

Scottish Postcode Directory 2021/2

October 2021

Introduction

The Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) bulletin contains specific information about each release of the Postcode Index and accompanying spatial data.

The Postcode Index links live and deleted postcodes to administrative, health, statistical and other areas. It also contains the Gridlink® one metre grid reference or National Records of Scotland (NRS) assigned grid references. The SPD is produced by NRS Geography, who provides geographic support to the Scottish Government (SG) and its associated agencies, as well as other organisations.

The Postcode Index uses the Government Statistical Service (GSS) standard 9-character codes for statistical geographies. The SG maintains the 'Standard Geographic Codes Register – Scotland' and is responsible for assigning new geographies with a 9-character code for Scotland. The register is available on the ['Small Area Statistics – Reference Material'](#) section of the Scottish Government website. Users are encouraged to adopt these standard names and codes, as they are the recognised standard to be used for National Statistics publications. More information on National Statistics can be found on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website.

Latest Statistics

The data is based on the July 2021 release of Royal Mail's Postcode Address File (PAF) and contains:

	All postcodes	Live postcodes	Deleted postcodes
All postcodes	241,870	159,413	82,457
Small User	192,385	153,737	38,648
Large User	49,485	5,676	43,809
<i>Small User Linked¹</i>	19,248	3,812	15,436
<i>PO Boxes</i>	30,237	1,864	28,373
The number of live, digitised small user postcodes ² is 152,533.			

¹ Small User Linked: The Small User postcode that contains the grid reference of the Large User postcode.

² Live digitised small user postcodes: There are 1,204 live, undigitised small user postcodes. These postcodes were planned for 'administrative' purposes; and cannot be digitised as they have no distinctive geographical position.

1. Updates since 2021/1

1.1 COVID-19

On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister advised that people should work from home where possible to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. NRS took the decision to close the buildings following this announcement and we have been working remotely since.

Due to this situation it has added additional time on our operations and how we send data out to customers.

As ever, we are trying our best to keep things moving in a timely manner and we thank you for your patience during this time.

1.2 Geographies

The following geographies have changed on the Postcode Index:

- Islands2021Code
- ScottishParliamentaryRegion2021Code
- ScottishParliamentaryConstituency2021Code

Islands 2021 – this update reflects a change to inhabited status for Ensay/Ensaigh, as well as the movement of Inchcape/Bell Rock as part of Ordnance Survey's National Cyclic Revision.

Scottish Parliamentary Region and Constituency 2021 – updated boundaries following the Interim Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries (Regions and Constituencies) at Cardowan by Steps ([SSI 2020/375](#)).

1.3 Boundaries

Our continuous postcode improvement work using the latest Scottish Address Register data is ongoing.

1.4 Data Dictionary

From 2021/2 the data dictionary will show code ranges for the first active to the last active code available for the geography. Some geographies will have gaps due to codes being archived over time.

1.5 Software upgrade

Following on from the 2021/1 bulletin, we have upgraded the software we use to create the Postcode Index. Unfortunately due to various technical and resourcing issues associated to the software upgrade, and the larger project of updating our underlying environment the upgrade took a lot longer than originally planned and we would like to thank users for their patience in getting the 2021/2 data.

2. Known Errors

Corrections and identified omissions to the data content of the SPD Index and/or Spatial data are included on the subsequent SPD release.

2.1 There were no errors identified in the SPD 2021/1 release.

3. Changing Geographies

3.1 Boundaries Scotland

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland changed their name to 'Boundaries Scotland' in May 2021. This was to reflect their added responsibilities for reviews of Scottish Parliament boundaries.

[Section 28](#) of the Scottish Elections (Reform) Act 2020 renamed the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland as Boundaries Scotland and came into force on 14 May 2021.

3.2 2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements

Boundaries Scotland submitted final proposals for the electoral ward boundaries in Argyll and Bute, Highland, and North Ayrshire council areas on 10 June 2021, and for Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney Islands and Shetland Islands council areas on 28 May 2021.

