

Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

Report on the meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board October 2014

Introduction

1. This note reports back to PAMS members on the business of the SCOTSTAT Board meeting held on 21st October 2014.
2. The agenda and papers for the meeting are available in the [SCOTSTAT](#) area of the Scottish Government website.

Meeting report

3. The latest meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board was held on Tuesday 21st October 2014 at St Andrew's House. The meeting was chaired by Roger Halliday the Chief Statistician in the Scottish Government.
4. The agenda for the meeting was as follows:
 - Direction Setting
 - Update on Statistical Improvements:
 - Data
 - Communicating analysis
 - People
 - Remit of the ScotStat Board
 - Data Zones
5. The first two items on the agenda were taken together and informed by two reports on progress within the Statistics Group and the 2013-14 Scottish Statistics Assurance Report.

The main issues covered in the first report were the Open Data Publishing Platform (ODPP) which aims at making the data behind publications more accessible; the new Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS) website; and more generally on communicating analysis. The ODPP and the new SNS website are due to be launched at the end of March 2015. An alpha version will be available before Christmas and will be shared to test functionality.

It was noted that although the result of the Referendum was now known, the constitutional arrangements were still changing. So the evidence base required for the new situation was still evolving. This was in a situation where the budget was still difficult. There was a discussion on data needs including data required from UK departments such as Office for National Statistics (ONS), Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). SCOTSTAT Committees were asked to identify areas in their remit where more data was needed.

Note: PAMS members are asked to identify outstanding data requirements.

The Statistical Assurance Report was a joint report between the Chief Statistician, the Chief Executive of National Records of Scotland (NRS) and the Head of Information Service Division (ISD). This covered various topic headings including:

- Efficiently assembling high value evidence;
- Better impact through improved communications;
- Developing statistical competency through recruitment, training and deployment;
- Improving and maintaining public confidence in National and official statistics; and
- Collaboration, user engagement and statistical planning.

It reported on progress throughout the year and future plans. It was felt that the report could have been clearer on the challenges which are currently being faced and not simply focus on what had gone well.

6. The remit of the SCOTSTAT Board was revisited again. This seems to be a recurring theme. It was agreed that there should be a purpose for the Board as well as a remit. Membership could be extended to cover civil society and not just the public sector and in particular it would be useful to have someone from the media involved.
7. The issue of datazones had been raised by Alex Morton of South Lanarkshire Council in relation to the new boundaries and what data might be made available for these new datazones in order to get time-series data. This request was noted and would be fed back to the senior statisticians. It was noted that that the claimant count figures for December 2014 would be published for the new datazones.
8. Board members were asked to identify data which required to be back dated.

Note: PAMS members are asked to identify data for new datazones which requires to be backdated.

Conclusion

9. This paper summarises the issues discussed by the SCOTSTAT Board at its meeting in October 2014.

I am happy to provide further information if required.

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