

**Population And Migration Statistics (PAMS) Committee
(Scotland)**

**Draft of National Records of Scotland (NRS) Statistics Plan 2017-18 and
Progress against the NRS Statistics Plan 2016-17**

Introduction

1. Last year NRS published a statistical plan for 2016-18. This paper provides an update on progress against that plan and outlines our priorities for 2017-18.
2. **Recommendation:**

The PAMS committee is invited to comment on progress against the 2016-17 plan and on priorities for 2017-18.

DRAFT



UPDATE ON STATISTICS PLAN 2016-18

Published XX June 2017

Purpose of this document

This paper provides an update on progress against the [National Records of Scotland Statistics Plan 2016-18](#) published on 15 June 2016. It also sets out the priorities and list of statistical publications for 2017-18. The content of this paper has been discussed with our users. We welcome comments and suggestions on the plan. Please refer to the comments section on Page 4 for contact details.

Why are Demographic Statistics Important?

Below are some of the reasons why NRS's demographic statistics are important

- The structure of the Scottish and UK population is changing. The population is ageing and migration patterns are changing. This means that the provision of services at national and local levels needs reliable and robust data to inform long-term and short-term decisions and policy making. NRS statistics are also used as the denominator for a number of funding decisions.
- Ageing: this has an impact on pensions and health care provision. Vital events data allow monitoring of deaths from specific causes.
- Migration: International migration is high on the public agenda, particularly in light of the UK's decision to leave the European Union. Migration is a key driver of Scotland's projected population growth contributing towards the Scottish Government's population target as well as mitigating against the effects of demographic change. Consequently, there is high demand for migration statistics and analysis both to understand migration flows as well as the characteristics and contribution of migrants living and working in Scotland.
- Household numbers are increasing faster than the population, as more people are living alone and in smaller households. Information on housing and households is used for planning housing and service delivery.

Our priorities for our forward work plan for 2017/18

Priority	Timetable	Benefit(s) we expect
1. Produce a range of statistical publications according to forthcoming publications schedule.	Ongoing	1. Maintained reputation for producing high quality timely national statistics which are used for resource allocation and planning of services 2. Enhanced reputation for professionalism
2. Provide informed advice and analyses to support policy-makers, Ministers, key users and user groups.	Ongoing	1. Maintained reputation for producing high quality timely national statistics which are used for resource allocation and planning of services 2. Enhanced reputation for professionalism
3. Develop further our infographics and data visualisations to improve how we present demographic data to our customers and help increase awareness and understanding of the data across a wider audience.	Ongoing	1. Improved dissemination, increasing our reach and impact 2. Increased media reporting of our statistics 3. Increased use of social media to cascade our statistics 4. Increased engagement in our statistics by a wide range of users
4. Provide further access to and analyses from Scotland's Census 2011 and previous censuses (a) add 1991 data to Census Data explorer (b) develop the processes to enable access to census microdata within a controlled environment at the Bioquarter, to ensure that the research carried out is legal, ethical, secure and efficient. (c) add 1981 data to Census Data explorer	(a) July to December 2017 (b) Aug 2017 (c) Mar 2018	Increased use of our data to inform policy, planning and general public awareness and understanding

5. Develop, improve and modernise the systems and processes we rely upon to deliver our demographic statistics services with a focus on Population and Migration statistics	Ongoing	Improved systems and processes to estimate our population and migration statistics; improved data quality
---	---------	---

Comments

We place strong emphasis on taking into account the views of the people who use our data. A draft of this updated plan has been discussed with representatives of users of our statistics within the Population and Migration Statistics Committee – details of which can be found within the User consultations, groups and seminars section of the NRS website. If you wish to comment on this plan, please contact:

Kirsty MacLachlan,
 Head of Demographic Statistics,
 National Records of Scotland,
 Room 1/2/10, Ladywell House,
 Ladywell Road,
 Edinburgh,
 EH12 7TF.
 Telephone: (0131) 314 4242
 E-mail: kirsty.maclachlan@nrscotland.gov.uk

NRS Statistical Publications Planned for 2017/18

A list of planned publications for 2017-18 is below.

April 2017

Household Projections for Scotland's Strategic Development Plan Areas and National Parks (2014-based)

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, March 2017

Mid-2016 population estimates Scotland

Demographic and census profiles of European Economic Area (EEA) born residents in Scotland

May 2017

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, April 2017

June 2017

Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2016

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, May 2017

Births, deaths and other vital events, first quarter 2017

July 2017

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, June 2017

Total Migration to or From an Area, Mid 2016 Update

August 2017

Scotland's Population, The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends, 2016

