

POPULATION AND MIGRATION STATISTICS COMMITTEE (SCOTLAND)

Household estimates and projections branch update

Estimates of households and dwellings

1. For the first time, GROS published a combined bulletin in May which contains 2007 dwelling counts and household estimates for local authorities and data zones. This can be found within the household estimates and projections pages of the GROS website (<http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/household-estimates-projections/index.html>).

2. GROS has developed and published a new neighbourhood statistics data collection on occupied dwellings (which are approximately equivalent to households), and vacant dwellings, based on information from Council Tax systems. The household estimates publication has been therefore expanded to include some summary analysis of this data, such as trends at local authority level, in urban and rural areas, and in areas with different levels of deprivation. The bulletin also includes summary analysis of dwelling counts, which have been obtained from the Assessors Portal. Detailed information on dwellings and households at data zone level can be found in the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website (www.sns.gov.uk).

3. Key points were:

- In mid-2007, there were 2.3 million households in Scotland – over 270,000 more than in 1991. Between 2006 and 2007, the number of households increased by more than in any other year over the past 25 years.
- The local authorities with the greatest percentage increases in the numbers of households over the last five years have been Aberdeenshire, West Lothian and Highland (all with over 8 per cent). The area with the smallest change was Inverclyde.
- There are higher proportions of flats in urban areas, and in more deprived areas. In contrast, there are higher proportions of detached houses in rural areas.
- Across Scotland as a whole, 2.8 per cent of dwellings are vacant and 1.4 per cent are second homes, though there is wide variation across the country.
- Remote rural areas have the lowest percentage of dwellings which are occupied (88 per cent), with relatively high percentages of vacant dwellings (five per cent of all dwellings in these areas) and second homes (seven per cent).
- Over a third of dwellings in Scotland are entitled to a 'single adult' Council Tax discount. This category includes one adult living alone or with children, or with other people who are 'disregarded' for Council Tax purposes. This percentage increases steadily as the level of deprivation increases.

Household projections

4. GROS published 2006-based household projections at local authority level in May. The projections now cover a 25-year period and are also available from the household estimates and projections pages of the GROS website (<http://www.gros.scotland.gov.uk/statistics/household-estimates-projections/index.html>).

5. The 2006-based household projections include the following new developments:

- Sub-national high-migration variant household projections have been included. These correspond to the new 2006-based population variants.
- GROS has used 2006 communal establishment figures instead of data from the 2001 Census that were used in previous projections. Communal establishment figures are subtracted from the total population to obtain the private household population, which can then be incorporated in the projections.

6. Key trends were:

- Between 2006 and 2031, the overall population of Scotland is projected to increase by 5 per cent but the number of households is projected to increase by 19 per cent - an average of 17,600 additional households per year.
- Most of the projected increase is due to changes in household structure, with more people living alone or in smaller households.
- There is a projected increase in the number of people in older age groups, with a fall in the number of younger people. This has an impact on household structure, as elderly people are more likely to live alone or with just one other person and children tend to live in larger households.
- Households headed by people aged 60 or over are projected to increase by over 50 per cent whereas households headed by someone aged under 60 are projected to increase by just four per cent.
- The proportion of households containing just one adult is projected to increase from 35 per cent of all households in 2006 to 44 per cent in 2031.
- The number of households containing one adult with children is also projected to rise whereas the number of households with two or more adults with children is projected to decrease.
- The largest projected increases in the number of households are in Orkney Islands, West Lothian and Edinburgh, which all have increases of 35 per cent. In contrast, Inverclyde has a projected decrease of three per cent and East Dunbartonshire has a projected decrease of two per cent.

Future developments

7. GROS plans to produce household projections for a number of different geographies. These include National Parks and “City Regions” (once the boundaries of “City Regions” have been defined).

8. Work is beginning on the preparation of an up-to-date list of communal establishments for the 2008-based household projections.

9. GROS plans to investigate the possibility of including up-to-date survey data on household type in the 2008-based household projections. These come from the Scottish Household Survey and they could be used in addition to the 1991 and 2001 Census data which are currently used in the projections.

10. The new Scottish administration is currently consulting on proposals to abolish Council Tax and replace it with a Local Income Tax within the next three years (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/03/11131725/0>). A side-effect of this would be that we would lose the source of most of our household statistics. As a result, we are now working to identify replacement household statistics, which can be put into place by the time that our existing data sources will be lost. GROS will investigate the feasibility of using these sources and their quality and coverage. Where possible, this will include comparing them to current small-area household and dwelling counts.

At present, we are currently investigating one of the possible data sources: the Electoral Register. This dataset includes information on all adults registered to vote. It includes the address and postcode, so it should be possible to aggregate the figures by address to show the number of households, and the number of adults in the household. Initial analysis shows a strong correlation between the number of households recorded in the Electoral Register and neighbourhood level household estimates from Council Tax systems, though it will exclude children and people who haven't registered to vote.

The household estimates and projections branch will provide updates on further findings and analysis of other data sources at future PAMS and HARG meetings.

Martin Macfie

GROS: Household estimates and projections branch

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