

Household estimates

Purpose

1. A comparison of headship rates from the 1981, 1991, 2001 Censuses, and the projected headship rates for 2001 used in the pre-2001 household projections.

Background

2. At a previous HARG meeting, GROS has presented analysis of household projections from before 2001, and the 2001 Census results, for each local authority area (HARG 2005(10)). The aim of this was to assess the accuracy of previous household projections, and identify any consistent inaccuracies in the projections, which we may be able to adjust for, in future projections.

3. However, the household projections incorporate the population projections results, so if the population projections were inaccurate, this will inevitably be reflected in the household projections. Therefore, HARG members suggested that GROS should also carry out comparisons of the headship rates, as these will not be affected by the population projections. Results for Scotland, by household type and age group, were presented in the paper HARG 2005(14).

4. HARG members also expressed an interest in seeing similar results for each local authority area. The Annex to this paper shows the headship rates from the 1981, 1991 and 2001 Censuses, for each local authority area, by household type. It also shows projected headship rates for 2001, based on projections of the 1981 and 1991 Census results. This is equivalent to the headship rates used in the pre-2001 household projections.

Conclusion

5. These graphs illustrate how the projected headship rates were derived – they project the trend in household types seen between 1981 and 1991. In many cases, the 2001 projected headship rates were close to the actual results seen in the 2001 Census. Where this was not the case, it was because the trend in household formation changed between 1991 and 2001.

6. The current household projections method incorporates changes in the overall population, and the overall household estimates, between Censuses. However, if there are changes in household formation rates (e.g., if the increase in people living alone starts to drop between Censuses), there is currently no way of identifying this and incorporating it into the household projections until the results of the next Census are available. However, some developments are underway which may enable this, such as incorporating survey results in the household projections (HARG 2007(3)), and using dynamic microsimulation to improve the accuracy of the projections, incorporating factors affecting household and family formation (HARG 2007(5)).

GROS household estimates and projections branch, February 2007