

# Migration Statistics Improvement Work Programme Update

## August 2009

### 1. Introduction

This is the August 2009 quarterly update on the progress of the Migration Statistics Improvement Work Programme.

The Migration Statistics Improvement Work Programme was initiated in April 2008, with the purpose to improve population and migration statistics in line with recommendations made in the 2006 Interdepartmental Task Force on Migration Statistics<sup>1</sup> and subsequent Parliamentary reviews. The programme is led by the National Statistician and the Office for National Statistics, working in partnership with Communities and Local Government, Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Department for Children Schools and Families, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Her Majesty's Treasury, devolved administrations and Bank of England.

The aim of the programme is for improved population and migration statistics that are relevant for users needs, are as accurate as possible and are recognised as being the definitive authoritative source of migration statistics. As improvements are made then the intercensal population estimates can be expected to be more easily reconciled with the 2011 Census counts when they are released.

A monitoring report was published by the UK Statistics Authority on 9 July<sup>2</sup> which includes feedback on the recommendations made in the interim report published on 7 April. The ONS welcomes this independent review into the Migration Statistics Improvement Programme.

### 2. User engagement

The quality assurance strategy for the programme was published as part of the previous update report.<sup>3</sup> In line with this, ONS have recently led the following activities:

- In June a series of open seminar roadshows were presented at Cardiff, Leeds, Birmingham and London. The seminars presented the package of improvements being made in the short term and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=14731>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/reports---correspondence/reports/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/Quality\\_Assurance\\_Strategy.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/Quality_Assurance_Strategy.pdf)

were well received, with useful feedback obtained. The presentations made at the roadshows are available<sup>4</sup>.

- Several more topic reference panels have been held to help quality assure the methods being developed for distributing international migration estimates, for estimating short term migration and for making adjustments using student data.

Starting in September we will be undertaking further quality assurance activities:

- **Expert Peer Review.** We will be inviting selected experts, including academics to participate in an academic peer review of the improvements we are proposing.
- **Local Insight Reference Panels.** A chance for local representatives to comment on the combined emerging results from the improvements, to sense check these results and see if they indicate any areas where further work may be required. If you would like to volunteer for these panels then please contact [imps@ons.gov.uk](mailto:imps@ons.gov.uk)
- **Topic Reference Panels.** We will continue to run topic reference panels as work develops.
- **Users' views.** From 30 November to 18 January ONS will be seeking views from users of population and migration statistics on the methods and impact of the improvement package. This will help to finalise the methods prior to release of revised estimates in May 2010.
- **Further seminars.** In early December we will be running a series of public seminars at a range of locations across England and Wales. These seminars will focus on the impacts of the proposed improvements.

It is particularly important to ensure wide user engagement prior to the publication of revised local authority mid-2008 population estimates in May 2010. Invitations to the December seminars will be issued in November. If any user is not aware of current plans for this please contact [imps@ons.gov.uk](mailto:imps@ons.gov.uk)

### 3. Progress

Much progress has been made in the areas of using administrative data, development of new products and methodological improvements. Annex A outlines significant activity in these areas.

### 4. Outlook (medium term delivery)

Much of the work reported in the annex concerns the short term delivery in time for revised estimates to be published in May 2010 but activity is also underway for the medium and longer term improvements. This final section outlines some of these activities.

Improvements to administrative data sources, data sharing gateways and linking methods are being developed to ensure timely sources are fully exploited for statistical improvement work.

Over the intercensal period monitoring and analysis has taken place of the sex ratio pattern in the population, both nationally and sub-nationally. An article focusing on national sex ratios will be published in the September edition of Population Trends. The work is moving towards a better understanding of sex ratio patterns for use in quality assuring the 2011 census results. However, once the short-term improvements have been implemented consideration will be given to re-examining the sub-national sex ratios and considering whether any adjustments are necessary to national and sub-national population estimates.

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[http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/June\\_Seminars\\_FIN\\_AL.ppt](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about/data/methodology/specific/population/future/imps/updates/downloads/June_Seminars_FIN_AL.ppt)

The methods for distributing international immigration to Wales and the regions of England are currently being re-assessed, including assessing why differences occur between official estimates and alternative approaches based on administrative data, and an independent review of the alternative methods.

ONS is working in partnership with Home Office and the UK Border Agency to ensure the e-Borders programme will supply the statistical benefits of counting people into and out of the country.

Throughout the lifetime of the improvement work programme ONS will continue to fully engage with users, providing regular updates and opportunities to learn more about the work.

## **Annex A Progress in areas of activity**

### **A. Key Sources Update**

#### *Use of administrative data*

Much work has been done linking record level **School Census** data from DSCF to births data. This work is designed to assess the feasibility of record linkage generally, and to explore the feasibility of identifying the number of children covered in the School census who were not born in the UK (in-migrants) and conversely the number of those born in the UK but not found in the School Census (out-migrants). Initial work has proved encouraging and the ONS will publish findings from the study when the analysis has been completed.

