

Summary of Population Statistics User Engagement Event



13th February 2020
Conference Room, Colby House

Attendees:

Attendees at the event comprised representatives from Northern Ireland Government Departments, local government and other public bodies. The attendees included those with an interest in Northern Ireland population, migration, education, economy and labour market.

Event Overview:

NISRA welcomed the attendees and outlined the agenda for the afternoon, the range of population statistics publications were highlighted.

Slide 4 - Mid-Year Population Estimates (MYE)

Current Release: [2018 mid-year population estimates for Northern Ireland](#)

NISRA outlined background information and some of the key findings from the MYE publication:

- The population of Northern Ireland at 30 June 2018 was estimated to be 1,881,600.
- The ten different geographies covered by the MYE publication.
- The proportions of the population in key age groups and how they have changed over the last 25 years.

New Wards (2014) were discussed along with the question of why population estimates are not produced for them. New wards do not align to Super Output Areas (SOAs) or Small Areas (SAs), which are base geographies that can be aggregated into higher geographies. Creation of a SA into New Wards (2014) lookup was tried but results were not robust enough to allow publication.

As part of Census 2021 preparation output geography is being discussed, which may affect the output geographies used for population statistics. With Census 2021 the mid-year estimates and their time series will be reviewed, and any revisions published. It is currently planned to examine the series from 1971 to 2021 (50 years). **The range of Geographies produced will be included as part of this review, with users consulted on which they use/no longer use, and any additional geographies they would be interested in.**

Slide 10 - Long term International Migration (LTIM)

Current Release: [Long-Term International Migration Statistics for Northern Ireland \(2018\)](#)

The LTIM publication takes a closer look at international migration estimates from the MYEs and brings together further information from administrative data sources to assist with the measurement and quality assurance. NISRA outlined the makeup of the +4,100 net migration from the mid-year population estimates components of change, and showed international migration flows over time with net international migration in 2018 at its highest level since mid-2008.

NISRA is interested in whether the LTIM bulletin is used (Web analytics shows low use of the bulletin). NISRA is going to consult users on their use of the LTIM bulletin and their opinion on changing LTIM to a statistical table's only release.

NISRA highlighted a note on the International Migration section of the NISRA website related to the reclassification of ONS international migration statistics and makes users aware that the NI migration estimates are not affected. ONS uses a range of sources to produce their long term international migration estimates, with the main one being the The International Passenger Survey. ONS had previously stated that the IPS has been stretched beyond its original purpose and over the last few years has been comparing its results to different data sources. They have started to make adjustments to their estimates based on their research, but plan to continue development and look at additional data sources. **Migration estimates for Northern Ireland are produced using administrative data and do not rely on the International Passenger Survey as part of the production process.**

Slide 17 - Estimates of the Population Aged 85 and Over (85+)

Current Release: [Estimates of the Population Aged 85 and Over, Northern Ireland, 2018 \(and 2001 to 2017 revised\)](#)

NISRA outlined background information and some key findings from the 85+ publication:

- The population aged 85 and over in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2018 is estimated to be 37,700 (2% of the total NI population).
- In mid-2018 females make up most of the 85 and over population (65.6%)
- Northern Ireland at 30.4% had the highest growth in the 85 and over population over the last 10 years out of the UK countries (Scotland 25% / England 22.8% / 16.7% Wales).

Slide 20 - Population Estimates for Small Areas

Current Release: [2018 Mid Year Population Estimates for Small Areas](#)

A statistical table only release, which includes tables for Small Area (SA), Neighbourhood Renewal Area (NRA) and District Electoral Area (DEA). This is the first time DEA estimates were included as part of the Small Area release. Population Estimates for District Electoral Areas have been developed primarily by aggregating population estimates for Small Areas, then in a second step, any Small Area

that is split by a DEA boundary has had its estimated population attributed to the appropriate DEA on the basis of the proportion of its population within that DEA in the 2011 Census.

The Northern Ireland Neighbourhood Information Service (NINIS) website has interactive maps available for SA and DEA population estimates (also available for MYE). <https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/InteractiveMaps/Population/Population%20Change/Population%20Totals/atlas.html>

Questions: Users were asked if they had any questions on the mid-year population estimates publications.

