

<b>Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)</b>
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**Minutes of the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland):  
16 November 2016**
**Present**

Alistair Harvey  
Amy Wilson  
Andrew Waugh  
Angela Adams  
Anthea Springbett

Caroline Capocci  
Celia MacIntyre  
Denise Patrick  
Esta Clark  
Esther Roughsedge

Fiona Tweedie

Gregor Boyd

Hervey Gibson

Jan Freeke

Jay Lindop

Jay Gillam

John McCoskry

Julie Ramsay

Kirsty MacLachlan

Liam Cavin

Luke Main

Maya Clayton

Mike Atkinson

Peadar Morgan

Sandy Taylor

Sarah Mohammed

Sarah Townsend-Cartwright

**Organisation**

City of Edinburgh Council

National Records of Scotland (NRS)

NRS

Clydeplan

Administrative Data Research

Centre (ADRC)-Scotland

NRS

NRS

NRS

NRS

NRS

Church of Scotland

Scottish Government (SG)

Cogent Strategies International

Glasgow City Council

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

NRS

NRS

NRS

Minutes

Chair

NRS

SG

NRS

NRS

Highland Council

By phone

Bord na Gàidhlig

NRS

NRS

Scottish Water

## 1. Introduction and apologies

1.1 Kirsty MacLachlan welcomed the group. Apologies were received from Venetia Haynes, Chris Carr, Cliff Beevers, David Readhead, Fiona O'Hanlon, Paul Mcnamara and Siobhan Couttie.

## 2. Minutes of previous meeting ([PAMS \(16\) 09](#))

2.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

## 3. Update on action points from previous meeting

**Action point 2016.01 – Closed** - Venetia Haynes has set up an outputs working group.

**Action point 2016.02 – Closed.**

**Action point 2016.03 – Closed.**

**Action point 2016.04 – Closed** - Amy Wilson noted that the New Scottish Statistics Board have had an initial meeting. Roger Halliday (Chief Statistician), Tim Ellis (Chief Executive of National Records of Scotland, Registrar General) and Scott Heald (Head of Profession for Statistics, Information Services Division, NHS) head the new group and are currently looking at the Official Statistics Strategy. The recent Scottish Official Statistics Conference linked in with the new Vision Statement and Action Plan for Scottish Official Statistics. Gregor Boyd added that a draft is available in the ScotStat Board Minutes.

**Action point 2016.07: Circulate the most recent Official Statistics Strategy to the PAMS group. Post meeting note:** The draft is available as part of the minutes of the [March 2016 ScotStat Board](#) and is available on the Scottish Government website

**Action point 2016.08: Amy Wilson to provide information about how users can interact with/contact the Board at the next meeting.**

**Action point 2016.05 – Closed** – We will continue to pass on invites.

**Action point 2016.06 – Closed.**

#### 4. Life Expectancy for Scottish Areas ([Paper \(16\) 11](#))

- 4.1 Sarah Mohammed gave an update on the work that National Records of Scotland (NRS) have been doing with the Office for National (ONS), Information Services Division (ISD), Scottish Government, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), Public Health England (PHE) and the Welsh Government to harmonise life expectancy statistics across the UK. NRS and ONS are publishing these statistics on the same day, and ONS are also publishing figures for healthy life expectancy and disability free life expectancy for local authorities across the UK, allowing direct comparisons (same methodology) of healthy life expectancy across the UK for the first time. She discussed the changes detailed in PAMS Paper (16) 11 and welcomed feedback from PAMS.
- 4.2 Alistair Harvey asked why NRS do not produce these estimates at intermediate zone, as available from ISD. Esta Clark responded that ISD took on producing estimates at intermediate geography levels after a review of priorities and resourcing in 2010.
- 4.3 Hervey Gibson asked if there had been a corresponding change to age specific mortality. Julie Ramsay responded that there has not, the age specific mortality rates are calculated based on the European Age Standardised Rates methodology which is different to that used for the life expectancy estimates. The method used to produce life expectancy figures from the National Life Tables uses ages up to 90 and over, and the changes to the sub-national life expectancy methods should make the sub-national life expectancy estimates more comparable with the European Age Standardised Rates.
- 4.4 Jan Freeke asked if a comparison with consistent previous years estimates is being released. Sarah Mohammed responded that NRS will be publishing a back series of council area figures, and will produce a back series for NHS Board areas/urban and rural/Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation in the future.

