

Minutes of Small Area Population Estimates Working Group

16 May 2005, 10am – 12pm, GROS, Ladywell House, Edinburgh

Attendees

Cecilia Macintyre, GROS (Chair)
Alistair Harvey, Edinburgh Council
Richard Belding, Aberdeenshire Council
Margaret Skinner, North Ayrshire Council
Jan Freeke, Glasgow City Council
Jenny Boag, Falkirk Council
Susanne McLellan, Forth Valley NHS
Elspeth Graham, St. Andrew's University
Jennifer Bishop, ISD
Chris Povey, ISD
Adam Krawczyk, SE
Muriel Douglas, NHSCR
Ganka Mueller, GROS
Esther Roughsedge, GROS
Neil Bowie, GROS
Gillian Miller, GROS
Andrew Aird, GROS (Minutes)

1. Introduction

Cecilia Macintyre welcomed everyone to the SAPE working group and apologised for the delay in getting the group together since the last meeting. It was decided that given the time that had elapsed since the last meeting the minutes of the previous meeting would not be discussed but that members were welcome to look at them and provide comment if they wished.

2. Background

Cecilia provided a brief history of the GROS small area population estimates work including an outline of the work carried out by Claire Boag in producing ward based small area population estimates. The ONS methodology was also presented and Celia explained that whilst ONS have adopted the ratio-change method as their method of choice for the production of their 2002 ward based SAPE they are still undecided about whether this or the cohort-component method is best.

3. Adopted GROS Methodology

The GROS methodology for producing datazone small area population estimates was presented to the group. A discussion ensued about parts of the methodology including the dis-aggregation of ward level asylum seeker data obtained from Jan Freeke of Glasgow City Council to a datazone level. Jan explained that this data may be available at a datazone level in future.

Action: Gillian Miller to liaise with Jan on the best method for creating the asylum seeker data.

Chris Povey asked questions about the datazone geography. Elspeth Graham explained what a datazone was along with their average size etc. Adam Krawczyk informed the group that more information on datazones can be found on the SNS website www.sns.gov.uk.

4. Current Requirements

The current requirements of small area population estimates were presented to the group by Celia. The main requirements were highlighted as being the GROS settlements work and for use as a denominator for the SNS website, for example in creating the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

Celia explained that there is also a requirement to produce retrospective SAPEs but that this work will be contracted out. Adam asked about the timescale of the retrospective work. Celia explained that the aim is October and that a draft specification for the work has recently been circulated.

5. Proposed Approach

Celia explained the approach that has been taken to produce the cohort-component SAPEs and to quality assure them. The issue of student areas was raised and Celia explained that this issue would be talked about when the findings were discussed.

Richard Belding asked if the 2004 Cohort-Component SAPE had now been produced. Gillian Miller confirmed that it had been completed recently. An estimated timetable of the proposed work was briefly presented to the group with a hard copy being available to members on request.

6. General Questions

Before discussing the findings group members were asked if they had any questions or comments. These questions and answers or comments are outlined below.

- Muriel Douglas explained that a lot of work had gone into cleaning up the community health index (CHI) especially in the last year. It was also pointed out that a lot of discussions had taken place between the universities and the people working on the CHI to improve the recording of students on the CHI.
- Jenny Boag and Muriel Douglas asked about the CHI Armed Forces (AF) process employed in producing the MYE/SAPE. Gillian and Celia explained that the AF personnel were removed from the CHI prior to processing the migration but that AF dependents were not.
- Jenny asked why we still incorporate an unmeasured migration adjustment when ONS do not. Celia explained that we do not use the same approach for international migrants and that we are not accurately recording the migration in Scotland. As a result it was decided that an adjustment should be retained although this was reduced in 2003-2004 from -2600 to -1500.
- Jenny asked whether we aged on students when creating the SAPEs. Celia confirmed this but highlighted that there may be an issue with this part of the process and that it will be looked at when reviewing the methodology.
- Jenny raised a problem with the geographies used to produce the SAPE constantly changing and explained that this could result in many local authorities just producing their own estimates. Celia and Elspeth explained that the datazone has been adopted due to the introduction of Neighbourhood Statistics and that the purpose of the datazone was to remove the complication of geographies constantly changing and to provide a consistent geography. Whilst this was understood it was agreed that this should be raised further at the next PAMS meeting.

Action: Jenny Boag agreed to produce a paragraph on this issue for discussion at the next PAMS meeting.

- Richard Belding highlighted his concern that paper 4 suggests approaching local authorities for comment on the changes observed in datazones in their council area. He explained that many local authorities may not deal in datazones so may be unable to help. Jenny agreed with this and also suggested that the response we get on this will be variable across the different local authorities.
- Jan Freeke asked about the process involved in picking up international migrants at a small area level. Celia explained that we use the International Passenger Survey to get the number of migrants and then use the CHI to distribute them. Muriel suggested that the home office may hold further information; however, Ganka explained that this information is no longer held by the home office.

7. Findings

A presentation of the findings of the quality assurance process was made and working group members were asked for comment on the data results circulated. Feedback on the results was on the whole favourable with both Jenny Boag and Richard Belding reporting that the majority of the changes observed in Falkirk and Aberdeenshire respectively appeared to be correct. A problem with student areas was again highlighted with suggestions on identifying student populations including approaching universities directly and flagging people of student age moving into Scotland for the first time on the CHI and extracting them. Celia explained that whilst it is recognised that in the long-term we need to do something about estimating the student population in the short-term we need to ensure that any changes made to the SAPE are in-line with published mid-year estimates. However, it has been agreed that the demography branch will write to local authorities in student areas to get further information on students in large halls of residence.

Jenny raised a question about whether we were identifying institutional populations correctly. Esther Roughsedge explained that she was currently leading a data collection exercise of communal establishment data which would ultimately be fed into the estimates.

A discussion of reasons for the population changes observed in some areas ensued with reasons for the changes being house building, changes to student halls of residences and improvements in the CHI. It was suggested that the problem of negative populations amongst the older age groups may be due to the closing of old people's homes. Esther highlighted that the communal establishment care data should allow us to look at this.

Action: Esther Roughsedge/Gillian Miller to investigate whether the negative populations are a result of home closures.

8. Next Steps

It was agreed that a spreadsheet showing the population changes and net migration during the period 2001-2004 for datazones in a local authority/health board be

circulated to that local authority/health board for comment/suggestions. Jenny Boag agreed to inform local authorities of the forthcoming spreadsheet at the next PAMS meeting. The variables to be included in the spreadsheet were discussed and the following variables agreed upon: -

Population 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004, Net migration 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, Census dwelling count, Assessors' dwelling counts 2003 and 2004, household size, total Census communal establishment population, deprivation percentiles and the population by age band.

Action: Jenny Boag to inform local authorities of forthcoming QA spreadsheet. Gillian Miller to produce and circulate the local authority QA spreadsheets.

A discussion of potential data sources for comparison took place. Neil Bowie informed the working group that he currently has access to the School Census data for 2003 and should have the 2004 data soon. However, he stressed that this data does not include people attending private schools or those educated at home. The assessors' dwelling counts data at a datazone level for 2003 and 2004 was also suggested as a means of comparison.

Action: Demography team and Census Alternatives team to meet to discuss possible comparison work.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that there should be another working group meeting prior to the October SAPE publication in order to discuss the forthcoming SAPE publication, future changes to the methodology and to present the work to be carried out in the production of retrospective SAPEs. Suggested time of meeting is sometime in early September 2005. Date to be confirmed.

Action: Gillian Miller/Cecilia Macintyre to establish a date for the next meeting.