
Mid-2010 Population Estimates for Settlements and Localities in Scotland

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A National Statistics publication for Scotland

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The full [List of Tables](#) containing the population estimates used in this publication are available on the National Records of Scotland (NRS) website.

Main Points

The main points in this report are:

Settlements

A settlement is a group of high density postcodes whose combined population exceeds 500.

- There are now 502 settlements in Scotland with a population of 500 or above.
- Nine new settlements have been identified from the mid-2010 population estimates. They are Braidwood, Crossgates, Dalgety Bay, Hallglen, Kingseat, North Queensferry, Symington, Thankerton and Tighnabruaich.
- The largest settlement in Scotland is Greater Glasgow. It has an estimated population of 1,195,200, over 20 per cent of Scotland's total and is distributed across seven local authority areas. In contrast, Aberdeenshire Council area has the highest number of settlements within its boundary (59) but the population of these settlements accounts for less than four per cent of Scotland's population.

Localities

Localities correspond to the more recognisable towns and cities of Scotland which can be found within settlements and must also have a minimum population of 500.

- The number of localities has increased to 629.
- Consultation with Scotland's local authorities has identified an additional 24 localities.
- The largest locality in Scotland is Glasgow, with an estimated population of 589,900.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Population statistics for administrative and other areas in Scotland are published annually by National Records of Scotland (NRS). There is, however, ongoing interest in population statistics for smaller areas, such as those which were absorbed into the present local authority areas following re-organisation in 1975, and it is these smaller areas which are generally more identifiable as the traditional towns and cities of Scotland. The parts of administrative areas which consist of land that is not built up are normally excluded from their boundaries.
- 1.2 At the time of the 1981 Census, the then General Register Office for Scotland defined localities as 'continuously built-up areas that had approximately 500 or more population at the time of the 1971 Census' and used maps to identify these areas, which were then grouped into settlements. For the 1991 Census, postcode boundaries were used along with maps to create localities, with postcodes being classed as either urban or rural. Again, a locality had a minimum population of 500 and consisted only of urban postcodes, which were those identified as having been in a locality in 1981 as well as those with a population density of five or more persons per hectare.
- 1.3 There are over 145,000 postcodes in Scotland. NRS has continued to use information which it maintains about these postcodes to define 'settlements' and 'localities' as good approximations to built-up areas. Data on unit postcodes includes a boundary enclosing all of the addresses assigned to the postcode, with these postcode areas being used as 'building bricks' in the creation of settlements and localities. Postcodes are no longer classified as either urban or rural but instead as high or low density, dependent on whether or not they meet certain conditions ([Section 2.1](#)).
- 1.4 It is currently planned that the locality boundaries identified in this publication will be used in the process of creating Output Areas (OAs) for the 2011 Census. OAs are the lowest level of geography for which Scotland's 2011 Census results will be released and are intended to match as closely as possible to the 2001 Census OAs and the 2010 locality boundaries.
- 1.5 Settlement and locality population estimates assist and inform other areas of Scottish Government policy and legislation: The Scottish Government's Urban Rural Classification is updated every two years and is based on the identification of key population thresholds of 3,000, 10,000 and 125,000; the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 offers discretionary relief from non-domestic rates for certain properties in rural settlements with a population below 3,000; the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 offers communities with a population less than 10,000 the opportunity to register an interest in land along with the right to buy should it be for sale.
- 1.6 Along with other population and demographic statistics, population estimates for settlements and localities were assessed by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority in May 2011 and have been designated as National Statistics ([Section 5](#)).