#### 5. Scotland's Census 2021 ([Paper \(16\) 12](#)) - general update

- 5.1 Amy Wilson gave a general programme-wide update on Scotland's Census 2021, as detailed in PAMS Paper (16) 12. She noted that many programmes are still in design phase, with movements towards procurement and increases in staffing. More information has now been made available on the [2021 pages](#) of the census website. She highlighted the on-going development of the census commercial strategy, and that NRS are looking at a more out-sourced approach than ONS.
- 5.2 Amy gave an update on Outputs and Statistical Disclosure Control and Geography, as described in PAMS Paper (16) 12. She noted the continuing work on analysis of Output Area thresholds, which are much smaller than those for England and Wales, and how important this is with respect to flexibility and comparability with the rest of the UK.
- 5.3 Jan Freeke mentioned that rural council areas are very interested in the small level of geography as provided by previous Output Area thresholds.
- 5.4 Amy gave a brief overview of the results from the [Topic Consultation report](#), published on 15 August. She indicated that they are looking at whether to include questions around sexual identity, with a public acceptability test, effect

on response rates and whether the census is the best place to ask questions related to issues of sex and gender identity. The feedback from countries that have recently held a census is that there have been a lot of requests for non-binary options. They are also looking into whether there should be a question about veteran status, and questions about income. ONS are not planning to gather information on income, but plan to publish some information on income based on HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) data.

- 5.5 Jan Freeke asked if there is a plan to link census and HMRC data. Amy said that ONS plan to link census with administrative data, but that there is no immediate plan to do this in Scotland; NRS will continue to engage ONS on this and to consider whether the production of these statistics might be possible in Scotland.
- 5.6 Amy introduced Andrew Waugh, who is leading the Administrative Data work for Scotland's Census 2021. She also highlighted that ONS are releasing trial outputs of population statistics using administrative sources.
- 5.7 Amy noted that the initial Privacy Impact Assessment will be published around the end of the year, and asked for PAMS to provide any feedback they may have on this release.
- 5.8 Jan Freeke mentioned that there are potential problems with the 'hard to count' population in deprived areas as a result of the move to an online census. Amy said that they would like to work with local authorities to find out what issues there may be.
- 5.9 Alistair Harvey asked if each local authority will have a census liaison officer. Amy responded that she did not yet know, last time there were some issues with some local authorities not having the capacity.
- 5.10 Amy welcomed any other feedback or questions PAMS may have, and will give a presentation on Scotland's Census 2021 progress at the next PAMS meeting and provide a 'road map' of the current plans.
- 5.11 Esta Clark has been promoted to Head of Design, and Amy Wilson to Head of Census, Statistics and Registration at National Records of Scotland.
- 5.12 Amy asked if PAMS would like a focussed census group as a PAMS subgroup. Alistair Harvey and Angela Adams agreed that this would be useful and welcomed.

**Action Point 2016.08: NRS to write to PAMS members and PAMS Local Authority (LA) representatives asking for nominations for a census subgroup.**

## 6. Branch update: Dissemination and Census Analysis ([Paper \(16\) 19](#))

- 6.1 Sandy Taylor gave an update on the work of the Dissemination and Census Analysis Branch, as detailed in PAMS Paper (16) 19. He highlighted that output area counts of the two alternative populations - the workplace population and the daytime populations - have been finalised and will be released in November.
- 6.2 Fiona Tweedie noted that the geography used for some of the census outputs is at low water mark rather than high water mark, meaning that the area centroids

are different. Caroline Capocci said that NRS Geography can provide the high water mark geographies and centroids.

