

<b>Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)</b>
--

**Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland):  
11 November 2015**
**Present**

Jenny Boag  
Chris Carr  
Nicholas Cassidy  
Esta Clark  
Jan Freeke  
Jay Gillam (minutes)  
Sarah Mohammed  
Hannah Rutherford  
Cecilia MacIntyre (part of meeting)  
Kirsty MacLachlan (chair)  
Debbie Amabile  
Esta Clark  
David Readhead  
Nicholas Sobey  
Iain Stewart  
Sandy Taylor  
Thomas Robertson  
Geoff Duke  
Amanda Sharfman (by phone)

**Organisation**

Falkirk Council  
Argyll & Bute Council  
Improvement Service  
National Records of Scotland (NRS)  
Glasgow City Council  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
NHS ISD  
Highlands and Islands Enterprise  
Renfrewshire Council  
NRS  
NRS  
NRS  
Office for National Statistics (ONS)

**1. Introduction and apologies**

- 1.1 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed the group. There were apologies received from Paul McNamara, Alistair Harvey, Cliff Beevers, Archie Clark, Fiona O’Hanlon and Fiona Tweedie.

**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**

- 3.1 All action points closed by the previous meeting have been removed going forward.

**Action point 2015.02** – on-going

**Action point 2015.03** – on-going, no requests have been received yet

**Action: All to send suggestions for local authority contacts who use transport flow data**

**Action point 2015.04** – report has been published, action point closed.

**Action point 2015.05** – on-going

**Action point 2015.06** – Subgroup has been created, action point closed.

**Action point 2015.07** – action point closed.

**Action point 2015.08** – Discussed as part of Any Other Business (AOB), action point closed.

**Action point 2015.09** – This action point was previously missed in the action point document. Esta Clark was given an update by Alastair McAlpine. A consultation with users is currently on-going to determine whether the next Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) should be put on hold until the errors in the age distribution of the mid-year estimates are corrected. Early indications are that users would like them to press ahead using existing estimates. New 2011 Data Zones are being used in the SIMD process.

**Action: David Readhead is on the SIMD user group and he kindly agreed to feedback to PAMS on any decision taken about the next SIMD.**

#### **4. Scotland's Census 2021 - programme update**

- 4.1 Geoff Duke introduced himself as the Programme Manager for Scotland's Census 2021 and gave an update on progress and future plans. He explained that progress was continuing to be made in planning for a census in 2021 and that momentum was building. The governance around the programme was continuing to be developed and that they are in the process of growing the team. He then talked through the main points of the update paper.
- 4.2 Jennifer Boag asked for PAMS Local Authority members to be consulted along with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) so that they are aware of discussions happening with non PAMS members within councils and asked that SOLACE and Chief Executives (CE) could be reminded of the PAMS group in any correspondence from NRS. Jennifer also proposed that discussion with councils to determine core tables should be part of the consultation process. Thomas Robertson noted the balance between flexibility in table design and risk of disclosure. He also mentioned that the next Census would take place predominantly online and that new technology may mean that there are other options for taking forward disclosure control in designing the 2021 Census and mentioned the approaches being taken forward elsewhere in the world e.g. Australia and Canada. The possibility of producing some tables only for the area of main interest/use (i.e. Glasgow), or at some intermediate geography was discussed.
- 4.3 Cecilia Macintyre gave an update about the online topic consultation, which is taking place through the new online government Citizen Space. The topic consultation will run until 15 January 2016 and three events are being run in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh to provide more information about the consultation. She stressed that for comments to be taken account of they needed to be submitted via Citizen Space as a formal consultation response. Cecilia highlighted that the method for identifying respondents in the consultation system meant that entries can be made by an 'individual' or 'organisation', with no question directly asking for the organisational information for 'individual' responses. Therefore please could councils clearly say which council area they are referring to in their consultation responses.
- 4.4 Amanda Sharfman noted that the ONS had the same issue with their consultation.

**Action: Cecilia to contact census colleagues in ONS to find out how they have approached this issue with their consultation.**

- 4.5 Cecilia MacIntyre made a request for users of census data to volunteer a one minute video about their use of census data, to be recorded at the PAMS conference, which would be used to promote the Census at various events..
- 4.6 Jennifer Boag mentioned that there would undoubtedly be interest in an income question as there was in 2011 and also noted that both topic consultations in the central belt, along with the PAMS conference have been organised on Tuesdays. While this may be unavoidable, it would be better practice to ensure that events are held on different days where possible.

**5. Mid-year Estimates (MYE) age distribution errors**

- 5.1 Esta Clark gave an update about the mid-year estimate age distribution errors, mentioning the two papers which were sent to PAMS members and key users of population estimates in September and she went through the plans going forward: the 2012, 2013 and 2014 mid-year estimates will be revised and published alongside the 2015 mid-year estimates, 2012, 2013 and 2014 2011-Data Zone estimates will be revised and published later in 2016.
- 5.2 Feedback on the approach taken to deal with the errors was very positive from PAMS members and other key users of population statistics. Jennifer Boag said that the consultation about the best course of action to take, and the speed with which replies to comments were given and decisions were taken was very helpful, and that the approach should be highlighted as best practice.
- 5.3 Amanda Sharfman from ONS commented that the ONS will revise the UK population estimates once the Scotland estimates have been revised.