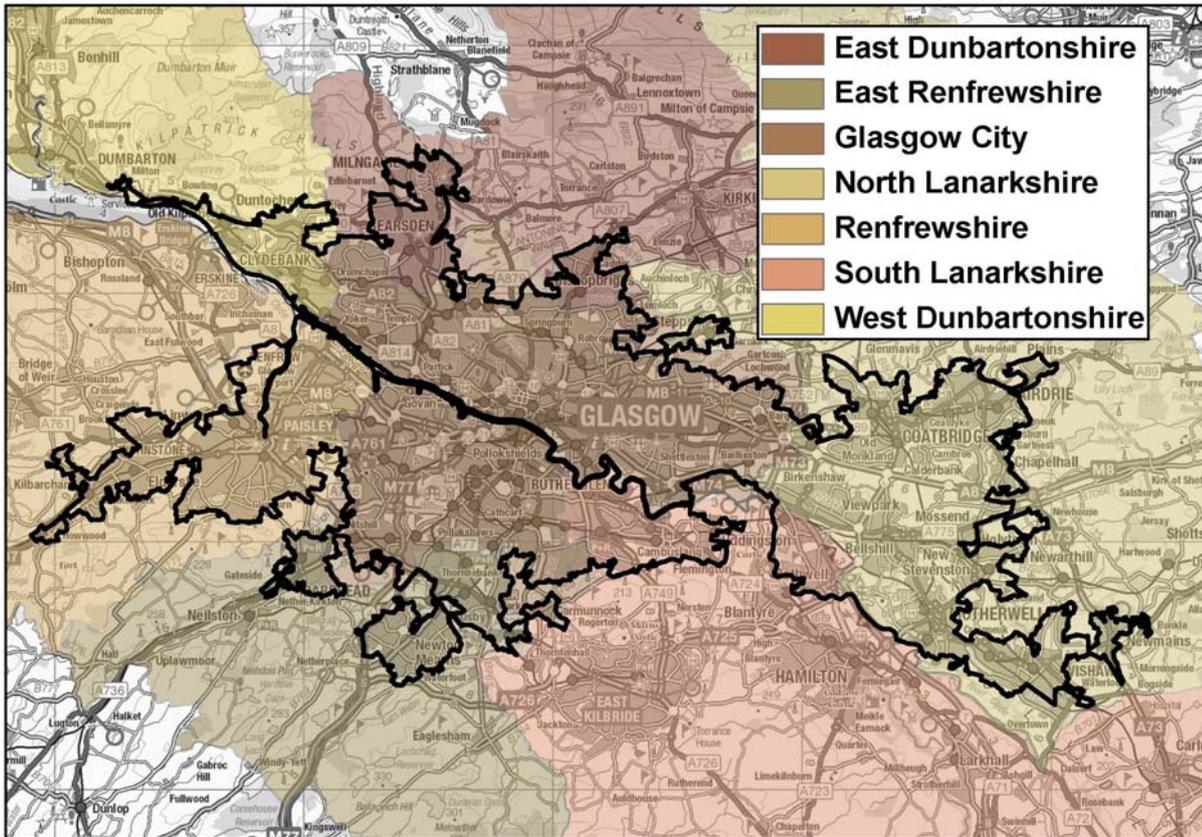
2. Methodology

- 2.1 The [Small Area Population Estimates](#), which were published by National Records of Scotland (NRS) on 30 August 2011, contain information on Scotland's population at data zone level. These estimates, together with information from the Royal Mail Postcode Address File, are used to classify unit postcodes as either 'high density' or 'low density'. A postcode is defined as high density if it meets one or more of the following threshold conditions.
- The number of residential addresses per hectare exceeds 2.1.
 - The estimate of population per hectare exceeds 5.
 - The number of non-residential addresses per hectare exceeds 0.1.
- 2.2 Contiguous groups of postcodes which have been defined as high density are used to form the built-up areas of Scotland. Boundaries to unit postcodes can be subjective and so a small amount of manual updates may be required for rural areas to maintain 'obvious' high density boundaries. Where the population is 500 or more, the area is defined as a 'settlement'.
- 2.3 Some settlements, which can cover an extensive area and may consist of more than one distinct town or city, are divided into constituent towns or cities ('localities') which are intended to be more representative of the towns and cities in Scotland. In most cases a locality, which must also have a minimum population of 500, is exactly equivalent to the settlement of the same name, but where settlements consist of two or more localities, the settlement is suffixed by the words "Settlement of" in the tables. For example, the settlement of Linlithgow and the locality of Linlithgow both have the same boundary and estimated population, however the boundaries and populations of Gourrock, Greenock and Port Glasgow (which are localities) are contained within the Settlement of Greenock.
- 2.4 The settlement and locality estimates have been through a process of quality assurance to ensure that any increases or decreases in population can be reasonably explained and are consistent with population trends in the surrounding areas. Councils were also invited to participate in this process and they identified a number of changes, some of which were made to settlement and locality boundaries.
- 2.5 The sum of the settlement (or locality) population estimates will not add up to the total of the 2010 mid-year estimates for Scotland as any populations outside settlements (or localities) are not included. The population estimate for each settlement (or locality) is rounded to the nearest 10, and where a settlement (or locality) is split by a local authority boundary, the population estimate for each part is reported separately and also rounded to the nearest 10. As a result of these adjustments, the overall population figure for some settlements (or localities) may not exactly equal the sum of its parts.
- 2.6 It is recommended that users exercise caution when comparing the settlement or locality population estimates with previous years. Whilst an increase in population may be due to newly built housing or local population increases, it may also be due to the inclusion of existing housing which had previously been separated from a settlement by a low density postcode (and vice versa for a population decrease).

3. Settlement Populations

- 3.1 The estimated settlement populations referred to in this document have been published on the NRS website. They are available in two tables, one which lists the [settlements in alphabetical order](#) and the other which lists [settlement populations in descending order of size](#). The settlement boundaries are also available to download in the form of shape files, which display spatial information on geographical areas and features. These files can be viewed using [geographic information system \(GIS\) software](#).
- 3.2 As of mid-2010, there are 502 settlements within Scotland. Nine new settlements have been identified, at Braidwood, Kingseat, Symington, Thankerton and Tighnabruaich, at Hallglen (which was previously a locality of Falkirk), Crossgates, Dalgety Bay and North Queensferry (all previously localities of Dunfermline). Kingseat and Symington, which are in Aberdeenshire and South Lanarkshire Council areas respectively, should not be confused with existing settlements of the same name in other parts of Scotland.
- 3.3 With the population associated with the naval base at Faslane now included with that of Garelochhead, Shandon is no longer classed as a settlement as its population has fallen below the minimum threshold of 500. Only one other settlement has changed in relation to the key thresholds referred to in [Section 1.5](#), with the population of Law now above 3,000.
- 3.4 The settlement of Greater Glasgow has the highest estimated population in Scotland (1,195,200). The next three highest are Edinburgh (491,360), Aberdeen (201,680) and Dundee (153,990), whose combined populations are less than three quarters of Greater Glasgow's.
- 3.5 The settlement of Greater Glasgow is spread across seven Council areas and, by itself, accounts for over 20 per cent of Scotland's population. In contrast, Aberdeenshire Council area has the highest number of settlements within its boundary (59) but the population of these settlements accounts for less than four per cent of Scotland's population. ([Figure 1](#))