6.3 Hervey Gibson enquired who the requests for commissioned tables come from.

**Action Point 2016.09: Sandy to provide a summary of who has requested commissioned tables.**

6.4 Peadar Morgan asked about the timescale for the 1991 and 1981 tables. Sandy replied that he will have a better idea in about a month and will publish our proposed timescale.

6.5 Alistair Harvey asked what size the geography is for workplace populations. Sandy responded that the minimum threshold of a workplace zone is 200 workers, and the maximum is around 3-4,000 workers.

**7. Statistics.gov.scot ([Paper \(16\) 13](#)) – general update**

7.1 Gregor Boyd gave an update on the progress of statistics.gov.scot, including the publication of population estimates and projections. He emphasised that the current aim is to update the statistics already on the web, and that they are thinking of splitting the data into two sections by current and old geographies.

7.2 Celia MacIntyre asked why we would split the data. Gregor responded that this is to make the site easier to use, and to resolve issues with aggregation to higher geographies, while still being able to make the older geography data available to users. Jan Freeke commented that there has been some frustration from the local authorities with Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) data being available at 2001 datazones while the population estimates are at 2011 datazones, and suggested that this be raised with suppliers. Gregor responded that they will look into asking suppliers for up to date geography data.

7.3 Angela Adams commented that a lot of local authorities are having problems accessing the blog, and asked if there were plans to put anything on knowledgehub. Gregor responded that they are looking into knowledgehub. He asked if local authorities could provide feedback on their problems accessing the blog – if they could send a screenshot, so that the team can diagnose the problem and try to resolve it.

7.4 Gregor gave an overview of the issues with dataset sizes on statistics.gov.scot, and the possibility of aggregating age groups to resolve this. Alistair Harvey noted that single year of age is the most useful data, and that there is no consensus on what agreeable age groups would be, as different users would like different aggregate groups. Gregor asked how the data is used, whether it is analysed online or downloaded and analysed. Hervey Gibson, Alistair Harvey and Angela Adams agreed that datasets are usually downloaded and then analysed or processed.

7.5 Gregor suggested that for casual online users, age groups could be used, and that full datasets by single year of age could be made available for download by power users. Alistair agreed that this seems reasonable, and that 5 year age groups could be used.

- 7.6 Angela Adams asked if data will continue to be published on the NRS website. Esta Clark responded that we will continue to publish our data on the NRS website.
- 7.7 Gregor asked PAMS if csv downloads with metadata would be useful for power users. Alistair responded that this would be useful.
- 7.8 Jan Freeke asked where the sub-national population projections data could be accessed. Esta Clark responded that we are hoping to make this available on statistics.gov.scot, and that in the meantime, detailed datasets are available from NRS on request.
- 7.9 Esther Roughsedge asked for PAMS views on publishing small numbers for some household types. Angela Adams responded that this data would be preferred so that users can do their own groupings. Esther mentioned that caveats around the data were clearly highlighted alongside the data when this was released as part of the sub-council area projections, and asked how this might work on statistics.gov.scot. Gregor responded that observation level metadata is currently being investigated.
- 7.10 Gregor let PAMS know that there will be statistics.gov.scot training coming up, and asked if local authorities had available meeting rooms that could be used to provide this training across the country. Angela Adams responded that there are rooms with projectors available in Glasgow, and provided a contact to ask about locations.

