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## NATIONAL STATISTICS CENTRE FOR DEMOGRAPHY (NSCD)

### WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2008/09

Prepared for the United Kingdom Population Committee

## Background

1.1 The United Kingdom Population Committee (UKPC) has responsibility for co-ordinating and agreeing a UK-wide work programme on population statistics and demographic analysis that is policy relevant and meets users' needs. The NSCD Advisory Board advises it in that role and helps identify gaps in provision. Under the *Framework for National Statistics*, the Population and Migration Theme Working Group is responsible for drawing up the three-year Work Programme which UKPC signs off at its May meeting each year.

1.2 The Theme Group meets twice a year and is formed from the main producers of population and migration statistics. A list of theme group members and useful websites can be found at the end of this document. The Theme covers population estimates and projections, outputs from the Census, international and internal migration estimates, household estimates and projections, demographic analysis, as well as statistics on births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships, divorces, citizenship, families and electoral turnout. These provide essential information about the characteristics, structure and dynamics of the population.

1.3 Population and migration statistics are produced using a range of data sources, both administrative and survey. The main government departments and devolved administrations involved in the preparation and production of these statistics are the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), the Home Office (HO) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and these departments provide membership for the Theme Working Group.

1.4 Population statistics and demographic analysis are extensively used by a wide range of users including government (both central and local), commercial users, academics and the general public. For example, they are used by the Bank of England and HM Treasury in assessing the labour market and for economic forecasting; by DCLG and the Department of Health for local resource allocation; and by the Department for Work and Pensions for planning pension provision. There is a significant level of interest in the statistics from local and health authorities, both from resource allocation and service planning and provision

perspectives; there is a Central and Local Government Information Partnership (CLIP) sub-group to advise the ONS Centre for Demography (ONSCD) on key issues. Immigration and citizenship statistics are used mainly for policy purposes by the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Parliament, the media and the public also have a strong interest in population statistics.

## Context

2.1 We are currently experiencing a significant level of **population change** in the United Kingdom, especially in relation to the magnitude and diversity of international migration, which affects all of the constituent countries. This brings challenges in not only knowing what our population is, and its characteristics, but in understanding what impact the changes that are taking place now will have in the future.

2.2 Against this backdrop, users have expressed their wish to see **significant improvements** in the coverage and quality of our population and migration statistics. In particular, there are concerns about their fitness for certain purposes which was one of the concerns expressed in the recent report of the Treasury Select Committee on “Counting the Population”, most notably because of the uses of the figures for resource allocation to a local level. A cross-Government Migration Task Force was convened by the National Statistician and reported in December 2006 on possible improvements that could be made to improve migration statistics; delivery of these improvements is requiring a significant level of cross-Government collaboration.

2.3 ONSCD and the devolved administrations are continuing **to prepare for the next Census** in 2011. The 2007 Census Test was carried out in England and Wales, the outcomes and evaluation of the Test were published in 2007. The 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011 has been chosen as the planned date of the next Census in England and Wales. A rehearsal for the 2011 Census will be carried out in 2009. Following the 2001 Census, concerns were expressed about the size of the gap between the 2001-based population estimates (rolled forward using the 1991 Census results) and the actual 2001 Census outputs. A significant amount of effort had to go into reconciling the two sources and the improvement work of ONS and the devolved administrations is aimed at being able to better, and more readily, reconcile the rolled forward 2001-based population estimates with the 2011 Census results.

2.4 The **devolution** arrangements are now relatively well established and we will continue to put a good deal of emphasis on finding the right balance between the requirements for UK statistics, for comparable statistics across the constituent countries of the UK, and the individual needs of users in individual countries, including those in the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

2.7 The **Office for National Statistics** became independent in April 2008 and will be overseen by a Statistics Board of the UK Statistics Authority. It is unclear at this stage how this will affect priorities but it will almost certainly impact on how the population statistics programme is planned out and reported on.

2.6 The work programme for NSCD was developed in parallel with the ongoing public consultation on development of the ONS statistical work programme for 2008- 2012. The ONS settlement from the Comprehensive Spending Review in April 2007 covered the years 2007-08 to 2011-12. Resources are increasingly scarce across government and we have a

duty to be as efficient and effective as possible in meeting current needs and responding to future needs. We recognise we are unable to meet all demands and have sought user views to help prioritise this work. Once the resources for the statistical work programme are finalised the prioritised plans will be issued on the website.