**6. Sub-national Projections**

- 6.1 Esta Clark gave a presentation on the progress of the sub-national population projections review.
- 6.2 Esta Clark commented that currently the project is on track to meet the proposed timelines, with a consultation on the international migration assumptions and rates to be used for cross border and within Scotland migration in Feb/Mar and publication of the results in June 2016.
- 6.3 PAMS members indicated a preference for the use of the revised population and migration estimates to be used to produce the projections.
- 6.4 Jan Freeke asked about the data that will be used in the consultation and how it will be presented given the new methodology. Esta explained that there were various level of detail that could be consulted on e.g. in and out flows for international migration by age and sex, also the rates to be used for cross border and within Scotland migration. Jan said that it would perhaps be best to consult on the high level assumptions only as he was not sure if everyone would be able to comment on the more detailed assumptions. PAMS members were in agreement with this approach.

- 6.5 Jennifer Boag queried the implication of increased numbers of refugees on the international migration estimates and projections. Esta explained that the data to be used in the projections would be that which had been used in the migration estimates used in the mid-year estimates and that the projections would be trend based and would not take into account changes that had happened since the base year of the projection. Esta asked Amanda how ONS were planning to deal with refugee numbers in the Long Term Migration Estimates based on the International Passenger Survey (IPS). Amanda said she was not sure but her colleagues in the ONS Migration team would be the best people to ask.

**Action: Esta Clark to send the presentation to Amanda at ONS and to interested council contacts.**

**Action: Esta Clark to consult with the ONS about their future treatment of refugees in the international migration estimates and to make it clear in the sub-national projections international migration consultation that the recent refugee numbers will not be included in the assumptions.**

## 7. Branch update: Dissemination and Census Analysis

- 7.1 Sandy Taylor gave an update on the dissemination and census team.
- 7.2 Jennifer Boag noted that the [Scotland Census Results Online \(SCROL\)](#) website link still works and does not obviously point out that it has been decommissioned and link/redirect to the new [Scotlands Census](#) website. (Post-meeting note: The SCROL website is no longer active – a redirect to the Scotland's Census website is now in place.)
- 7.3 Jennifer Boag also commented on a lack of staff continuity, resulting in a loss of experience that may be particularly important in the census group. Whether staff could be brought back for another rotation in census for 2021 or whether staff moving into census branch could be kept for a 4 year rather than 2 year rotation was discussed.

## 8. Branch update: Household estimates and Projections

- 8.1 Debbie Amabile gave an update for the Household Estimates and Projections branch and highlighted the current issues they were having with making data available due to the Scotlands Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) data platform now being frozen which meant no new data could be added to it. It was suggested that the small area household estimates should be made available on the NRS website.
- 8.2 Chris Carr, Jennifer Boag and Jan Freeke asked whether numbers could be published rather than the percentage figures for dwellings, since typically users calculate the numbers from the percentages. Debbie Amabile and Kirsty MacLachlan commented that percentage figures have been published due to concerns about the coverage and quality of the data source and users understanding of the accuracy of the final figures. It was proposed that the numbers be published with a caveat about the accuracy of the figures.
- 8.3 Jennifer Boag asked when the next Household Analysis Review Group (HARG) meeting would be held. Debbie replied that the next meeting would be held before the next household projections are produced as there would then be material to discuss with users.

## 9. Branch update: Population and Migration

- 9.1 Esta Clark gave an update for the Population and Migration Statistics branch and talked through the main points from the paper.
- 9.2 Esta asked about the requirement for including the armed forces adjustment in the small area projections project. She explained that there was a trade-off between making the adjustment in the projections meaning that NRS could not release the detailed POPGROUP input files due the disclosive nature of the armed forces data and having projections which made an adjustment for this sub set of the population. Chris Carr responded that the armed forces contribute significantly to the population in some areas and need to be included given that councils cannot get access to information about this population sub group themselves. PAMS therefore agreed that an armed forces adjustment would be made in relevant areas and that this would restrict the POPGROUP files that would be made available when the projections are produced.
- 9.3 Esta commented that the geographies that will be used in the small area projections have not changed since the previous position tabled at the projections sub group meeting and that the PAM contact for this project for each council area would be consulted before any changes or aggregations due to small populations are made.
- 9.4 Jan Freeke asked if there was an update on the work being carried out by Professor Phil Rees and colleagues on ethnic population projections. Esta agreed to ask if Phil and colleagues could come to Scotland to give an update on their work. Esta also mentioned that she was speaking to the Home Office to see if they could come and do a seminar on the data they hold, probably in the summer of 2016.

**Action point: Esta Clark to invite Phil Rees and colleagues to give a presentation in Scotland about their population projections by ethnic group.**

## 10. Branch update: Vital events

- 10.1 Kirsty MacLachlan talked through the Vital Events branch update as Julie and Frank sent their apologies. Monthly birth figures are now being published on the NRS website and it was asked whether it would possible to have these figures at Local Authority (LA) level rather than Scotland level only.

**Action point: Kirsty to ask Julie Ramsey about the possibility of these figures being published at a lower geography.**

## 11. Branch update: Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC)/ Scottish Informatics and Linkage Collaboration (SILC)

- 11.1 Unfortunately Gerry Donnelly was not there to go through the update paper provided. Kirsty asked if anyone had any comments or queries.
- 11.2 Jan Freeke and Jennifer Boag said that it would be useful if some brief, practical examples could be given about how the data is accessed and used.
- 11.3 Action: Kirsty to ask Gerry to provide examples of how ADRC/SILC was being used for the next PAMS meeting.

**12. Any other business**

- 12.1 Jennifer Boag announced that she would be retiring next September and that this would be her second last PAMS meeting. She was looking for a replacement to take on the coordination of the LA side PAMS group. So far Allison Craig has volunteered to take on the role, as long as someone else can also be found to co-chair the group.

**13. Date of next meeting**

- 13.1 May 2016.