

2011 CENSUS POSTCODE BASED OUTPUTS

September 2013

Guidance Note

1. Introduction

NISRA has today (26 September 2013) released estimates for the number of households and people (including those living in communal establishments), broken down by gender, for unit postcodes as at Census Day – 27 March 2011.

The information relates to the usually resident population of Northern Ireland, with students being recorded at their term-time address. Relevant definitions, such as those for usual residents, households and communal establishments, can be accessed in the '2011 Census Definitions and Output Classifications' document¹. As with all other releases from the 2011 Census, the estimates have been adjusted to take account of under-enumeration. Further details on the methodology that was used to adjust the results for under-enumeration can be found in the 'Methodology Overview' paper² on the NISRA website.

2. Allocating Census Records to Geographic Areas

Each record on the Census database contains two separate geographic identifiers, namely, a postcode and a grid-reference. All Census outputs are allocated to geographic areas such as Local Government Districts, Wards, Super Output Areas, Small Areas and so forth through the grid-reference of the relevant Census record.

¹ '2011 Census Definitions and Output Classifications' is available from:
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2011-census-definitions-and-output-classifications>

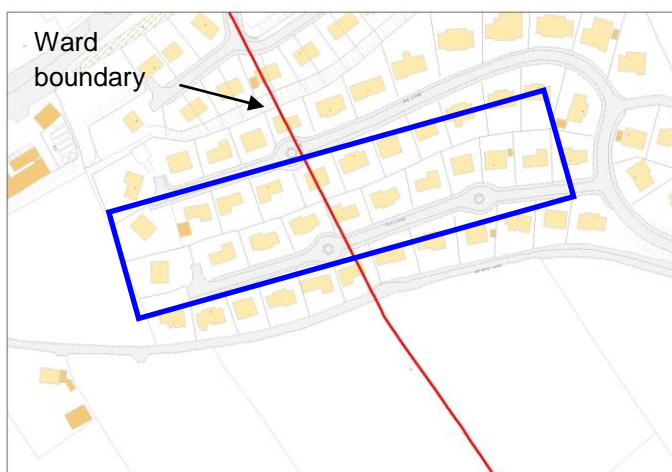
² More information on under-enumeration is available from:
<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2011-census-methodology-overview>

3. Allocating Postcodes to Geographic Areas – Central Postcode Directory (CPD)

Postcodes are dynamic identifiers, managed by Royal Mail, that change on a regular basis as new buildings are introduced and other buildings are demolished or converted. Importantly, postcodes are not constrained to other administrative or statistical boundaries.

Figure 1 below illustrates an example where properties sharing the same postcode (a ‘typical’ domestic postcode covers about 15 addresses) span an administrative boundary.

Figure 1: Illustration of a postcode spanning a Ward boundary



The Central Postcode Directory (CPD) provides a look-up that maps postcodes to a range of geographic units on a one-to-one basis – that is; each postcode is allocated to a single Small Area, to a single Super Output Area and so forth. In most cases, the postcode is wholly located within the geographic unit but in many cases, as in Figure 1, the postcode spans more than one geographic unit. In such cases, the allocation of the postcode is based on the grid reference of the nearest property to the postcode centroid of all the relevant addresses. In some instances this will have included both

domestic and commercial addresses. Further detail on this allocation is available on the NISRA website.³

A consequence, of this one-to-one allocation of postcodes to (for example) single Small Areas, is that the aggregation of postcodes within a Small Area (as defined in the CPD) will not always yield exactly the same statistical output as that published for the Small Area. The published figure for the Small Area should be used, since it is based on the grid-references of individual properties, while the aggregation of postcodes is an approximation.

4. Confidentiality

The Registrar General has taken steps to ensure that the confidentiality of respondents is fully protected. Accordingly, all published results from the Census (including those relating to Postcodes) have been subject to statistical processes to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. A description of the steps taken to ensure confidentiality is available in the 'Methodology Overview' paper.⁴

5. Further Information

For further information please contact:

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³ More information on the 'Central Postcode Directory' is available from: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/geography/central-postcode-directory>

⁴ More information on confidentiality can be found in: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/2011-census-methodology-overview>