

Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee (Scotland)

Report on the Meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board August 2012

Introduction

1. This note reports back to PAMS members on the business of the SCOTSTAT Board meeting held on 27th August 2012.
2. The agenda, papers and minutes for the meeting are available on the [SCOTSTAT](#) website.

Meeting report

3. The latest meeting of the SCOTSTAT Board was held on Monday 27th August 2012 at St Andrew's House. This was a joint meeting with Senior Statisticians within the Scottish Government (SG). The meeting was chaired by Roger Halliday the Chief Statistician in the Scottish Government.
4. The agenda for the meeting was as follows:
 - ScotStat website and register update
 - Administrative data efficiencies
 - Communicating statistics
 - Statistics Group Strategic Work Plan
5. ScotStat website and register update.

A brief update was provided on the upgrade to the ScotStat website which was due to happen shortly. The administrator side of the site was ready to go and would be rolled out to Official Statistics producers in the near future. The online e-mail system to allow communication between ScotStat members was still being developed. It was hoped that the new system would improve communication between producers and users of statistics.

In response to a question, SG agreed to investigate adding the topic area to the HTML e-mail header for StatStat update e-mails which it was felt would be beneficial in identifying alerts of particular interest more easily.

6. Administrative data efficiencies.

One of the current ten strategic priorities for the Statistics Group is to maximise impact within tight budgets by investigating whether there are potential efficiencies for data collection in the use of admin data. The current approach is one of continual improvement on a topic area basis.

The paper considered whether a more strategic approach was required so that bigger efficiencies could be made, but which would require more resources. The

examples of the ScotXed project and LOGASnet were given as ones where efficiencies had been achieved and data quality improved but this had taken time and required the development of new software.

There was a discussion, and it was agreed that ongoing efficiency improvements should always be pursued in each topic area as this was best practice, but that each topic area should also consider whether there were areas where bigger projects could be developed and make a case to pursue these where they could be identified. ScotStat Committees might be a way of exploring the quickest wins and the biggest potential for increased efficiencies on a topic basis. The integration of health and social work was an area which might provide opportunities for greater efficiencies.

7. Communicating statistics.

This was a key area across the whole of the Government Statistical Service. A conference had been held in June and the Improving Quality and Dissemination Group within SG had been re-established. They were also building on the assessments from the UK Statistics Authority.

It was agreed that SG would provide a paper on progress in this area for the next Board meeting.

8. Statistics Group Strategic Work Plan.

The top ten Strategic Priorities of the SG Statistics Group are:

1. Communicating Statistics
2. National Performance Framework
3. Efficiencies in collecting administrative data
4. Resources
5. Referendum
6. Constitution
7. Data linkage
8. Surveys
9. Improving data quality in public bodies
10. IT

The Chief Statistician outlined some of the issues under each heading set out in the paper circulated prior to the meeting (except 1 and 3 which are covered above).

While National Well-being was a priority for the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Prime Minister, SG felt that they already had measures of national well-being under the National Performance Framework.

On the issue of resources, vacancies were being filled so we should expect to see some changes in personnel in the near future in each topic area.

Some restructuring is taking place to allow work to be done on statistics for the Referendum and to look at what would be needed under different constitutional scenarios.

A consultation on data linkage had been held and the results have now been published in the [publications](#) section on the Scottish Government website. A National DataLinking Service will be set up.

SG and the Improvement Service, in conjunction with other stakeholders, are working jointly to develop a programme of analytical work to support Community Planning Partnerships make better use of evidence and analysis in driving improved outcomes in their communities. This will support the recommendations from the review of Community Planning and Single Outcome Agreements.

The meeting then broke into discussion groups to consider what the most important of the ten priorities were. The Chief Statistician would collate the views of the groups and incorporate these into the process for updating the SG Statistics Group priorities.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held early in 2013.

Conclusion

- 10.** This paper summarises the issues discussed by the SCOTSTAT Board at its meeting in August 2012. I am happy to provide further information if required.

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