## 8. Feedback on NRS outputs ([Paper \(16\) 14](#))

- 8.1 Esther Roughsedge gave a brief presentation comparing the publication outputs of NRS with the Office for National Statistics, and discussing the [3\\* Open Data standards](#) that NRS have agreed to meet. She asked for feedback from PAMS on NRS publications and plans for 3\* open data.
- 8.2 Alistair Harvey responded that feedback had been positive from PAMS on the current publication length and content, and that local authorities like having the detail covering all local authorities in Scotland. Hervey Gibson noted that the ONS website can still be difficult for rural users in Scotland to access. Having PDF's available for publications helped with this, as there can be issues with the html version.
- 8.3 Esther mentioned the long series of tables that are usually included at the back of the PDF version of the reports, and asked for PAMS ideas on the usefulness of these. Alistair responded that the tables at the back of the PDF are not used, as they use the Excel version. Jay Gillam asked if PAMS would be happy if we replaced these with links to the excel versions of the tables. Alistair responded that that seems like a reasonable replacement.
- 8.4 Esther asked about the format of the tables and figures as they are currently presented on the website: as a long list of all tables individually in excel, alongside a csv and PDF for each dataset, and what data formats are used. Alistair responded that local authorities mostly use the excel versions. Fiona Tweedie commented that some users prefer the csv versions, and have to do quite a bit of work to get the excel data into a machine readable format.

- 8.5 John McCoskry presented some of the download figures for individual tables and detailed tables. Very few individual tables are downloaded, and typically downloads are of the excel versions. However, for the detailed sub-national projection tables there were roughly equal numbers of downloads for excel and csv data.
- 8.6 Andrew Waugh asked whether to be truly machine readable, the data location should be fixed online. Esther Roughsedge responded that this is currently not possible on the NRS website, but this should be possible on statistics.gov.scot.
- 8.7 Esther gave a demonstration of some of the recent visualisations that NRS have produced, and asked for PAMs feedback on these data presentations. Angela Adams responded that there has been a 'big thumbs up' from PAMS for the interactive population pyramids. Local authorities particularly welcome interactive visualisations which allow them to select figures for individual council areas. Ideally, they would like a button added to allow you to download it as a PDF.

## 9. Presentation on ADRC and SILC ([Paper \(16\) 15](#))

- 9.1 Anthea Springbett gave a presentation on the Scottish Informatics and Linkage Collaboration (SILC) and the Administrative Data Research Centre (ADRC), with an introduction to who they are and what they do, and how researchers can access the data. The slides are available as PAMS Paper (16) 15.
- 9.2 Jan Freeke asked who can access the data. Anthea answered that third sector applicants need a guarantor, and that there can be issues around this. Typically, researchers from the public sector and universities can apply.
- 9.3 Jan asked if local authorities can feed in operational data. Anthea responded that this is possible as long as it has identification information that the data can be linked on.
- 9.4 Hervey Gibson asked how this parallels data from the rest of the UK. Anthea responded that data does have NHS number, and linkage can be performed using name or date of birth for example.

## 10. Progress on the NRS Statistics Plan ([Paper \(16\) 16](#))

- 10.1 Kirsty MacLachlan gave an overview of the update paper (PAMS Paper (16) 16), and asked the PAMS committee for any comments and feedback.
- 10.2 Alistair Harvey commented that the committee are not happy with the progress on including Higher Education Statistics Authority data into population statistics, and asked whether this had been cancelled. Esta Clark reminded the group that this work was delayed to allow the age distribution in the mid-year estimates to be corrected and the work would be taken forward over the coming year, depending on staffing.
- 10.3 Jan Freeke asked if there were any plans to produce updated sub-council area projections, Esta Clark and Kirsty MacLachlan responded that NRS are aiming to get in touch with users before the end of the year to get feedback on the use of these statistics, but that NRS does not currently have the funding to run this project again.



- 10.4 Kirsty noted that Transport Scotland produce small area projections, and asked whether PAMS would like these to be made available. Alistair Harvey and Hervey Gibson responded that these are not consistent with higher geography projections and that there are questions around the consistency and comparability in methodology across local authorities. They would like the data to be more open, but it would need to include a lot of caveats.
- 10.5 Angela Adams commented that there was a lot of really positive feedback about the sub-council area projections, and local authorities are looking forward to responding in the consultation. There had been discussion about POPGROUP, and a general consensus that it is not user friendly. She asked whether NRS could provide training and a practical course in using POPGROUP. Esta Clark responded that some of this will be covered or asked about in the consultation. She added that Ludi Simpson had previously come up to NRS for half a day and provided some training. Jan Freeke suggested that the consultation could ask if the Scottish POPGROUP user group should meet again, and what the benefit(s) of this would be.
- 10.6 Jan asked about the possibility of using the new sub-national projection methodology to produce smaller area population projections. Esta responded that this could be developed, but is also reliant on staffing and resources, and NRS would need additional funding to produce these statistics.

