 and then 2017, 2019 and 2021, tying in nicely with the next census in 2021.

- 12.4 Jenny expressed the gratitude of PAMS that projections will continue to be every two years. Steve Smallwood agreed, and highlighted that there was a particular user need from a number of government departments.
- 12.5 Esta also introduced Sarah Mohammed, who is working on life expectancy statistics, and informed PAMS about current talks with ONS about improving life expectancy statistics. In particular expansion to include older age groups in the calculation process. Esta indicated that emails will be sent out to users about the proposed improvements in due course. Kirsty MacLachlan added that Standard Life also expressed an interest in the expansion of life expectancy to older ages at a recent meeting she had with them.

13. Branch update: Vital Events

- 13.1 Julie Ramsay gave an oral update for the Vital Events branch. She highlighted the changes that have been made to include NHS Board and council area level birth and death data, which will now continue every month, and planned changes to the age groups in quarterly in monthly data as a response to requests from users. The highest age group will be increased from 85 and over to 90 and over and will come into effect for the 2016 reference tables onwards. She indicated that the best time to introduce this change is in the data for quarter three, published in December of this year.
- 13.2 Julie mentioned that the major focus of the Vital Events branch has been the new Vital Events IT system, which has taken a lot of branch time. She highlighted that regular customer outputs will be changing when the new system goes live. Most of these will be minor formatting changes, and they have been in contact with users about the changes that will occur. These changes will affect death data produced from mid-July onwards.
- 13.3 Julie also highlighted the publication of reference tables in August, including a new time series on marriage, introduced in response to an increased number of ad hoc requests for more information on place of residence (in or out-with Scotland). She also highlighted the on-going and increasing work on infographics which seems to have been well received. In particular, she noted that a new interactive visualisation on baby names will be going live soon.

14. Branch update: Household Estimates and Projections

- 14.1 Kirsty MacLachlan gave an update on behalf of the Household Estimates and Projections Branch, with apologies on behalf of Esther Roughsedge and Debbie Amabile.
- 14.2 Kirsty asked for the opinion of PAMS on the inclusion of statistics at 2001 data zones (in addition to 2011 data zones). Jenny Boag expressed that if this is doable this would be preferred, because this data is useful for time series. Kirsty enquired if users have any particular time pressures for this data. Jenny responded that there was no time pressure, but that the data would still be welcomed.
- 14.3 Kirsty added that Households will also investigate the possibility of reproducing sub-council area household projections in the future.

14.4 She also asked for feedback from PAMS about the increased use of infographics and alternative means of interacting with users, in particular Twitter. Jenny responded that unfortunately Twitter is banned by most local authorities, and they cannot receive updates in this manner.

14.5 Jan Freeke suggested having another Household Analysis Review Group meeting.

Action Point : Esther to add a note to the minutes about plans for the next HARG meeting. Post meeting note: A meeting of the Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) will be held, when we have draft household projections available to discuss.

14.6 Jan Freeke enquired about the publication of types of households/dwelling and number of rooms. Kirsty responded that there is currently a review of the data access agreement to see whether NRS can share and publish this data. **Post meeting note:** The Assessors have now agreed that NRS will be able to obtain and publish this data as before, but it will not be available in time to be included in the June household estimates publication.

15. Any other business

15.1 Kirsty MacLachlan formally thanked Jenny Boag for her contributions to PAMS, Census and official statistics over the years and wished her all the best for a long and happy retirement when it came in September.

16. Date of next meeting

16.1 November 2016.