



Statistical Areas Statistics Plan 2014-15

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1. Introduction

The Statistical areas of National Records of Scotland (NRS) publish a wealth of statistical information about the people of Scotland.

This plan sets out our statistical work planned for 2014-15 and includes information on: priorities; statistical publications; and improvement activities.

More information on the high level business objectives for 2014-15 is given in Section 6. This report follows a different layout from previous statistics plans as it sets out how the three main statistical areas meets the purpose, values and vision of NRS as a whole.

Our statistics are widely used, have a wide reach and a deep impact on decision making, therefore it's essential they are as accurate and robust as possible. Census and Demographic Statistics collected by NRS filters through to all sectors of local and central government through areas such as service planning, transport, housing, equalities monitoring, Single Outcome Agreements and when complying with the specific duties within the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (available on the legislation.gov.uk website).

This Statistics Plan will be reviewed in Autumn in the light of the outcome of the Referendum.

1.1 Realignment

To meet the needs of the organisation and with the transition into the final phases of 2011 Census outputs production, there has been a realignment of statistical areas within NRS. In 2014 NRS will be implementing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) changes ensuring that how we allocate and utilise our Information Technology (IT) staff meets the needs and objectives of the organisation.

There are now three distinct statistical areas within NRS which will work closely with each other:

- Demographic Statistics
- Statistical Futures and
- Data Resources

1.1.1 Demographic Statistics

The new Demographic Statistics area is led by Kirsty MacLachlan and publishes statistical information about the people of Scotland including Census outputs, Population and Household estimates and projections, Migration, Life Expectancy, Vital Events (Births, Deaths & Marriages) and Electoral Counts. These statistics are used by the Scottish Government, local authorities, health boards and others to inform policies, allocate resources and to plan services.

1.1.2 Statistical Futures

The new Statistical Futures area is led by Amy Wilson and is responsible for the delivery of the 2021 census programme, planning for future statistical innovation and increasing the reach and impact of NRS statistics. NRS announced in March 2014 that it will begin planning for a census for 2021, taking over the work of the Beyond 2011 programme. This area will focus on the design and stakeholder engagement of a census in 2021, learning from the 2011 Census and Beyond 2011 programmes and producing the business case for the 2021 census.

1.1.3 Data Resources responsibilities

The new Data Resources area is led by Gerry Donnelly and is responsible for bringing together a number of our key data resources into a single area in order to strengthen the joined-up services we provide to our stakeholders. This new area includes the NHS Central Register (NHSCR) and Geography teams who continue to provide essential underlying data and services across a range of internal and external partners, our staff working on three key national research data linkage initiatives; the Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS), the Scottish Health and Ethnicity Linkage Study (SHELS) and the Scottish Data Linkage Framework, and a new data sharing team to provide advice and guidance to maximise the benefits we can deliver through legal and ethical data sharing. Over the coming year by bringing these teams together we aim to maximise the reach and impact of our data resources through increased collaboration, efficiency and coordination.

2. Priorities

National Records of Scotland (NRS) operates within the Government Statistical Service (GSS) as well as contributing to the Scottish Government National Performance Framework (NPF), Scotland Performs and Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs).

PURPOSE FOR NRS

- We collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland's people and history and make it available to inform present and future generations.

OUR VALUES

- Professionalism, Expertise, Respect, Accountability and Customer Service.