The final proposals were from the 2019 Review of Electoral Arrangements for the six Council areas specified in the [Islands \(Scotland\) Act 2018](#) which began in January 2019

Approval of the final proposals will be subject to Scottish Parliament agreement and if adopted will be used in May 2022 local government elections.

The news release and report per area are available on the [2019 Reviews of Electoral Arrangements](#) section of the Boundaries Scotland website.

3.3 Review of UK Parliament constituencies

The Boundary Commission for Scotland began the 2023 Review of UK Parliament constituencies in January 2021.

Further information on the review is available on the Boundary Commission for Scotland's [2023 Review of UK Parliament Constituencies page](#).

3.3 International Territorial Levels 2021

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, a new UK-managed international statistical geography - International Territorial Levels (ITLs) was introduced on 1 January 2021, replacing the former NUTS classification. To ensure continued alignment, the ITLs have been established to mirror the NUTS system and will be reviewed every three years.

Unfortunately due to testing of the upgrades we have not managed to include this change in the Postcode Index for 2021/2.

A look-up of NUTS to ITL code has been provided in the interim.

3.4 Name updates for 2011 Data Zones and Intermediate Zones

The Scottish Government's Geographic Information Science & Analysis Team has advised us of name updates affecting Data Zone and Intermediate Zone geographies as shown below.

The SPD Lookups for these geographies have been updated to the corrected names.

East Lothian Council area

Intermediate Zone 2011 Code	Intermediate Zone 2011 Name	
	Before Update	After Update
S02001534	IZ01	Wallyford/Whitecraig
S02001535	IZ02	Musselburgh South
S02001536	IZ03	Musselburgh West
S02001537	IZ04	Musselburgh North
S02001538	IZ05	Musselburgh East
S02001539	IZ06	Pinkie Braes
S02001540	IZ07	Prestonpans West
S02001541	IZ08	Prestonpans East
S02001542	IZ09	Cockenzie
S02001543	IZ10	Tranent North
S02001544	IZ11	Tranent South
S02001545	IZ12	Ormiston
S02001546	IZ13	Longniddry and Aberlady
S02001547	IZ14	Haddington Rural
S02001548	IZ15	Haddington North
S02001549	IZ16	Haddington South
S02001550	IZ17	Gullane and Drem
S02001551	IZ18	North Berwick North
S02001552	IZ19	North Berwick South
S02001553	IZ20	East Linton and Rural
S02001554	IZ21	Dunbar West
S02001555	IZ22	Dunbar East

The name changes have been applied to Data Zone level as well for the code ranges S01008163 to S01008294, an example of the change shown below.

Data Zone 2011 Code	Data Zone 2011 Name	
	Before Update	After Update
S01008163	IZ01 – 01	Wallyford/Whitecraig – 01
S01008164	IZ01 – 02	Wallyford/Whitecraig – 02

West Dunbartonshire Council area

Intermediate Zone 2011 Code	Intermediate Zone 2011 Name	
	Before Update	After Update
S02002460	IZ01	Whitecrook
S02002461	IZ02	Singer and Clydebank South
S02002462	IZ03	Drumry
S02002463	IZ04	Clydebank
S02002464	IZ05	Clydebank North
S02002465	IZ06	Clydebank east
S02002466	IZ07	Duntocher
S02002467	IZ08	Dalmuir
S02002468	IZ09	Kilpatrick
S02002469	IZ10	Bowling
S02002470	IZ11	Dumbarton east
S02002471	IZ12	Dumbarton
S02002472	IZ13	Dalreoch
S02002473	IZ14	Leven
S02002474	IZ15	Bonhill
S02002475	IZ16	Alexandria
S02002476	IZ17	Balloch
S02002477	IZ18	Lomond

The name changes have been applied to Data Zone level as well for the code ranges S01013122 to S01013242, an example of the change shown below.

Data Zone 2011 Code	Data Zone 2011 Name	
	Before Update	After Update
S01013122	IZ01 – 01	Whitecrook – 01
S01013123	IZ01 – 02	Whitecrook – 02

4. Scotland's Census

4.1 Scotland's Census 2022

Scotland's next Census is moving to March 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19, as announced on 27 July 2020.