Vital Events Reference Tables, 2016

Deaths from various causes, 2016

Drug-related deaths in Scotland, 2016

Population By Country of Birth and Nationality for Scottish Areas, 2016

Small Area Population Estimates, Mid-2016 for 2011 Data Zones

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, July 2017

Local Area Migration Excel tool, 2016 data

September 2017

Life expectancy at Scotland level, National Life Tables 2016

Births, deaths and other vital events, second quarter 2017

Population Estimates for Scottish Centenarians, 2006-2016

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, August 2017

October 2017

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, September 2017

Winter Mortality in Scotland, 2016/17

November 2017

Projected Population of Scotland, 2016-based

Life Expectancy for Areas in Scotland, 2014-2016

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, October 2017

December 2017

Babies' First Names, 2017

Births, deaths and other vital events, third quarter 2017

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, November 2017

January 2018

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, December 2017

February 2018

Weekly and monthly data on births and deaths registered in Scotland, January 2018

March 2018

Babies First Names 2017 – full list

Most Common Surnames in Birth, Marriage and Death registers, 2017

Electoral Statistics for Scotland as at 1st December 2017

Progress against the NRS Statistics Plan for 2016-17

#	Objective	Progress as at May 2017
	Established work	Details
1	Produce statistical publications according to the publications schedule.	Statistical publications all produced on time. The population projections for Scottish areas were moved to October due to methodology changes, and the household projections were published in January as a result.
2	Engage with other colleagues, stakeholders and users to ensure that we understand their current and future needs and that we work to meet those needs, and ensure that our stakeholders are engaged with the Statistics work of NRS.	NRS staff gave a number of presentations and posters about their work at the British Society for Population Studies conference, and we have taken part in / given presentation at several other conferences. We have also had 'market stalls' to present our work at a Scottish Official Statistics Conference and the Scottish Government 'Evidence in Policy' week. We ran a half-day event called 'Changing lives with data', as part of the Data Festival.
3	Provide informed advice and analysis to support uses of our statistics, through liaison with policy colleagues, Ministers, key users, user groups, publications and presentations.	Evidence provided to Scottish Affairs Committee Inquiry into Demography April 2016; evidence provided for British Irish Council Ministerial meeting in December 2016; on-going analytical support to policy colleagues in the Scottish Government; input to the EU analytical network chaired by Scottish Government; presentation on drug-death statistics to the Harm Reduction group of the Partnership for Action on Drugs in Scotland, in September 2016; presentation on infant death statistics to Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy conference in February 2017.
4	Answer ad hoc customer requests for statistics on topics such as population, households and vital events (births, deaths and marriages) and provide a service for commissioned census tables	NRS responded to a wide range of statistical requests for both demographic and census data. We estimate these to have totalled around 1,000 requests in 2016/17. Many of these come through Statistics Customer Services within the Dissemination and Census Analysis branch and a number of customer requests resulted in commissioned census multi-variable tables. Individual branches

		within NRS also directly receive requests for their data. For instance, these include Vital Events, Households, Population and Geography branches.
5	Develop access agreements to census microdata products at the Bioquarter in Edinburgh.	Data sharing agreements are being developed on a project by project basis. A pilot project is underway.
6	Continue to work with the Data Linkage Framework to improve the data linkage landscape.	NRS developing role as trusted third party indexing service for Scottish Informatics and Linkage Collaboration (SILC). Read-through indexes (which are a secure, privacy-preserving and efficient approach to indexing) involving NRS vital events and census data are being developed along with Health and Education.
7	Continue to develop the Scottish Longitudinal Study and seek out other potential sources of data.	Discussions with Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS) and Indexing team to improve efficiencies around linking of NRS data to SLS. An application is being drafted to link to justice data.
8	Contribute to UK wide projects on: improving migration statistics, population estimates and population projections.	We are liaising with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) on UK wide projects on improving migration statistics, population estimates and projections.
9	Continue to work collaboratively with the Centre for Population Change (CPC), an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project involving a consortium of Scottish universities.	The CPC hold regular seminars in Ladywell House which NRS staff attend. We are also arranging a meeting between CPC staff and Scottish Government (SG) policy and strategy units to share research and plans.
10	Review the methods and systems used to produce sub-national population projections, taking into account changes made in the	The NRS sub-national population projection system has been rewritten to take account of the ONS methods and academic recommendations.

	national methodology by Office for National Statistics (ONS).	
11	Develop further analysis of data from Scotland's Census 2011 when requested by customers.	Further travel to work flow have been provided to Transport Scotland. There has been a lot of analysis of Scotland's Census 2011 relating to people with learning disabilities or developmental disorders which are available in: Analytical Reports on the Scotland's Census website.
12	Continue to further enhance the Scotland's Address Register to support Scotland's Census and other activities.	A test version of the new Address Register has been produced and maintenance regime developed. Work to quality assure the additional information has begun. The Scottish Address Directory is now live and a new version created quarterly.
13	Ensure that we have business continuity plans in place for each significant service or product allowing us to continue to operate selected services during and following any disruption.	Business continuity plans have been developed for each business area and will be reviewed regularly.
14	Support local authorities in using 'Popgroup' software to produce their own local area population projections.	Although data has been made available to facilitate local projection/forecasting, no requests by local authorities have yet been received.
	New Developments	Details
15	Investigate ways to improve our digital engagement and investigate ways to improve the dissemination methods of our statistics.	Considerable efforts have been put into developing infographics and data visualisations to accompany the publication of our statistics, including new interactive visualisations of population estimates and projections and household projections, which allow users to view figures for the area they are interested in. Tweets are also regularly issued.