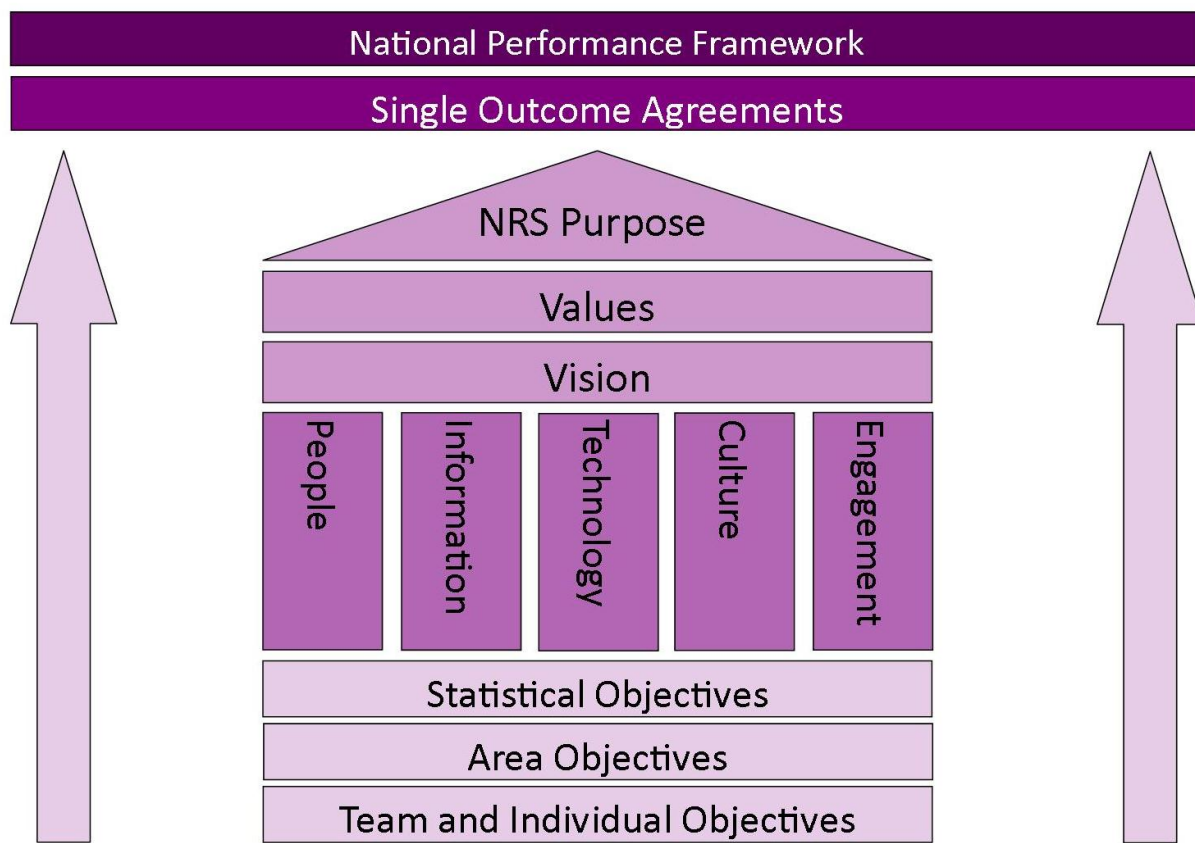
OUR VISION

- By 2018 NRS will be increasingly recognised as an organisation that has reach, impact and influence; is trusted and professional; is innovative and flexible; and provides leadership across the registration, archives and official statistics sectors.
- Our skilled and enthusiastic workforce will work across boundaries, internally and externally, to achieve our Purpose.
- We will have a better understanding of our customers (and potential customers) and provide reliable digital and other services in response to their needs, with a focus on continuous improvement.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

- People, Information, Technology, Culture and Engagement.

These are then translated into statistical objectives for NRS as a whole, area objectives, team and then individual objectives. This structure can be summarised below:



2.1 Contribution to Government Statistical Service Objectives

As a National Statistics producer National Records of Scotland is a member of the Scottish Government Statistics Service (GSS) and therefore also a member of the UK wide GSS.

The GSS comprises of a network of civil servants who work in the Office for National Statistics (ONS), other Government Departments, and in the devolved administrations of Scotland and Wales. Within the GSS there is a body of around 1400 professional statisticians - called the Government Statistician Group (GSG) - which operate within a personnel framework administered by the National Statistician's Office.

This framework sets the standards for recruitment, qualifications, competence and training. Each government department has a Head of Profession for Statistics who is responsible for professional statistical matters and statistical staff working in their departments, and who is professionally accountable to the National Statistician.

In National Records of Scotland (NRS) the Head of Profession is the Chief Executive who is supported in this role by a professional statistician and by working in collaboration with Scotland's Chief Statistician.

All statistical publications in NRS adhere to the UK Statistics Authority [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#) (information available on their website), which is a prescribed set of practices and protocols for producing government statistics. All National Statistics publications in NRS have been assessed over the last three

years to ensure that they meet the code of practice. Because of the vital importance of population statistics, they will be reassessed later in 2014 as part of the continuing process of quality assurance by the UK Statistics Authority.