The decision was not taken lightly. However, the quality of the census data must remain robust, and by moving to 2022 NRS can continue to deliver a census which ensures the highest possible response rate from people across Scotland, to allow government, local authorities and key services plan for every element of public life, from building homes to NRS support.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement exercise on draft Census Geographic Boundaries

As part of work leading up to the 2022 Census, colleagues in the Scottish Government and National Records of Scotland produced draft versions of new Data Zone (DZ) and Output Area (OA) boundaries. These were created to allow processes to be tested on creation of OA, potential issues with OA design and allow SG to access impact on DZ.

Due to COVID-19 we have been unable to respond to individual queries. Our GIS colleagues in Scottish Government who are working with us on this project are currently providing analytical support for COVID-19 resilience work. As such, it is going to take us a bit more time than we anticipated to respond with comments. We are very grateful for users taking the time to provide comments and feedback on this exercise. Please be assured that we will respond, once we have capacity.

Final OA and DZ boundaries will be based on results from the 2022 Census, rather than the Scottish Address Directory and population estimates used for these draft boundaries. It is also intended that there will be a public consultation on the final post-census DZ boundaries.

4.3 Census 2021

The Office for National Statistics and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency held their Censuses on Sunday 21 March 2021.

You can find out more about their Censuses via the following Census websites:

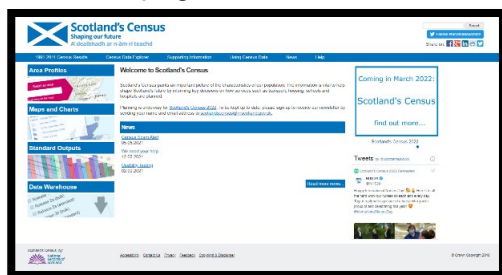
- [Office for National Statistics](#)
- [Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

4.4 [New Census Outputs website](#)

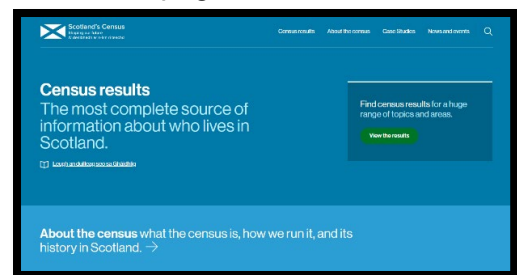
The Census Outputs website was launched circa 2012 and while the site provided users with access to the huge range of data collected in the census, it was difficult to navigate and hard for users to know if they were accessing the right information.

Scotland's Census team have been developing and testing a new Census Outputs website, focusing on improving the users experience on the site, making content easier to understand and reducing the amount of pages required to obtain information.

Old home page



New home page



The new site was launched on 13 May 2021. A Beta version of the [Flexible Table Builder](#) has been made available using synthetic data to allow users to test and provide feedback before the 2022 Census.

5. Postcode FAQs

5.1 Postcode recoding

Wherever possible Royal Mail try not to change addresses and postcodes. Changes are however sometimes necessary to ensure that mail is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible. It is also possible for a council to prompt change by re-numbering buildings or re-naming roads.

Further information on the process for postcode re-coding is available in the [PAF Code of Practice](#) on the Royal Mail website.

Updates on [recodes](#) are available on the Powered by PAF website.

5.2 Postcode re-use

Royal Mail deletes postcodes for various reasons but most commonly, it is due to the demolition/re-development of buildings or to postcode re-use. Deleted postcodes are occasionally re-used by Royal Mail but not usually before an elapsed period of two or three years. When a postcode is re-introduced, it will not necessarily contain the same addresses or cover the same area as the original postcode.

5.3 Postcode boundaries do not align to administrative and electoral area boundaries

Royal Mail defines postcode areas for sorting mail efficiently; the postcodes have no relationship with administrative or electoral boundaries. Royal Mail requires a stable geography in order to deliver its services, which these areas cannot provide.