Q1: Do you have a product that compares the mid-year population estimates against the population projections?
A1: We do not publish an analysis which compares the population estimates to the population projections, however, we do use the population projections for quality assurance in the internal production of mid-year estimates. We will consider adding a section to our mid-year estimates bulletin which compares the estimates and projections if we find that significant differences between the two have arisen.
Q2: Do NISRAs mid-year estimates come out at the same time as ONS?
A2: Yes, the mid-year population estimates are released in June each year on the exact same day as ONS.
Q3: Are there confidence intervals around the mid-year population estimates, similar to the estimates released by ONS?
A3: No, we do not produce confidence intervals around the mid-year population estimates. Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates are produced solely from administrative data and therefore confidence intervals are not calculated. ONS use the International Passenger Survey to estimate the international migration element of their mid-year population estimates and therefore there is the requirement to produce confidence intervals around these survey estimates.
Q4: Will District Electoral Areas estimates be rebased after Census 2021?
A4: Yes, after Census 2021 we will rebase all population estimates between 2011 and 2021.
Q5: Why is a single year of age breakdown not available for Super Output Areas?
A5: We do not publish a single year of age breakdown for super output Areas for two reasons. Firstly, these estimates have not been quality assured at this level of detail. Secondly, the small numbers involved are not considered sufficiently large enough for a robust application of our ratio change methodology. Please consult our mid-year estimates methodology paper for further details.

Q6: Did Census 2011 produce estimates at New Ward (2014) level? Can you produce population estimates for new Wards based on the census estimates?

A6: New Ward (2014) was not a standard geography for Census 2011. Census 2011 published two commissioned tables for New Wards (2014) in July 2017:

- **CT0367NI:** Usually resident population by four broad age bands by sex
- **CT0368NI:** All occupied households and average household size).

We are not able to produce population estimates for new Wards as the base geographies (Small Areas and Super Output Areas) used to calculate population estimates do not align with the new Ward geographies. Therefore, we cannot accurately aggregate these base geographies into new Wards to estimate the population. Slide 8 from the user event shows the error which arises when we try to calculate new Ward estimates.

Slide 24 - Population Projections for Northern Ireland (NPP)

Current Publication: [2018-based Population Projections for Northern Ireland – October 2019](#)

NISRA outlined background information and some of the key findings from the NPP publication:

- Over the next 25 years the population is projected to reach 1.99 million
- The aging of the Northern Ireland population is projected to continue over the next 25 years.

Slide 26 - Population Projections for Areas Within Northern Ireland (SNPP)

Current Publication: [2016-based Population Projections for Areas Within Northern Ireland](#)

NISRA produce the SNPPs, with the next release scheduled for Apr 2020. SNPPs follow the same methodology as the NPPs whereby assumptions are made around future fertility, mortality and migration, but a further step is taken of creating scaling factors for each LGD. These rates are brought to the Demographic Statistics Advisory Group for comment from academics and demographic experts in NI. The fertility scaling factors used in the 2016-based SNPPs were used to demonstrate how the assumptions for the SNPP are produced.

Slide 29 - Population Projections Post Census 2021

NISRA are planning for the 2021 Census – this will have an impact on all population statistics, including the dates of the next national and subnational Northern Ireland population projections. NISRA will rebase all Northern Ireland population estimates using the next Census. The usual two year projection timeframe would mean the production of 2020-based projections before the rebasing was complete, so it is currently proposed that 2020-based national and subnational population projections will not be produced.

In line with ONS it is proposed that the next round of projections will be 2021-based and likely be published by the end of 2022. This would be in line with the position taken after the last two Censuses, and means future Northern Ireland subnational population projections (in line with 2021 Census) would not be published until 2023/24. This is not yet a definitive policy and

timings may change. Users of national and subnational population projections are currently being consulted on the proposed approach.