Figure 1: Settlement of Greater Glasgow



4. Locality populations

- 4.1 Estimated locality populations have also been published on the NRS website. As with the settlement population estimates, there are two tables listing the [localities in alphabetical order](#) and in [descending order of size](#), along with shape files which can be viewed using GIS software ([Section 3.1](#)).
- 4.2 There are now 629 localities within Scotland. Following recommendations received from local authorities, some settlements and localities have been sub-divided, creating 24 new localities.
- The settlement of Auchterarder has been split into the localities of Auchterarder and Gleneagles.
 - The settlement of Fort William has been split into the localities of Banavie and Corpach, Caol and Fort William.
 - The settlement of High Valleyfield has been split into the localities of High Valleyfield, Newmills and Torryburn.
 - The settlement of Oakley has been split into the localities of Carnock, Comrie and Oakley.
 - Locality boundaries within the settlement of Bonnybridge have been re-drawn, creating new localities at Dennyloanhead, Greenhill, Head of Muir and High Bonnybridge.
 - Locality boundaries within the settlement of Falkirk have been re-drawn, creating new localities at Brightons, Carronshore, Larbert, Laurieston, Maddiston, Redding, Reddingmuirhead, Rumford, Wallacestone and Westquarter.
 - Locality boundaries within the settlement of Greater Glasgow have been re-drawn, creating new localities at Netherlee, Stamperland and Thornliebank.
- 4.3 Of the 629 localities, 460 are also settlements. Forty two settlements are sub-divided to create the remaining 169 localities.
- 4.4 The locality with the highest estimated population was Glasgow (589,900). As with the settlement population estimates, the next three highest locality populations were, in order, at Edinburgh (468,720), Aberdeen (189,120) and Dundee (144,170).

5. Notes on statistical publications

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics (available on the [UK Statistics Authority](#) website).

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods, and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

National Records of Scotland

From 1 April 2011, the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) merged with the National Archives of Scotland to become the National Records of Scotland (NRS). The [GROS website](#) will remain active until it is replaced by a new website for NRS.

We, the National Records of Scotland, are a non-ministerial department of the devolved Scottish Administration. Our aim is to provide relevant and reliable information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland. We do this as follows.

- Preserving the past – We look after Scotland's national archives so that they are available for current and future generations, and we make available important information for family history.
- Recording the present – At our network of local offices, we register births, marriages, civil partnerships, deaths, divorces and adoptions in Scotland.
- Informing the future – We are responsible for the Census of Population in Scotland which we use, with other sources of information, to produce statistics on the population and households.

You can get other detailed statistics that we have produced from the [Statistics](#) section on the NRS/GROS website. Statistics from the 2001 Census are available from [Scotland's Census Results On-Line \(SCROL\)](#) website and the [Census](#) section of the NRS/GROS website.

We also provide information about [future publications](#) on the website. If you would like us to tell you about future statistical publications, you can register your interest on the Scottish Government [ScotStat](#) website.

Enquiries and suggestions

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

Email: customer@gro-scotland.gsi.gov.uk

If you have comments or suggestions that would help us improve our outputs or our standards of service, please contact:

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6. Related organisations

Organisation	Contact
<p>The Scottish Government (SG) forms the bulk of the devolved Scottish Administration. The aim of the statistical service in the SG is to provide relevant and reliable statistical information, analysis and advice that meets the needs of government, business and the people of Scotland.</p>	<p>Office of the Chief Statistician Scottish Government 4.N06, St Andrews House Edinburgh EH1 3DG Phone: 0131 244 0442</p> <p>Email: statistics.enquiries@scotland.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Website: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics</p>
<p>The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing a wide range of economic and social statistics. It also carries out the Census of Population for England and Wales</p>	<p>Customer Contact Centre Room 1.015 Office for National Statistics Cardiff Road Newport NP10 8XG Phone: 0845 601 3034 Minicom: 01633 812399</p> <p>Email: info@statistics.gsi.gov.uk</p> <p>Website: www.ons.gov.uk/</p>
<p>The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) is Northern Ireland's official statistics organisation. The agency is also responsible for registering births, marriages, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland, and the Census of Population.</p>	<p>Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency McAuley House 2-14 Castle Street Belfast BT1 1SA Phone: 028 9034 8100</p> <p>Email: info.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk</p> <p>Website: www.nisra.gov.uk</p>

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