

Minutes of the 1st Small Area Population Estimates Working Group Meeting

Thursday 18th April 2002, 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.

Present

Garnett Compton	GROS (Chair)
Claire Boag	GROS (Project Manager)
Caroline Capocci	GROS (Secretary)
Muriel Douglas	GROS
Jonathan Ashbridge	GROS
Celia Macintyre	Scottish Executive
Chris Povey	Information and Statistics Division
Jan Freeke	Glasgow City Council
Richard Belding	Aberdeenshire Council
Derek Neill	North Lanarkshire Council
Jenny Boag	Falkirk Council

Apologies

Apologies were received from Peter Knight, Scottish Executive.

Introduction

1. Mr Compton welcomed working group members to the meeting, thanked them for attending, and apologised for the delay in getting the first meeting organised. He outlined the purpose of the working group, which was to discuss small area population estimates methodology.

SAPE 02 (02) – Terms of reference

2. C Boag introduced the paper on terms of reference and asked for any comments or changes. She explained the objectives of the working group, stating that this meeting would concentrate on evaluating and agreeing a migration methodology for use in the mid-year estimates methodology.
3. Mrs Douglas queried the use of addresses and postcodes when evaluating CHI data. It was explained that address information was no longer available under conditions of use. Mrs Douglas was invited to take up the issues of postcode evaluation for the health service outside the meeting.
4. Mr Freeke noted that his requirement was for small area population estimates at OA level. If these were available he suggested that Glasgow City might no longer need to conduct their VPS.
5. It was mentioned that Forth Valley are making ward level population estimates using their own CHI data.

Action 1 Claire Boag – investigate further

6. Working group membership was discussed, and it was suggested that academic and health involvement might be useful.

Action 2 Claire Boag – approach potential members

SAPE 02 (03) – Migration background

7. C Boag introduced the migration background paper, which summarises the use of migration data in the mid-year estimates and the migration work undertaken for the first CHI working group. It was produced largely for information.
8. Ms Macintyre expressed an interest in obtaining more background information – about the SAPE project, the previous work undertaken on the use of the CHI, and the ONS small area estimates project. Others members agreed that they would find this useful.

Action 3 Caroline Capocci

SAPE 02 (04) – Imputing missing postcodes in CHI migration data

9. Further to her earlier comment on postcode quality, Mrs Douglas queried why we use 'Method 1', and in particular, questioned whether this method would be necessary if the GROS extract had the CHI current address field. It was noted that the initial GROS CHI extracts did in fact have this current address field, so that records from the extract that had missing or invalid postcodes could be allocated postcodes via their address information, using AFD postcode plus software. GROS found that approximately 40% of such records could be allocated valid postcodes via their address information in this way. However it was not possible to allocate valid postcodes to the remaining 60% of these records using their address, and hence method 1 was used to impute valid postcodes to these remaining records. Now that the current address field is not present on the extract we can no longer allocate postcodes via address information and so at present we impute valid postcodes to all records that initially had missing or invalid postcodes via method 1.
10. In summary it was noted that having the current address field would improve the quality of the postcode data, but that method 1, or some similar such method, would still be required even if the address field were made available.
11. J Boag suggested that the quality of the postcode data would deteriorate over time without the 'current address' information.
12. Mr Neill commented on the apparent reduction in postcode quality between 1999 and 2000 implied by Table 1 of the paper 'Imputing missing postcodes in CHI migration data'. In response, it was mentioned that this was due to the fact that the 1999 extract had the 'current address' field and that it could be allocated postcodes via AFD postcode plus, whereas the 2000 extract did not have the current address field.
13. The group generally agreed that the recommended method (method 2 – using both origin and destination information) would be the most appropriate method depending on the outcome of the validation work suggested in the paper. However, It was felt that if method 2 is found to be more accurate than method 1, and is implemented in the production of migration data, then it is essential that the postcodes imputed on the migration dataset be fed back into the small area estimates dataset, to ensure that the postcodes of the patients in the two datasets are consistent.

Action 4 Claire Boag – validate method 2

SAPE 02 (05) – Zero year old migrants

14. C Boag introduced the paper on zero year old migrants, which was based on papers CHI 00 (13) and CHI 00 (14), which were produced following a recommendation from the CHI working group's final report.
15. Mrs Douglas informed the group about a new birth register that is currently on pilot in the Borders. It is proposed to cover 95% of children being born. The midwife registers the child on CHI, 2 papers are sent out: 1 to the registration office, 1 to the GP (both papers have CHI number on them). This is to help omit inaccuracies within the CHI system, and may resolve problems with zero year old migrants.

16. The group agreed that, given the small numbers involved, the recommendation to estimate zero year old migrants by matching Vital Events records to CHI records should be taken forward, but that the method should first be validated using more recent data.

Action 5 Claire Boag – validate method

SAPE 02 (06) – Migrant deaths

17. This paper proposed a methodology for estimating the number of migrants who die before the time the second CHI extract is taken. The group agreed the method.
18. There was a discussion on the necessity for the assumed 3 month re-registration delay. Mr Povey mentioned that the turnaround for the CHI was getting faster. Mr Compton acknowledged the CHI turnaround but reminded everyone that this was processing turnaround only, and not people going to register with a GP so we still assume a 3-month lag.

SAPE 02 (07) – Information on transfers to and from the CHI

19. C Boag introduced the paper, which provided results of an initial investigation into the use of two of the fields on the CHI 'date of transfer out & codes' and 'date of transfer in & codes', to estimate migration flows between Scotland and a) England & Wales, b) Northern Ireland, c) overseas and d) the Armed Forces.
20. Mr Belding queried an anomaly in Grampian, and whether it is due to private patients (i.e. oil industry), students, or timing of extracts. The group discussed this but no firm conclusions were reached. It was agreed that further investigation would be appropriate.
21. Mrs Douglas would like to see more examples and information as she expected CHI flows to be higher than NHSCR flows. Mr Neill suggested that perhaps the flows on the NHSCR are higher due to students being missed in the CHI extracts, in particular overseas students. C Boag notified the group of some observed inconsistencies in the transfer indicator coding on the CHI extracts, and noted that more detailed knowledge of the meaning and allocation of certain codes will need to be built up to enable further investigation.
22. It was agreed that further investigation is required on asylum seekers/visitor switchers and their registration on the CHI. Currently NHSCR can't tell if people coming from overseas are asylum seekers, CHI may be able to.
23. Mr Freeke questioned year to year changes in electoral roll inflation as a validation of migration estimates and this is something that should be considered. He also queried the possibility of migration flows being published at a lower level. Mr Compton was hesitant, as there were inconsistencies between the different sources. However, he felt that if the quality were acceptable then this would be a useful dataset to make public. This would need to be considered after a new methodology was implemented.
24. Mr. Compton stated that he felt the work presented in the paper was very encouraging, and that it had provided an interesting insight into this potentially useful new data source on migration into and out of Scotland. Mr Freeke agreed. However, further work will need to be undertaken to address the issues and concerns raised in both the paper and at the meeting.

Action 6 Claire Boag

Any other business

25. The next SAPE meeting is expected to be held in late June. Mr Compton asked the group if it was felt that it would be more convenient for everyone if we held the meeting in a more central location, such as the COSLA building. It was agreed that a more central location would be sought.

Action 7 Caroline Capocci