

Population and Migration Statistics Committee (PAMS) (Scotland)

Update from the Beyond 2011 Programme

Introduction

1. The census has long been the benchmark for capturing a comprehensive, consolidated and accurate snapshot of the population. However, various sources indicate that the current system of providing population and key socio-demographic statistics is no longer meeting all user needs.
2. The Beyond 2011 programme has been initiated to propose viable alternative options to the traditional census. Before any such proposals can be made, there is a need to carry out significant research into alternative options within a timescale that allows sufficient time to fall back to a full census in 2021.

Alternative Sources Update

3. We are developing a number of alternative methodologies to produce population statistics which have traditionally been delivered by the Census. These methods can be grouped into three broad categories: Census options, survey options and administrative data options.
4. National Records of Scotland (NRS), in conjunction with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), are currently exploring the feasibility of the different methodologies to identify the most viable options. We will explore these options in more detail next year before consulting on them in late 2013.

Data Access Update

5. Work is ongoing to gain access to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Scotland and Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) datasets, which will be used in the production of the population spine by the Alternative Sources branch.
6. A legal secondee has been recruited to work with the Beyond 2011 programme and the Scottish Government Data Linkage Framework. One of their initial tasks will be to help gain access to a range of data sources needed in the research of alternative options. The secondee will also work with UK departments (e.g. ONS) to determine any possible changes to Scottish and UK wide legislation to allow easier sharing of data for statistical and research purposes.

Stakeholder Engagement Update

7. The [Beyond 2011](#) web pages on the NRS/GROS website are the main dissemination tool for publicising messages, reports and consultations relating to the Beyond 2011 project. The content and structure of the portal will be updated over the coming months to contain more information on linkage, how data is assessed, held, stored etc. It will also contain more information on our legal obligations, in respect to the Data Protection Act (DPA), Human Rights Act etc and also examples of data 'journeys' in an attempt to allay privacy fears.

8. On the 8th November 2012 NRS will take part in a half day event organised as part of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) festival of Social Science. The aim of this event is to begin to dispel misunderstandings around the DPA as well as understanding the concerns held by data custodians.

The event has three streams:

- Communication
- Clarification and
- Listening

9. NRS is one of the organisers of this event and will have both posters and speakers at the event, discussing various aspects of the Beyond 2011 programme.
10. There are two consultations planned in 2013:

Consultation 1: Assessing Outputs

- Planned to begin Q1 2013
- Will cover user requirements from a census, including the balance between frequency, accuracy and quality of the options
- Allow a wide range of users to respond
- Series of stakeholder engagement events will be held on the run up to the consultation. This will include talking to as many government departments, local authorities, health boards, charities etc as possible in the time period.

Consultation 2: Alternative Options

- Planned to begin Q4 2013
- Will cover the different options that could be used to create a population spine and will follow on from responses received from the first consultation as other stakeholder events.
- Will be preceded by a range of stakeholder events, explaining the different options

11. A draft stakeholder engagement strategy, which contains more detailed information on the activity of the branch has been drafted and will be published in Q4 2012.