UK Statistics Authority reports can be found on their website via the following link; (www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk).

2.2 Contribution to the Scottish Government National Performance Framework

The Government in Scotland set out their priorities within [the National Performance Framework](#) (NPF) available on the Scottish Government (SG) website. The NPF supports delivery of the Scottish Government's Purpose which is: 'To focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth'.

Progress towards the Purpose is tracked by seven Purpose Targets and it is supported by 16 National Outcomes - describing the kind of Scotland we want to be - and 50 National Indicators, covering key areas of health, justice, environment, economy, and education.

Like other Scottish public bodies, the statistics areas within National Records of Scotland provide a range of information used to measure performance in the NPF. The Scottish Government's [Criteria for Assessing Performance](#) which is available on their website, gives guiding principles and methodology for assessing and reporting progress on these measures.

Statistical information published by National Records of Scotland is used across the NPF from the Scottish Government's Purpose through to individual National Indicators, either directly or indirectly.

2.3 Contributions to Single Outcome Agreements

In 2007, representatives of the Scottish Government and Scottish local government signed a concordat. This concordat committed both to moving towards Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) for all 32 of Scotland's councils.

SOAs are agreements between the Scottish Government and the 32 Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) which set out how each will work in the future towards improving national outcomes for the local people, in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities

This has increased the need for data which can be used to measure progress against appropriate local indicators.

2.3.1 Data at sub-Scotland geographies

To address this need, National Records of Scotland (NRS) is committed to making information at sub-Scotland geographies publicly available. More information on what sources are available can be found on the NRS website ([sub-Scotland data sources](#)) which gives a detailed breakdown of all NRS data available at sub-Scotland geography levels (for example, council area or NHS Board area).

Census 2011 information is regularly published on the Census Data Explorer within Scotland's Census website (www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk).

NRS also publishes information on the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics website (www.sns.gov.uk).

3. Meeting users' needs

In addition to taking into account requirements for the National Performance Framework and Single Outcome As, we consider the needs of a wide range of statistics users when planning our work.

National Records of Scotland (NRS) engages with our users in three main ways through consultation, events and seminars, and through continued stakeholder liaison. This may be through face-to-face meetings, teleconferences, e-mail, or more recently through online platforms and social media.

3.1.1 Consultation and steering groups

NRS has a core set of consultation groups that are used in an advisory capacity. These contain users from a range of different backgrounds, including local authorities and health boards, for example¹:

- [Population and Migration Statistics \(PAMS\) Committee](#) (main ScotStat user committee)
- [Small Area Population Estimates \(SAPE\) Working Group](#)
- [Household Analysis Review Group \(HARG\)](#)

More information on our main consultation groups is available on the NRS website.

NRS also works with various externally-led steering groups that are used to address specific issues, for example¹:

- NHS Central Register (NHSCR) governance board
- National Forum on Drug-Related Deaths and the Scottish Suicide Information Database Steering Group
- International Collaboration on Census Pre-Registration Working Group
- UK Joint Census Board
- 2021 Census UK Operations Group
- UK Population Theme Advisory Board
- Scottish Public Health Observatory Steering Group.

As part of our evaluation of Census 2011 we are undertaking a review of the benefits achieved through the use of this rich data source. This work will form the bulk of a report on the 'Benefits Realisation of Census 2011', which is expected to complete in 2014-15.

To make our data more accessible, a key function of the NRS statistical areas is to provide advice on the use and understanding of its statistics. A user group for POPGROUP software continues to meet to improve the information and guidance available for users to produce their own small area projections.

NRS also provides on-going ad-hoc statistical advice to internal and external colleagues, and other users of demographic data.

3.1.2 Regular events and seminars

NRS regularly take part or attend the following events, for example¹:

- PAMS biennial conference

Footnote

1) This is not a comprehensive list but is used to illustrate ways in which we engage.

- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) annual Festival of Social Science Event
- British Society for Population Studies (BSPS) annual conference and other events
- Scottish Local Area Research & Intelligence Association (LARIA) annual conference.
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) International Census Research annual conference
- Royal Statistical Society annual conference

NRS takes part in informal seminars, talks etc, which are used as another method to engage with users of our information. A conference focusing on uses of the 2011 census was held on 25 June 2014.