Record level data have also been aggregated to a non-standard specification of the age of child at 30 June to provide a comparison for quality assurance of the mid-year population estimates, and will also be used to quality assure the revised estimates which are due to be published in May 2010.

A feasibility study involving the linkage of successive extracts of data from the **Migrant Workers Scan** (MWS) has also been completed. The successful linkage has established the usefulness of MWS data for migration statistics improvement purposes in understanding:

- how long after arrival migrants tend to register for a National Insurance Number and
- consequent migrant flows within the UK.

The main findings from the feasibility study will be published later in the year together with further research plans.

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data on **students** are currently being used to improve internal migration estimation within England and Wales using the term-time and domicile address of the higher education students. The data are also being used to investigate characteristics and demographics of overseas students, for example a sex ratio analysis and their likelihood of staying in the UK immediately after completion of their studies.

#### *Entry and Exit data developments*

Agreement has been reached between the Home Office and ONS on sharing of data from the **e-Borders** pilot system (Project Semaphore) for research purposes. This system has been collecting passenger data on certain designated routes. This is a major step in the aim of using future e-Borders data to improve migration statistics.

Following the successful implementation of radical changes to the design of the **International Passenger Survey** (IPS) the next phase is reviewing the design to ensure it remains optimal in terms of the balance of sampling between ports.

### **B. Methodological Improvements**

#### *Distribution of long-term international migration to local area level*

Statistical models using timely aggregate administrative sources have been developed and are being introduced to replace the current use of the 2001 Census to **distribute international migration** to local

authority level. Similar models already used for emigration distribution are also being refined as part of this work.

Model based estimates for both immigration and emigration are continuing to be refined taking account of comments received from internal quality assurance procedures, Southampton University, and from users at the June roadshows. This work includes testing a range of variations on the models and exploring the use of other covariates.

#### *Adjusting estimates of student migration within England & Wales*

A method has been developed based on administrative data on student's term-time address from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The method also includes an adjustment for moves made at the end of study. Both adjustments supplement existing estimates of moves around the country based on patient registers.

Recent refinements to the proposed approach include the development of a counter-adjustment to account for when students (or former students) do eventually re-register with a GP. Work is also being carried out in response to comments received at the June roadshows.

### **C. New Products**

#### *Estimates of Short Term Migration*

A research report on short-term migration to local area level will be published on October 8th. As previously reported, ONS is initially defining short-term migration as moves made for longer than a month but less than a year. The published report will contain figures on these moves at the local area level for the first time. Release of the report has been moved from the end of August to allow further time for quality assurance.

User input has been particularly valuable to the development of this new product most recently at the local authority reference group. Comments were also received from users at the June seminar roadshows.

#### *Quality Measures*

Work has progressed on developing quality measures for population estimates. A separate report providing information on the agreed methodology, progress and future direction of this work was published on 27 August and a more detailed update will be published in November.

#### *Local Migration Indicators*

A set of local migration indicators were first released in May 2009 and have been updated for August following availability of additional data sources and user feedback. As well as functionality enhancements new indicators have been added consisting of:

- Internal migration estimates expressed as turnover rate per thousand of the LA population
- Flag4 data (rate per thousand of the LA population who have registered with a GP and their previous address is outside England and Wales)
- Proportion of LA population who have registered under the Worker Registration Scheme (applies to A8 countries only)

User feedback has been very positive and many of the additions or enhancements listed above have been made as a result of this feedback. The local migration indicators will develop over time and we are still keen to receive feedback, via email to [local.migration.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:local.migration.indicators@ons.gov.uk)

## **D. Reporting**

The latest edition of the Migration Statistics Quarterly Report (MSQR) is available at <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15230>. This is a joint report by ONS, the Home Office and DWP and summarises the main messages from all the regular quarterly migration datasets released on 27 August 2009. This includes:

- Provisional International Passenger Survey (IPS) estimates of long-term international migration, year ending December 2008 [ONS]
- Population by country of birth and nationality from the Annual Population Survey, January to December 2008 [ONS/GROS]
- Internal migration by country/region for the UK: year to December 2008 [ONS]
- Control of Immigration: Quarterly Statistical Summary, UK, 2009 Q2 [Home Office]
- National Insurance number (NINo) allocations to adult overseas nationals to March 2009 [DWP]

The MSQR also links to the other products in the co-ordinated population and migration data release of 27 August:

- Mid-2008 population estimates (national and local authority levels) [ONS]
- Local area migration indicators (quarterly update) [ONS]
- Improving Migration and Population Statistics (IMPS) update report [ONS]
- UK internal migration (local authorities), mid-2007 to mid-2008 by 5 year age group and gender [ONS]
- Parents' country of birth: England and Wales, 2008 [ONS]
- Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2008 [Home Office]
- UK visa applications, 2008-09 [Home Office]
- Migration estimates for Northern Ireland (report) [NISRA]

The next co-ordinated reporting date will be 26 November 2009. This will include 'Migration Statistics 2008', the first edition of a new annual report on migration statistics. The report will analyse migration data for the calendar year 2008, including the final long-term international migration data (formerly referred to as Total International Migration), which will also be published on 26 November.