NRS split postcodes for statistical reasons; they are not a feature of Royal Mail. Split postcodes are those with an 'A', 'B' or 'C' suffix and occur when:

- a postcode straddles two or more Council area boundaries. The most populous part of the postcode is identified by suffix A and the smaller parts by suffixes B, C, etc.;
- a postcode straddles the Scottish/English border and the Scottish postcode is allocated a suffix 'A';
- an island and the mainland share a postcode, or a postcode contains property on more than one island.

5.4 PO Box postcodes

PO Box addresses do not have a specific geographic location; instead, the mail is sent to a local delivery office, from where it can be forwarded to the real address or collected by the addressee.

Grid references for PO Box postcodes are assigned to the local Royal Mail sorting/delivery office and are deemed low quality.

6. Differences in Scottish data between the Scottish Postcode Directory (SPD) Postcode Index and the Office for National Statistics Postcode Directory (ONSPD)

6.1 Postcode History

The SPD Postcode Index provides full postcode history; the ONSPD provides the most current version of the postcode only (as shown below).

SPD Postcode Index:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	01-Aug-73	01-May-95
G31 4QD	20-Apr-12	06-Jul-12
G31 4QD	17-Apr-13	07-Aug-13
G31 4QD	16-Jan-14	

ONSPD:

Postcode	Date of Introduction	Date of Deletion
G31 4QD	201310	

6.2 Postcode Updates

Due to differing update regimes existing between ONS and NRS, the dates for introduction and deletion can differ. The SPD Postcode Index contains quarterly PAF updates, whereas the ONSPD contains monthly PAF updates.

6.3 Split postcodes

Unlike the SPD Postcode Index the ONSPD does not recognise split postcodes. Instead the ONSPD holds the postcode as a whole record.

7. Supply arrangements

7.1 Data Formats

The 'Cut Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory is available for free download from the [Scottish Postcode Directory](#) page of the National Records of Scotland website.

- Boundary files Shape format
Public Sector Geospatial Agreement (PGSA) members only
- Index files CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access 2000 compatible format
- Lookup files CSV, or Microsoft (MS) Access 2000 compatible format

7.2 Full Version

The 'Full Version' of the Scottish Postcode Directory can be supplied for a charge (a royalty payment to Royal Mail), please contact the [Geography Customer Services team](#).

8. Licence and Copyright Statements

8.1 Postcode Boundaries and Grid References

This dataset is being made available for your personal, non-commercial use under the terms of the [INSPIRE End User Licence](#) because it includes Ordnance Survey (OS) Licensed data.

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8.2 Postcode District and Sector Boundaries and Grid References

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8.3 Scottish Postcode Directory - Postcode Index

The following attribution statement must be acknowledged or displayed on any product using NRS data:

'Contains NRS data © Crown copyright and database right [year].'

8.4 Further information of licensing can be found in the geography [licensing](#) page of the NRS website.

9. Open Data

Geographic data is becoming increasingly available as open data throughout the world. This means that it is free to access, use and share.

9.1 [SpatialData.gov.scot](#)

SpatialData.gov.scot Metadata Portal is Scotland's catalogue of spatial data. The spatial data is covered under EU Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE) regulations.

The Scottish Government Geographical Information Science and Analysis team (GI-SAT) manage the portal, which contains INSPIRE data, metadata, and web services from the Scottish Government and other Scottish public sector organisations.

9.2 [Data.gov.uk](https://data.gov.uk)

Data.gov.uk is the UK's data and metadata portal. Unlike SpatialData.gov.scot, it includes non-spatial datasets as well as spatial data.

9.3 [Ordnance Survey Open Data](https://www.ordnancesurvey.gov.uk/open-data)

Ordnance Survey publish free open datasets under their OpenData program, which can be downloaded from their website. Ordnance Survey simply ask that you acknowledge the copyright and source of the data by including the following attribution statement: 'Contains OS data © Crown copyright [and database right] (year)'.

10. Enquiries

Please contact our Geography Customer Services team if you need any further information.

E-mail: geographycustomerservices@nrscotland.gov.uk

There are two ways to be notified of new SPD releases.

- Contact our Geography Customer Services team, or
- Register on [ScotStat](https://scotstat.gov.uk) for 'geographical boundaries'.

[Guidance](#) for signing up to the ScotStat Register is available on the Scottish Government website.