3.1.3 Liaising with Stakeholders

We meet regularly and communicate with a range of public sector and academic organisations on a range of issues, for example¹:

- Scottish Government (SG) policy and analytical staff
- Information Services Division (ISD) of NHS National Services Scotland
- COSLA
- ONS, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
- Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

We also use the ScotStat register, the Census mailing list, NRS Twitter feed (@NatRecScot) and the Knowledge Hub to update users on our publications, upcoming events and consultations.

3.2 Formal Consultation

There were two main consultations in 2013-14:

- Beyond 2011 user requirements for collecting population and socio-demographic information
- Technical consultation on the design of the Data Sharing and Linkage Service²

Information on future consultations can be found on the [NRS website](#):

3.2.1 Census 2021 programme and the closure of Beyond 2011

In 2013 NRS held a formal consultation on the user requirements for collecting social and demographic information:

The results were published within the [Analysis of Responses Report](#) on the NRS website in November 2013 and highlighted that users were comfortable with the use of administrative data but that the risks would be too high, at this stage of research, for administrative data to be used to replace the census. This information, in conjunction with a range of consultation events and research by the Alternative Sources branch was used as evidence in the recommendation to start planning for a census in 2021.

Footnote

2) Please note that this consultation was run through ISD (NSS) and not through the Scottish Government.

3.3 Census 2011: Outputs prospectus

A lot of information from the 2011 census has now been published with more detailed complex tables still being produced. The prospectus presents plans for the release of Scotland's 2011 Census results. It describes what results are included within each of the releases and sets out indicative timings for future releases and topic reports. The prospectus is divided into the following three main areas:

- Release plans for Scotland's Census results;
- About Scotland's Census, methods and reference material;
- Censuses across the UK.

The latest version of the outputs prospectus (April 2014) is now available from [Scotland's Census](#) website.

4. National Records of Scotland Statistical Publications (2014-15)

Our current list of publications for 2014-15:

April

Scotland's Census 2011, 3C (plus on going releases throughout the year as outlined in the latest census prospectus plus various topic reports)

Life Expectancy for Areas in Scotland, 2010 – 2012

Mid-Year Population Estimates, Mid 2013

May

Electoral Statistics, Scotland, 2013

Projected Population of Scotland, 2012 based Sub-National Population Projections

Small Area Population Estimates, Revised estimates for 2002 – 2010

June

Births, Deaths and Other Vital Events, first quarter 2014

Monthly Data on Deaths Registered in Scotland, first quarter 2014

Weekly Data on Births and Deaths Registered in Scotland, First quarter 2014

July

Mid-Year Population Estimates, Settlements and Localities - Mid-2012

Total Migration To Or From An Area, Mid 2013 update

Estimates of Households and Dwellings in Scotland, 2013

Household Projections for Scotland, 2012-based

August

Deaths from various causes, 2013

Drug-related deaths in Scotland, 2013

Population By Country of Birth and Nationality for Scottish Areas, 2013

Projected Population of Scotland, Scotland's Strategic Development Plan Areas and National Parks, 2012-based

The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends, Scotland's Population 2013

Small Area Population Estimates, Mid-2011, Mid-2012 and Mid-2013
Estimates for new data zones
Vital Events Reference Tables, 2013

September

Population Estimates for Scottish Centenarians, 2003 - 2013
Births, Deaths and Other Vital Events, second quarter 2014
Monthly Data on Deaths Registered in Scotland, second quarter 2014
Weekly Data on Births and Deaths Registered in Scotland, second quarter 2014

October

Winter Mortality in Scotland, 2013/14

November

Household Projections for Scotland's Strategic Development Plan Areas and National Parks, 2012 based

December

Babies First Names, 2014
Small Area Population Estimates, 2001-2010 for new data zones
Births, Deaths and Other Vital Events, third quarter 2014
Monthly Data on Deaths Registered in Scotland, third quarter 2014
Weekly Data on Births and Deaths Registered in Scotland, third quarter 2014

March 2015

Babies First Names, 2014 (full lists)
Births, Deaths and Other Vital Events, 2014 (preliminary)
Births, Deaths and Other Vital Events, fourth quarter 2014
Monthly Data on Deaths Registered in Scotland, fourth quarter 2014
Weekly Data on Births and Deaths Registered in Scotland, fourth quarter 2014

Additional information, including specific dates for [future publications](#) where known, is also provided on the NRS website.