2.7 Two key areas where the introduction of the Statistics Act and the creation of the Statistics Board may affect the NSCD work programme are:

- **Independent assessment of key statistics.** The Board will be required to prepare and publish a Code of Practice against which it will independently assess the quality and integrity of key statistics (both produced in ONS and across government departments) for formal approval as National Statistics. The timetable for this work and the order in which key statistics will be reviewed has not yet been determined.
- **Data Sharing.** The Act allows for increased sharing of data between ONS and other departments, subject to agreement by Parliament on a case-by-case basis. This will give us the opportunity to exploit and create far richer datasets than we have now.

## **Work Plan for 2008/09**

### **Providing a relevant and accurate picture of the population**

3.1 During 2008/09, we plan to provide a relevant and accurate picture of the population of the United Kingdom, updated for changing user requirements. In particular, we will:

3.1.1 **Make High Level Statements on the Population of the United Kingdom** through:

- The National Statistician's Annual Article on the Population in Population Trends (December 2008);
- The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Statistics 2007 in Scotland in August 2008;
- The Annual Report (2007) of the Registrar General for Northern Ireland in November 2008; and
- The third Annual Report providing a summary of demographic information for Wales in March 2009.

3.1.2 **Produce and publish regular outputs containing statistics, analysis and associated metadata**, including:

- Population Estimates and Projections (National and Subnational);
- Small Area Population Estimates, Quarterly Population Estimates, Population Estimates by Ethnic Group, by Cohabitation and Lone Parenthood;
- Household Estimates and Projections;
- Marital Status Estimates and Projections;
- Migration Statistics (International - Immigrants and Emigrants - and Internal);
- Control of immigration statistics including statistics on Asylum and Persons Granted British Citizenship;
- Compendia reports, including Key Population and Vital Statistics (April 2008) and Population Trends (quarterly);
- Regular Vital Events Statistics;
- Detailed Fertility Analyses, including cohort fertility figures and true birth order estimates;
- Life Expectancy Data including cohort expectations of life;
- Settlement and Locality Population Estimates (for Scotland);
- Electoral Statistics;
- Additional analyses for internal/external customers, such as Worker Registration Scheme and National Insurance Statistics and Data on Unaccompanied Minors.

3.1.3 **Develop new and improved outputs, in line with user requirements**, including:

- Continue to develop our longitudinal data capabilities, following the success of the ONS Longitudinal Study as a data source. We will further develop the Scottish Longitudinal Study (SLS) database which was launched in March

2007. As at February 2008, there were 18 research projects approved. We will further develop the use of the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study that was formally launched in December 2006;

- Produce an annual statistical series on the numbers of households in Northern Ireland since 2001;
- The Welsh Assembly Government, with the support of Welsh local authorities, will be developing population projections for each of the 22 local authorities to be published by Summer 2008;
- Provide the first estimates of numbers of short term migrants (those who stay for periods of between 1- or 3- months and a year for certain purposes, most notably for work) at a national level and assess whether any estimates can be made from existing data of “population churn” at a local authority level;
- ONS to continue development work to assess feasibility of population statistics on flexible output bases past 2011;
- ONS continue to develop a model to produce stochastic population projections and publish a set of stochastic projections on an experimental basis;
- Families – improving analysis and reporting of the stock of families and continued ad hoc analysis reporting of family related events such as marriage and cohabitation, civil partnerships and divorce;
- Improve reporting on the demographic drivers and effects of an ageing population;
- Continued development and transition of recently introduced experimental statistics to National Statistics status – small area population estimates, quarterly population estimates, population estimates by ethnic group, short-term migration estimates, household population estimates, estimates of the very elderly and population estimates for Primary Care Organisations..

#### 3.1.4 **Improve the presentation of our population data through:**

- Website development in ONS (through the i-Dissemination project), GROS and NISRA
- Implementing the Migration Task Force recommendations on coherent reporting by moving towards quarterly releases covering ONS, DWP and HO migration related outputs
- We will also implement the results of the ONSCD publications review (due for completion in Spring 2008) which will propose options for coherence and co-ordination when presenting a picture of the population
- Continue to expand the range of supporting data and metadata that are published on the web, and filling the gaps.

3.2 Across the countries of the United Kingdom, we will be **joined-up** in our approach to our regular population outputs across the individual countries of the UK and, where possible, produce headline statistics for the individual countries that coincide with the publication of key ONSCD outputs (including for the mid-year population estimates). In addition we will as far as possible ensure that tables produced by ONS include the whole UK, even where information is produced by devolved administrations.

3.3 During 2006/07, UKPC reviewed our **NSCD governance and committee structure** and recommended changes to how we keep up-to-date with changing user requirements - in

particular, that we introduce a Central Government User Network and approached the Statistics Users Forum to see how non-commercial users might be better engaged. This will strengthen existing user links. These recommendations will be taken forward in 2008/09, while maintaining the existing CLIP population sub-group arrangements. For next year's work programme, we will seek users' views more explicitly on our programme of work and develop a separate section on identified user needs.

