

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

POPULATION ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS UPDATE

Introduction

This paper summarises the recent work on population statistics. PAMS is asked to note the paper and other comments. Written comments will also be welcome to esta.clark@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Mid-Year Estimates

The 2004 mid-year estimates for Scotland were published on 27 April 2005. Scotland's population was estimated to be 5,078,400 - an increase of 21,000 on the previous year. The increase was due mainly to a net migration gain of around 26,000 people.

One day's pre-release access, for local briefing purposes, was given to those Health Board and Council representatives who returned signed forms. Thirty one forms were received from a mixture of councils and health boards and they were sent a summary table showing the estimates and the components of change. Comments are invited on how well this process worked.

The 2005 mid-year estimates are planned for April 2006.

Small area population estimates

Provisional datazone population estimates for mid-year 2002, 2003 and 2004 have been produced using the cohort-component method and an initial quality assurance (QA) performed. The methodology and initial findings of the QA process were presented to an internal audience on 18 April 2005 to gain feedback. All agreed that the methodology presented provided the best option for producing estimates in the absence of alternative data sources and should be adopted for the production of the 2001-2004 datazone population estimates. These results were also presented to the Small Area Population Estimates working group for further appraisal on Monday 16 May 2005.

Following the meeting it was agreed that a spreadsheet containing information on the populations, migration and various descriptive statistics for each datazone would be sent out to a user in each local authority and health board for quality assurance/comment. We have asked that users look particularly at areas in which population changes have occurred, areas which they know have been developed, and areas with deprivation scores in the lowest decile. Also, where there are communal establishments we have asked the users to report whether the changes we have identified are realistic.

Issues surrounding estimating the number of armed forces personnel, asylum seekers and migrants into and out of a particular datazone were also raised. It was agreed that all datazones showing unexpected changes in the population and containing large numbers of these populations would be investigated further prior to release by checking them against other data sources, for example the dwelling count estimates, if no comment on the datazone has been received from a local authority or health board.

Small area population estimates for 2001-2004 are expected to be released in October 2005.

Population Projections

The 2003-based interim national population projections for Scotland and the UK were published on 30 September 2004. These interim projections were produced due to revisions to England and Wales mid-year estimates and to take account of more recent information. The long-term assumptions remained the same. 2003-based sub-national projections for Scotland were not produced.

The next set of national projections (2004-based) are planned for late October 2005, the sub-national projections to follow in December 2005.

There will be a consultation process in June on the Scotland level assumptions which will involve a small meeting of experts in Scottish demographic issues. These comments along with comments from an external meeting of academic experts (organised by GAD on 5 May) will be fed into the National Population Projections (NPP) meeting in July (chaired by the Office for National Statistics ONS). The headline assumptions will be published in "Population Trends" on Thursday 29 September by ONS. On this date the sub-national migration assumptions will be sent to Council Chief Executives and copied to PAMS local authority contacts for comments by end October.

Further work has shown that reviewing the sub-national projection method is going to take more time than initially anticipated. As a result, for the 2004-based sub-national projections, the "easy" recommendations from PAMS (see paper PAMS (03) 21 for more details) should be included. That is:

- Increase the projection period to 20 years;
- Use five years worth of data to calculate local scaling factors – rather than three;
- Modify the system to use "correct" geographies;
- Modify the system to produce the customer output files automatically.

Along with this work on the existing system it is planned to hold a seminar by Prof Phil Rees on available projection methods which will be open to PAMS members and representatives from local authorities. This seminar will then feed into a meeting of the Population Projections Working Group with a view to developing the sub-national projection method for the next set of sub-national projections (2006-based).

Quarterly Population Estimates

The first Quarterly Population Estimates (QPEs) were published in December 2004 for England and Wales by the Population and Demography section of ONS. The next set will be published at the end of May and then end of August, and so on.

GROS have not been able to devote any resources recently to considering the issues surrounding Quarterly Population Estimates for Scotland. For example, work needs to be carried out to look into the suitability of the migration data sources in Scotland for the modelling work involved in producing them. In the meantime, as with Northern Ireland, we are keeping in touch with developments with the production of the QPEs for England & Wales.

90+ Estimates

There has not been much progress here. We have developed a system of estimating single year of age 90+ populations, using the same methodology as used by GAD. We are still investigating the feasibility of using this for local authorities and health boards.

Marital Status Estimates

Marital status estimates have been produced for 2001, 2002 and 2003. These are available from Customer Services and on the website. A short paper explaining the method used will be added to the website shortly. Following the revisions to the population estimates, revised marital status estimates have been produced for 1982-2000. These will also be published shortly along with the methodology used to produce them.

Marital Status Estimates for mid-2004 will be published in the reference tables that go with the "Annual Report" in July on the GROS website.

Life tables

Life expectancy at birth has been published by ONS for Scottish local authorities and health boards for 2001-2003. Three years worth of data is used to produce them as explained in the methodology paper on ONS website available through the following link:

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/STATBASE/Product.asp?vlnk=8841>.

GROS will publish tables for 2002-2004 for Scotland in the Annual Report in July using the same methodology.

International Migration Review – Implementation

The project board of the Implementation group of the National Statistics Quality Review (NSQR) in International migration met in May. Many of the issues discussed related to methods for improving the total international migration figures for the UK. ONS presented a paper where they had compared the different allocation of international migrants, using the Census, the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS). GROS will be providing comments to ONS on the proposal. In Scotland, there are plans to enhance the IPS sample for the purpose of estimating visitor numbers. The impact of this on migration estimates is likely to be small, but will be considered. The Fresh Talent policy team in Scottish Executive are exploring data to feed into their evaluation. GROS will brief the review team of any relevant work in this area.

Publishing migration data on the GROS website

Due to the recent increased interest in migration data it is planned to put together a proposal for publishing information on migration on the GROS website on a regular basis. Please see paper PAMS (05) 06 for more details.

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