[Statistics at a Glance](#) provides information on key statistical trends, including [High Level Summary of Statistics](#) - overview of each of our main areas of activity

[Council Area Profiles](#) - overview of each of the 32 council areas in Scotland

The [About Our Statistics](#) section of the NRS website also provides more information about the background to official statistics and the policies and practices used to produce them.

5. Continuous Improvement Activities

Continuous improvement is an integral part of the Scottish Governments (SG) [National Performance Framework](#) (details available on their website) and the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics. We are always trying to improve the way that we meet the needs of users, ensure that our statistics are produced, managed and disseminated to high standards and ensure that the statistics are well explained.

Scottish Government (SG) National Outcome 15:

Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

Across the three statistical areas in NRS, there are a range of cross cutting improvement activities planned in 2014-15³:

- Contributing to UK wide projects on: improving migration statistics, population estimates and population projections; and census 2021.
- Developing new infographics and data visualisations and investigating ways to exploit the latest technologies and methods to increase reach and impact.
- Investigate ways to further engage with stakeholders and the general public regarding our statistics.
- Ensuring statistical staff continue to develop their skills and competencies through a continuous development programme, including, where appropriate spending time with those who enter the administrative data we use.
- To understand, document and explain the flow of data (including administrative data) from when it is recorded to when it is used in analysis and publications.

Demography

- Developing a new Vital Events Information Technology (IT) system to improve data processing, take account of the forthcoming changes to the arrangements for the certification of death, save staff time and provide scope for improving data quality.
- Developing methods for revising population estimates for Councils, NHS Boards and data zones using the 2011 census and other data (e.g. estimation of the number of Armed Forces and investigation of improved sources of internal, cross-border and international migration).
- Working with pilot local authorities and health boards to help improve population and household estimates
- Implementing changes to the household projections methodology, incorporating the 2011 census and other data.
- Publishing age-standardised death rates calculated using the new European Standard Population
- Improving the methodology for mid-year estimates
- Reviewing the methods and systems used to produce sub-national population projections, taking into account changes made in the national methodology made by Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- Developing census microdata products and progressing access to secure data through a safe haven
- Developing census topic reports
- Making enhancements to the dissemination of census and demography outputs
- Improving the Census Data Explorer website

Footnote

3) This is not a comprehensive list and is simply to illustrate the range of improvement work being undertaken.

Statistical Futures

- Investigating the potential of a range of sources of administrative data to contribute to the development of more efficient systems for population statistics
- Investigating potential synergies between Scottish Government (SG) surveys and 2021 census data collection systems
- Investigating new sources of administrative data to contribute to the improvement in quality of population and household statistics - for example, using Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data.
- Investigating ways to improve the design and methodology for Census 2021.

Data Resources

- Improving the quality of the NHS Central Register (NHSCR) and increasing the capacity to carry out and support data linkage projects
- Develop the use of the NHSCR as the basis for creating a population spine for use in data linkage projects
- Implementing improvements to the Geography section of our website, including incorporating 2011 Census geography information.
- Developing postcode and address systems in Geography and developing a Geography Strategy for NRS
- Further developing the Scottish Longitudinal Survey seeking out other potential sources of data
- Extending the reach and impact of the Scottish Health and Ethnicity Longitudinal study through wider engagement with potential users
- Develop a standardised data sharing agreement for use across NRS and developing a common approach to data sharing across NRS including the use of Secure File Exchange
- To develop a coordinated approach to data access and privacy.

6. High level Business Objectives for the three statistical areas (2014-15)

The high level objectives for the National Records of Scotland (NRS) statistical areas are aligned to the set of five strategic pillars and this dictates the way in which we work. These objectives, where appropriate, will be used by every branch across the three statistical areas when setting objectives for their team and individual members of staff.

