

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Implications of the recent change to NHS Board areas

Non-Census data

On 1st April 2006, Argyll & Clyde NHS board was dissolved, resulting in a change to NHS Board geography in Scotland. The Argyll & Clyde area was split up as follows. The part which formed the Argyll & Bute local authority area was added to the existing Highland NHS board area to form a larger Highland NHS area. The remaining part was added to the existing Greater Glasgow NHS board area to again form a larger area, to be called Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS board area. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the implications of this change for statistical output produced by GROS.

An meeting was held by ISD on 28th April to discuss with the NHS boards the implications of this change for statistical information. It was agreed that for a two year period, data would be provided for the old NHS board areas but that Argyll & Clyde should be split into its two constituent parts. Comments are invited on such a proposal. The advantage of doing this would be that it would be easy for a user to create figures for both the new and the old NHS areas.

Census data

A further consideration is what should be done as regards the 2001 Census data, in particular the data contained on the SCROL website (www.scrol.gov.uk). The views of users are invited on what they would like to see on SCROL.

There are four different possibilities:

1. Amend all the NHS Board tables on SCROL so that they reflect the new rather than the old areas. This would be a huge task as there are a large number of published tables for which new data would need to be produced.

A similar exercise to amend the Westminster Parliamentary Constituencies (WPCons) data, which began around this time last year, is not as yet complete and has utilised a large amount of staff resources. The changes to the WPCon areas were much more extensive than the change to the NHS board areas as the former affected pretty much all parts of Scotland.

A further consideration is that the split of Argyll & Clyde is a very "neat" one in that one of the parts consists of an entire council area. Therefore, it is possible to obtain information for the new areas for almost all tables (the exceptions being migration and travel tables and some other tables containing percentages rather than numbers) by getting the same information for Argyll & Bute council area and adding/subtracting as appropriate.

This option is therefore considered to be the least desirable.

2. Leave things exactly as they are on the basis that these were the NHS board areas which were in existence at the time of the last Census. Under this option, customers who wanted published tables for the new areas would need to request them from GROS Statistics Customer Services.

PAMS (06) 09

3. Leave things as they are, except to arrange for a “pop-up box” to appear every time a user tries to produce a table at NHS board area level in SCROL. Such a box would inform the user that the areas they will be producing the table for will not reflect the dissolution of Argyll & Clyde but that, if they wish figures for the new areas, they should obtain the same table for Argyll & Bute council area and then perform the following calculation:

New Highland NHS board area = Old (smaller) Highland NHS board area + Argyll & Bute council area

New Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS board area = Old Greater Glasgow NHS board area + Old Argyll & Clyde NHS board area - Argyll & Bute council area.

The note in the “pop-up box” would make it clear that such a calculation would not be possible for certain table numbers i.e. those with migration or travel data or with percentages as opposed to numbers.

4. As with 3. except that the migration, travel and “percentages” tables for the new areas could be put onto the main GROS website. The note in the “pop-up box” would be amended to reflect this.

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