16	Develop a new Vital Events Information Technology (IT) system to improve data processing, take account of the changes to the arrangements for the certification of death, improve efficiency and provide scope for improving data quality.	A new IT system for vital events statistics was completed at the end of September and is much more robust and easier to maintain and will allow greater scrutiny of the quality of the data.
17	Develop the use of the NHS Central Registrar (NHSCR) as the basis for use in data linkage projects for population estimating purposes as well as exploring its further use in other projects.	NRS now acts as a trusted third party for data linkage projects which have gone through the approval process. Seven data linkage projects are underway in 2016/17 so far.
18	Improve the Census Data Explorer website.	Scotland's Census 2001 data have now been added to the Census Data Explorer and work is progressing to add 1991 data.
19	Develop new infographics and data visualisations and investigate ways to exploit the latest technologies and methods to improve the effectiveness of our dissemination.	Refer to action 15 above.
20	Investigate the potential of existing and new sources of administrative data to contribute to the development of more efficient systems for population statistics - for example, using Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data.	Because of resource constraints and other priorities, little progress has been made in investigating the potential of HESA data to improve population estimates.

21	Maintain and develop a Geography Strategy for NRS.	Preliminary work has been undertaken and a Strategy will be developed in 2017. This task has been put back to late 2017/18 due to other pressing work priorities.
22	Investigate the reliability of the data collected when a death is registered, on the ethnicity of the deceased person. Report on the apparent level of reliability, for Scotland	A report on the reliability of the data on the ethnicity of deceased persons was published in March 2017, and is available on the NRS website. It is part of a new web section which provides information about the figures that have been published, how the information should be collected, the quality of the data and other background information.
23	Continue to work with the Boundary Commission for Scotland to provide improved quality assurance for the annual Electoral Statistics publication.	The Boundary Commission were involved in the quality assurance of the latest publication of electoral statistics in March 2017.
24	Continue to work with the Scottish Assessors' Association Electoral Registration Committee to improve the exchange of information.	NRS, jointly with ONS, are in discussion with the Electoral Commission to transfer responsibility for producing Electoral Statistics to the Electoral Commission.
25	Investigate the potential for updating the sub council area population and household projections.	NRS has consulted users to better understand how the sub-council area projections have been used and to explore ongoing demand for projections. NRS does not currently have resource to update the sub council projections but training in the POPGROUP software used to produce the sub-council area projections is being organised for PAMS members, local government and other interested parties by NRS. The training is being administered by staff from the University of St Andrews, and aims to provide attendees with the skills required to produce local area projections.

	Other improvements	Details
26	Develop our approaches to data linkage and safe access to data in a collaborative, proportionate and risk managed manner across our three key linkage projects to facilitate legal, ethical and public value research.	Processes and procedures have now been developed for data linkage and data access projects under SILC. Read-through indexes have been developed for health, education and Scotland's Census 2011 datasets to facilitate safer and more efficient linkage.
27	Improve the processing of migration data by replacing historic processing systems to better reflect data supply and data needs to produce migration and population estimates.	The work to replace and modernise part of our migration processing system is in progress and we hope to complete this work in 2017.
28	Extend the reach and impact of the Scottish Health and Ethnicity Longitudinal (SHELS) study through wider engagement with potential users.	Developing proposals to open up access to SHELS data via the National Safe Haven.
29	Improve the methodology for mid-year estimates.	We improved our use of the NHSCR to create cross-border and within Scotland migration, making direct use of the record level NHSCR Demographic Extract.
31	Develop a standardised data sharing agreement for use across NRS and develop a common approach to data sharing across NRS including the use of Secure File Exchange.	A standardised data sharing agreement and agreed data transfer approaches have now been decided.

32	Have a coordinated approach to data access and privacy.	Information governance is being developed in conjunction with the SG and Information Services Division (ISD). NRS also have an internal Privacy Working Group which acts as a first base for any NRS projects.
33	Improve the quality of the NHS Central Register (NHSCR) and increase the capacity to carry out and support data linkage projects.	Data Quality activity on the NHSCR is on-going and we continue to consider approaches to improving the quality of the data.
34	Take part in a range of continuous improvement activities at individual, team and business area level.	Individuals are strongly encouraged to undergo continuous professional development and there are numerous opportunities to attend training courses, seminars and conferences. Teams meet regularly and discuss any potential improvements. NRS also hold regular leadership events where ideas for improvements are often collated and taken forward where possible and practical. Some of NRS's outputs have been improved steadily over a number of years, for example, a list of each year's main Data improvements to the Vital Events statistics can be found on the NRS website.