People

- To take part in a range of continuous improvement activities at individual, team and business area level.
- To ensure we have the necessary skills and tools to support our work
- (All staff) To ensure that Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) and Continuous Professional Developments (CPDs) are maintained.
- (Line managers) To manage direct reports effectively, providing clear direction and purpose and ensuring that they deliver on their objectives and develop professionally and personally.
- (Line managers) To ensure regular monthly conversations are held with staff and to ensure PLPs and CPDs are maintained

Information

- To publish timely statistics that are fit-for-purpose, meet user needs and can be used to support informed decision-making by government, public services, business, researchers and the public.
- To provide informed advice and analysis to support uses of our statistics, through liaison with policy colleagues, Ministers, key users, user groups, publication in journals and presentations.
- To investigate, where possible, ways to implement improvements to the methodology used in our statistics.
- To join up across all statistical areas to improve the quality and efficiency of all of our statistical information.
- To investigate ways to increase our production of open data and to continue to embrace our use of digital technology while ensuring we respect the privacy of the data we hold in a fair and proportionate manner

Technology

- To investigating ways in which administrative data, methodology improvements and operational advances could be used to continuously improve our statistics.
- To develop our approaches to data linkage and safe access to data in a collaborative, proportionate and risk managed manner across our three key linkage projects (and possible future projects) to facilitate legal, ethical and public value research.
- To maintain and update key databases and datasets vital to NRS and external users such as the Vital Events systems, geography databases and NHSCR.
- To maintain and update the NRS and Scotlands Census websites, developing and enhancing our digital presence.
- To actively pursue the opportunities afforded by new and emerging technologies for statistical data collection and processing in line with the Scottish Digital Strategy.

Culture

- To foster a culture of respect, mindfulness and resilience in our staff
- To create a culture of cross working and can-do attitude across NRS
- To foster a sense of organisational responsibility and personal responsibility to NRS
- To ensure our staff have a good work-life balance.
- To ensure that objectives and workloads are stretching but achievable.

Engagement

- To ensure that we produce an annual statistics plan, setting out the priorities for the year ahead.
- To ensure a coordinated approach across the three statistical areas, with our colleagues across NRS and with our partners in other organisations, ensuring joined-up approaches to our statistics for our stakeholders and customers, investigating additional ways to meet their needs now and in the future.
- To ensure our stakeholders are aware, and engaged with the statistical work of NRS.
- To ensure that we have a joined up statistical communication strategy that is fit for purpose internally and externally.
- To work closely with the UK Statistics Authority in any assessment.

6.1 Additional Objectives for the Statistical Futures Area

Information

- To effectively plan for a census in 2021, using proportionate project management techniques.
- To work closely with other census taking countries (administrative and survey based) to understand and learn from their lessons when implementing changes.
- To have a continued and active presence at UK and international census methodology forums.
- To coordinate the Benefits Realisation for Census 2011, documenting benefits and disseminating information found internally and externally.
- To lead the Business Support and Improvement Office, collaborating with the other statistical areas to create efficiencies in the way we work and investigate methods of improvement.

Technology

- To coordinate the Scottish Integrated Census Programme, investigating ways in which administrative data, methodology improvements and operational advances could be used to produce a census in 2021, learning from the lessons and benefits found in the 2011 census programme.
- To have a continued and active presence at UK and international census technology forums.

Engagement

- To keep our users informed of updates to the Scottish Integrated Census Programme, maintaining and developing links in the census community.

6.2 Additional Objectives for the Demographic Statistics Area

Information

- To have a continued and active presence at UK and international demographic statistics methodology forums.
- Technology
- To investigating ways in which administrative data, methodology improvements and operational advances could be used to continuously improve current demographic statistics.

Engagement

- To hold regular meetings with key stakeholders such as the Population and Migration Statistics group, keeping our users informed on changes, developments and releases of demographic statistics.

6.3 Additional Objectives for the Data Resources Area

Information

- To engage and document privacy and equality issues around our statistical products, including the Scottish Integrated Census Programme.
- To secure access to external data resources required by the statistical areas, ensuring that data requests are coordinated and proportionate.
- To ensure that NRS is aligned with the Data Linkage Framework and Scotlands Digital Strategy.
- To lead on the Privacy Working Group across NRS.

7. Comments

Our statistical planning is a continuous process, and we place strong emphasis on taking into account the views of the people who use our data. A draft of this plan was discussed with representatives of users of our statistics from the Population and Migration Statistics (PAMS) committee.

Further information about the committee can be found within the [User consultations, groups and seminars](#) section of the NRS website. The final version will be circulated to members of the ScotStat Register (available on the Scottish Government website) who have indicated an interest in Demographic and Population Statistics, including the census. If you wish to comment on this plan, please contact:

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