3.4 We will meet our **International Obligations** to supply data to the European Commission, Eurostat, UNHCR, IGC and other international stakeholders.

3.5 We will continue to provide a **Source of Expertise and Advice** more generally and respond promptly to Parliamentary Questions and other requests for data/advice.

### **Developing an improved understanding of the impacts of population change**

4.1 Migration is the key driver for population change and there is a programme of new work described in section 5.

4.2 We are constantly seeking to produce and disseminate our regular outputs in more efficient ways so as to be able to put more effort and resource into **demographic analysis**. This was re-inforced as a priority by the NSCD Advisory Board.

4.3 Some of the demographic analysis work will be done in **partnerships**, for example with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Local Government Association (LGA) and other organisations with an interest in demography. There is already precedent set in this respect in Scotland (see below) and through the ESRC seminar series in England. ONSCD has also started engaging with organisations where partnerships might be helpful and this work will be continued in 2008/09, in the light of the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review. We will engage with the new ESRC Centres of Population Change and we are engaging with them in advance of the formal start of the programme in October 2008.

4.4 During 2008/09, we will concentrate our efforts on:

- Existing demographic analysis and reporting plans (compendia; fertility; migration; ageing; children/young people; mortality/life expectancy; families; households). For example, we plan to produce analyses of sub-national fertility for reporting purposes but also potentially to inform sub-national projections and work towards understanding intercensal population drift and its impact on sex ratios in particular;
- Continuing the research on the impact of international migration on fertility;
- ONSCD will also develop its mortality analysis to complement the work currently undertaken for national projections;
- We have begun work to consider the demographic analysis required to help understand and reconcile 2011 mid-year estimates and the Census. We have started to look at what sex ratios in the population and in administrative data sources can tell us

about population change and will conduct further analyses to gain a better understanding of demographic trends including migration;

- Expanding the ageing program of work to better understand and report on the demographic process of ageing. Current funding for 2008/09 will allow us to analyse and report on the characteristics and trends of the older workforce (based on the Labour Force Survey), trends in retirement migration for those migrating from the UK and trends in living arrangements at older ages and the provision of care. GROS are holding a seminar on ageing research in Glasgow in November 2008;
- If additional funding is provided for the work on ageing it will allow us to coordinate and disseminate ageing research between government departments and relevant UK organisations, obtain and analyse more data sources appropriate to ageing research and study how projected increases in the number of older people at a local level may affect service provision;
- Conducting analyses to inform new marital status projections, covering trends in both legal marital status and cohabitation;
- Analysis of information collected on the International Passenger Survey on marriages abroad and publish outcomes (September 2008);
- Analysis of marriages ending in divorce and age disparity patterns of couples divorcing in relation to the age disparity of different marriage cohorts (Population Trends June 2008). Having achieved this understanding it will then be possible to extend this analysis to provide a more complete picture of partnerships that includes cohabitating couples;
- Working towards publishing annual stock estimates of families by type (March 2009);
- Beginning work to look at establishing transition rates into and out of families, but in particular into and out of lone parenthood and cohabitation;
- Establishing improved links with ESRC (e.g. the new Centres for Population Change), LGA and other stakeholders, including on new ESRC programmes, learning from Understanding Population Trends and Processes (UPTAP) initiatives/studentships, as well as supporting specific projects - for example, "Migration, Race and Population Dynamics: Explaining Britain's Ethnic Geography" (Leverhulme Trust/University of Manchester);
- Working with the Greater London Authority (GLA) whose recently commissioned report recommended that a New Migrant Databank should be established to provide an integrated source of intelligence on new migrant activity. GLA envisage this to be undertaken as a partnership venture with ONSCD as a member of the project steering group.

4.5. The Scottish Government has a population target to increase the Scottish population in line with the EU 15 countries, by 2017. As part of the work to support the target, the Scottish Government is considering commissioning research to provide evidence to help inform policies.

4.6 Scotland has just completed a Demography Research Programme (ESRC/Scottish Executive), whose aims were to develop greater understanding of the key aspects of fertility, migration and ageing to inform the evidence base on demographic issues in Scotland. Plans to take forward some of this work and to explore new areas of research are being considered and a workplan is currently being consulted on. The British Irish Council work stream on demography is led by Scotland and will cover key themes including migration and healthy independent ageing.

## **Developing further our population statistics**

5.1 A key aim of our development work is to be prepared for 2012, when we will receive the first results of the 2011 Census, while recognising that there is also an on-going requirement to develop our population statistics and to strengthen the methodological basis for our work.