Slide 30 - Northern Ireland Household Projections

Current Publication: [Northern Ireland Household Projections \(2016-based\)](#)

NISRA outlined background information and key findings from the household projections publication:

- Over the period 2016-2041, the overall percentage growth in the number of households (12.2 per cent) is projected to noticeably exceed that of the population (7.6 per cent).
- The difference in growth rates between the population and the number of households can be explained by the changing composition of the population and trends in household formation.
- Over the period 2016 to 2041, the fastest growing household types are those of one/two adults without children. Which is directly linked to the increased population aged 65 and over.

Slide 31 - Population Projections – UKSA Compliance checks

Compliance checks are short, focused reviews, typically providing a high-level investigation of the extent to which statistics meet the standards of the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) – Trustworthiness, Quality and Value. Compliance check for both NPP and SNPP have been undertaken by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) over the course of the last year. (NPPs in Apr 2019 and SNPPs in Jan 2020). UKSA confirm both NPP and SNPP should continue to be designated as National Statistics. NISRA outlined some of the compliance check findings.

Slide 33 - Developments and Future Developments

NISRA outlined some recent improvements in statistical bulletins and statistical tables. Developments such as the release of DEA population estimates and publication of data on OpenDataNI.

Proposals that users are going to be consulted on were then discussed:

Proposal 1 – publish LTIM tables only (no bulletin)

- Council representatives stated they have used the LTIM bulletin in the past, they agreed to look into which parts they had used. NISRA indicated that the LTIM bulletin reiterated some information from the MYE bulletin and a shorter LTIM bulletin was also an option if there were specific parts users would like to keep that were not also available from the MYE bulletin.

Proposal 2 – discontinue unnecessary geographies

- Education authority stated that they did not use the former Education and Library board geography breakdown but would like estimates for the new education boards.
- NISRA explained that it will be a two stage process, users would be consulted on the geographies they use/don't use. The results of this would need to be examined along with any decisions on the geographies that will be used for Census 2021.
- Representatives attending from NINIS stated that they were happy to forward questions on use of population statistics geography to their user mail list, as some NINIS users may use population statistics and not be on the population statistics mail list.

Proposal 3 – no NPP and SNPP until Census results

- Some users said they may be interested in commenting on the next release dates for NPP and SNPP publications. They wanted to review some uses of NPP/SNPP figures and determine when and where updated figures would normally be applied.

Ongoing ONS developments (which NISRA attend workshops and groups on) were also mentioned, including:

- ONS Transformation of the population and migration statistics system ([see link](#)).
- ONS Administrative data-based population estimates (ABPEs) ([see link](#)).
- ONS Migration developments – Utilising data from Home Office and Department for Work and Pensions.

Questions: Users were asked if they had any questions on the Northern Ireland population projections or anything else related to the Northern Ireland mid-year population estimates.

Q7: Do you publish population estimates for the former 26 Local Government Districts?
A7: Yes, we produce population estimates for a range of geographies, including the former 26 Local Government Districts.
Q8: How does new LTIM idea of not producing with analysis fit in with OSR recommendation on making sure statistics are produced with analysis?
A8: The LTIM publication is an amalgamation of different sources which have all been previously published. The key analysis of international migration is present in the MYE publication. Web analytics shows low use of the LTIM bulletin. This may be because some of the LTIM bulletin recaps on information/analysis from the MYE bulletin. NISRA is consulting users to determine if the LTIM bulletin it is needed/used. The associated statistical tables would still be released, and a shorter LTIM bulletin is also an option if there are specific parts users would like to keep that are not available from the MYE bulletin. However, NISRA will check that it complies with the code of practice before making any decisions.
Q9: Can we produce variant population projections for lower levels than Local Government Districts?
A9: We currently do not produce any variant sub-national population projections, however, we are open to considering producing variants if there is an exceptional user need. We would ask users to get in contact with us to discuss this. However, we are not able to produce population projections for any geographical area below the former 26 Local Government Districts. Please visit the sub-national population projections page to find details on the geographies we produce population projections for.
Q10: Are there any data on the NISRA website relating to variant projections?
A10: Yes, as part of the national population projections we release a number of variant projections, all of which can be found on the variant population projections webpage .