## 11. Branch update: Population and Migration ([Paper \(16\) 17](#))

- 11.1 Esta Clark gave an overview of the Population and Migration Branch update Paper (16) 17. She highlighted recent staffing changes, and the additional projections that were requested by the Scottish Government that were published on 23 November and used International Passenger Survey data to make assumptions about changing international migration to Scotland.
- 11.2 Esta asked the PAMS committee if there are any local authority data on refugees that could be useful to the branch in producing population and migration estimates for mid-2016. The branch receive some council area level data from the Home Office, but would like access to smaller geography data for producing the small area population estimates. Mike Atkinson responded that they do have this data, but are not sure that it would be shared, and that it would be difficult to get this data from all local authorities for February, and refugees should all appear in the Community Health Index. Maya Clayton added that NRS would not need this information by February, as the small area estimates are released later in the year. Esta added that NRS will contact PAMS regarding this on-going work and methodology.
- 11.3 Esta thanked PAMS for their help in the quality assurance of the new sub-national projections methodology. Jan Freeke added that the feedback was generally positive, that local authorities were happy with the change in methodology and believed that the projections were more realistic. Hervey Gibson commented that this is the case for cities, but may not necessarily be the case for more rural areas.
- 11.4 Esta asked if PAMS had any feedback on the use of 90 and over population estimates at council area level. Alistair Harvey responded that this had not yet been discussed by the PAMS local authority side-committee and that they would ask for wider feedback to find out if other areas are using these statistics.



11.5 Jan Freeke asked about the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) decommission in England and Wales, and whether the changes to the methodology for estimating cross-border movements is a short-term solution. He asked what the long-term solution is. Jay Gillam responded that this is a short-term solution for the cross-border flows in the mid-2016 population estimates. The Office for National Statistics are replacing the use of this data source with a new methodology using the Personal Demographics Service (PDS) of NHS patient demographic details, but we do not yet have details of this methodology.

## **12. Branch update: Household Estimates and Projections ([Paper \(16\) 18](#))**

12.1 Esther Roughsedge gave an overview of the Household Estimates and Projections branch update paper (16) 18.

12.2 She asked if PAMS would like the data on property type and number of rooms to be made available for 2015. Alistair Harvey responded that PAMS would like this data to be published by NRS, if possible.

12.3 She outlined the proposed publication plan for household projections, due to delay in publication of the sub-national population projections during methodology review. Local authority and Scotland figures will be published first, followed by Strategic Development Plan areas and National Parks at a later date. She asked for PAMS comments on this planned timetable, and this was agreed.

## **13. Branch update: Vital Events ([Paper \(16\) 20](#))**

13.1 Julie Ramsay gave an update for the Vital Events branch, as detailed in PAMS paper (16) 20. She highlighted the additional detail added to the baby names statistics and the visualisation, changes to suicide statistics and the publication of additional marriage statistics, weekly and monthly birth and death figures and additional detail in drug-related deaths and winter mortality statistics.

13.2 Peadar Morgan asked whether a similar visualisation could be created for surnames from the baby names statistics. Julie responded that this should be possible.

## **14. Any other business**

14.1 Jan Freeke congratulated and thanked Esta Clark on behalf of PAMS for all her work over the years as head of the Population and Migration statistics branch.

14.2 Kirsty MacLachlan asked PAMS if they are interested in a conference in winter 2017, and asked for ideas for topics and speakers.

**Action Point 2016:10: All to contact Kirsty MacLachlan with ideas for topics/speakers for the PAMS conference 2017.**

## **15. Date of next meeting**

15.1 May 2017.