5.2 ONSCD has established a Population Statistics Development Board to oversee and help prioritise further developments. The strands of work that have been identified are aimed at providing answers to the following key questions:

- What will the population statistics of the future look like and how will we deliver them?
- What are the best sources to underpin them, including the need for a 2021 Census, the use of admin sources and the Integrated Household Survey?
- How do we avoid the issues arising following the 2001 Census, when there was a large difference between the Census results and the rolled-forward population estimates, and how do we best reconcile observed differences?
- How do we provide better estimates of migration at a national level and improved distributions of population locally, taking account of the Migration Task Force recommendations?
- How is the structure of the UK population changing, what is driving those changes and what are the implications?
- What does a fully modernised and automated population statistics system look like?
- How can we communicate to users a better sense of the quality of what we produce?

5.3 Key elements of the work that will be taken forward in 2008/09 include essential cross-government work to improve population statistics. In particular:

- Specific research to develop improvements to population statistics for implementation in subsequent years, working closely with others across government. Key strands of the ONS work plan for example are: to research the feasibility and develop methods to produce estimates of short-term migrants; to research improvements to internal migration estimates and to improve the distribution of international migrants between local authorities within intermediate geographies in England and Wales.

- ONS has established a programme of work to improve migration and population statistics working collaboratively with other departments from across government and the devolved administrations. In February 2008 ONS reported the arrangements that have been put in place for overseeing and steering the improvement work programme. This followed the announcement by John Healey, the Minister for Communities and Local Government, on 4 February 2008:

*"I can confirm that we will put in place a cross-Government programme of work driven by senior officials from central Government and the LGA, and led by the National Statistician. That will accelerate the work that has already begun to improve population statistics, including at a local level. The senior programme board will aim to meet for the first time this month. To support that programme of work a ministerial group, jointly chaired by me and the Minister for Borders and Immigration, will be set up, while the independent statistics board will ensure the quality of the statistics that are produced."*

The Migration Statistics Improvement Programme Board has met and the Ministerial Group will meet for the first time in June 2008. Further information about this work is provided in box 1.

- 5.4 We will continue the programme of demographic research and development in Scotland, for example representing interests on projects to improve address lists in Scotland, including the Definitive National Address (DNA) Project and Assessors' Portal.
- 5.5 Continuing to investigate the potential for developing more efficient population statistics systems in Scotland, including:
  - Update current collections and reports: school census, child benefit, older persons, DVLA car registration, electoral registration;
  - Continue work on evaluating additional data from school census to inform migration estimates;
  - Continue work on record linkage projects to help better understand census coverage issues;
  - Create regular extracts from the NHSCR for statistical purposes to enable better estimates of migration to be made at small area level.
- 5.6 We will continue to develop our demographic statistics in Northern Ireland. In particular, NISRA are examining a number of ways to improve migration statistics, following on from the publication of a sources and methods paper in July 2006. A common set of questions will be introduced into a range of household surveys to provide further information. In addition, further research will be conducted on the potential to extract information from administrative data sources, such as National Insurance Numbers.
- 5.7 Examine the potential of the Northern Ireland Longitudinal Study to inform population statistics and preparations for the 2011 Census; Work with the Pointer team to exploit the value of the NI address database;

## BOX 1

### *Further information about the improving migration and population statistics work programme*

5.3.1 The improving migration statistics work plans will focus on:

- Improving the data available on numbers entering and leaving the United Kingdom;
- Making effective use of new and existing administrative and survey data sources;
- Improving local population estimates and projections used in allocating resources and developing services;
- Improving the public reporting of population and migration statistics; and
- Establishing a wider range of timely indicators and analysis to inform the evidence base on migration and its impacts on policy and public services.

Full details of the programme, priorities and timings will be worked through by the Programme Board and its sub-groups.

5.3.2 ONS, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions have worked together to establish five interdepartmental working groups that cover each of these elements of work. These are cross departmental groups that also involve the Local Government Association (LGA), the devolved administrations, the Bank of England and, for the group on indicators and analysis, academic expertise.

5.3.3 There will be regular engagement with users through seminars, the population sub-group of CLIP and through conferences as opportunities arise. The LGA will play a key role in engaging Local Authorities in England and Wales in the programme through a series of workshops the first of which took place on 23 May.

5.3.4 Several Departments have agreed to share in the funding of the work programme. ONS, CLG, Health, Home Office, Her Majesty's Treasury and the Bank of England are to provide additional cash funding, totalling £12m over the next three years. Key data suppliers (including Health, the UK Borders Agency, Work and Pensions, Innovation, Universities and Skills, and Children, Schools and Families) will also take forward additional work within their Departments.

