

LA Workshop Feedback

This report provides an overview of a Local Authority (LA) workshop held in London on 29 November 2005. The aim was to give LAs an opportunity to feed their ideas for improving population statistics into the Improving Migration and Population Statistics (IMPS) project. In particular, the aim was to involve a broader range of LAs than can be included in the, necessarily, small number of LA case studies. The findings from the day are being analysed and will feed into the IMPS Research Plan which collates all research questions relating to the IMPS project.

The workshop started with a number of short presentations from ONS:

- an overview of the IMPS project;
- the results of research into the relationship between new housing and population change;
- an overview of work to compare the mid year estimates with trends in key administrative data (council tax data, electoral roll and patient register data);
- an update on research into possible improvements in the estimation of migrants moving overseas. This is one of a number of areas of work from the National Statistics Quality Review (NSQR) of International Migration Statistics which is being taken forward as part of the IMPS project.

Piers Elias, Tees Valley Strategic Unit (TVSU), then gave a presentation from the LA perspective. He outlined work that has been carried out by the TVSU and set out some challenges for ONS to consider as part of IMPS. These included:

- Identifying improvements to the estimation of international migration
- Improving links and identifying opportunities for data sharing with other government departments e.g. Department of Health, HM Revenue and Customs, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department for Work and Pensions
- Ensuring that address lists are up to date, which will be of particular importance for the 2011 Census
- Making better use of other data sources including those held by private companies e.g. utility bills, mobile phone lists,

For copies of the presentations, please email the IMPS team on **imps@ons.gov.uk**

Delegates then worked in syndicate groups to identify their top three key issues with the MYEs. The following four questions were suggested to assist the groups:

1. How do you use the MYEs?
2. What other information and data sources do you use?
3. What particular issues affect population estimates in your area?
4. What methods and data sources do you use to overcome those issues?

The particular recurring themes, seen as a priority by many of the delegates, were

- the methods and sources for measuring migrants (internal and international) including asylum seekers

- the methods used to allocate migrants and special population groups (e.g. armed forces personnel and their dependents) at a local level

These themes were taken forward to the afternoon session when delegates were asked more specifically to consider:

- What further research could ONS carry out to better understand the relationship between housing stock, dwellings and population?
- How could we better measure Armed forces personnel, civilian staff and their dependents?
- How could we better understand patient registers and what could we do to improve them and their use?
- How could we improve the estimation of total in and out migration?
- How could we improve measures of internal migration especially for special population groups, e.g. transient population, young adults and students?
- How could we improve the distribution of international migrants including asylum seekers?
- How could ONS make better use of local knowledge and expertise to improve the MYEs e.g. second homes, change between censuses?

These sessions identified some useful sources and ideas which need to be researched further, either for possible use in the production of the population estimates or as validation or quality assurance of the current sources. Examples include data on immigrants (The Gangmasters Licencing Authority and the Refugee Council) and housing (Housing Needs Survey data at LA level). Several of the groups raised concerns and expressed a lack of understanding about how the current sources are used, particularly the International Passenger Survey used to estimate international migrants.

The information collected during both sessions is being analysed further and fed into the IMPS research plan which is used to collate, prioritise and allocate work across the IMPS project.

Feedback from the delegates (based on evaluation questionnaires completed by 42 of the 55 delegates) indicated that they had found the day useful and had appreciated the opportunity to feed their concerns and ideas back to ONS first-hand. ONS are now considering the timing of a further workshop. This is likely to be early Autumn 2006 when the first round of LA studies has been completed.

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