5.8 We have created a model for the production of stochastic population projections, the aim of which is to give users improved information about the expected accuracy of projections. Over the next year, we will be seeking to resolve outstanding methodological issues with a view to publishing a set of stochastic projections as experimental statistics.

5.9 We intend to research and develop sub-national population projections down to local authority level in Wales, a level not achieved since local government reorganisation in 1996. As part of this, the Welsh Assembly Government will continue to lead the

recently formed UK group which looks at the different sub-national projections methodologies in each of the countries and learns from the different approaches. The Welsh Assembly Government aim to publish the projections by summer 2008. This work will then be reviewed and taken forward to the future. The main demands for sub-national projections in Wales include:

- Local authority and national park planners require such projections in order to inform their Local Development Plans, and in some cases have worked towards developing their own projections in the absence of figures published by government;
- Those planning and assessing service provision sub-nationally require sub-national projections (e.g. demand from Social Services Inspectorate Wales as part of planning care services for the elderly);
- The Welsh Assembly Government also wish to investigate using sub-national projections for the allocation of resources to local councils on a three year basis
- There are similar demands for local authority household projections for planning purposes and local authority population projections are the basis for deriving these.

- 5.10 The Welsh Assembly Government are also planning work on developing household estimates and projections at local authority level in Wales during 2008-09. This work will follow-on from the sub-national population projections project.
- 5.11 Conducting a review of the methodologies for forward household projections - by DCLG, SE/GROS and NISRA, learning from recent experiences across NSCD; GROS are also co-supervising a student at Liverpool University doing a PhD on “Incorporating Social Trends into Household Projections”.
- 5.12 **Continue to prepare for the 2011 Census**, including preparing for the 2009 Rehearsal. The Census plans are set out separately and not reported more fully in this theme document. However, as mentioned above, a key strand of our development work for the Population and Migration Theme will be preparing for the 2011 Census. This will include work on coverage and definitions, and planning for the demographic analysis needed to support QA of coverage adjustment.
- 5.13 We intend to refresh the vision of an Integrated Population Statistics System (IPSS) which was initially published in October 2003. Work in 2008/09 will focus on developing the business case, establishing the benefits and costs and some initial work on “proof of concept” feasibility studies. The proposed vision is for more integrated and flexible population statistics systems which would have 2011 Census data at its core but with the Census data linked to other sources (administrative and surveys data) at the person level. Proposed developments for an address register, population register and the IHS would all facilitate the building of such a system.

## **2009-10 and beyond: Looking Forward**

6.1 In addition to continuing to progress the work identified in the 2008/09 programme, the following items have been identified as emerging issues. Taking them forward is subject to funding, planning and capacity constraints:

- Ageing work including better understanding of trends in life expectancy over time and integrating work on healthy life expectancy with effect on retirement.
- Planned implementation of improvements in 2008 population estimates and projections to be published in 2009 e.g. making better use of administrative data in the distribution of international migration.
- Making use of emerging data sources to improve migration statistics e.g. e-Borders.
- Making use of improved survey sources to improve migration statistics e.g. International Passenger Survey redesign and enhancements to the continuous household surveys that will become the Integrated Household Survey.
- Ethnic population projections (not being pursued at this point - may be developed outside of NSCD, for example under UPTAP).
- Working in partnerships (ESRC, LGA).

## Theme Group Members

This Work Programme was developed by the following people:

Guy Goodwin (Chair)	ONSCD
Chris Shaw	ONSCD
Patrick Collier	Home Office
Bob Garland	Department for Communities and Local Government
Robert Beatty	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
Roma Chappell	ONSCD
Luned Jones	Welsh Assembly Government
Kirsty MacLachlan	General Register Office for Scotland
Ian Cope	Office for National Statistics
Peter Goldblatt	ONSCD
Philippa Brimicombe (Sec)	Office for National Statistics

## Useful Websites

Further information on the statistics covered by this theme can be found at:

National Statistics	<a href="http://www.statistics.gov.uk">www.statistics.gov.uk</a>
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency	<a href="http://www.nisra.gov.uk">www.nisra.gov.uk</a>
General Register Office for Scotland	<a href="http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk">www.gro-scotland.gov.uk</a>
Home Office	<a href="http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk">www.homeoffice.gov.uk</a>
Welsh Assembly Government	<a href="http://www.wales.gov.uk/statistics">www.wales.gov.uk/statistics</a>
Scottish Executive	<a href="http://www.scotland.gov.uk">www.scotland.gov.uk</a>
Department for Communities and Local Government	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk">www.communities.gov.uk</a>