

2008-Based Population projections
Consultation meeting
Belfast, 30 June 2009

Present:

Robert Beatty	NISRA-Census (chair)
Tony Dignan	Economic Research & Evaluation
Joe Frey	NI Housing Executive
Jos Ijpelaar	NISRA-DMB
Julie Jefferies	ONS
David Marshall	NISRA-DMB
Pat McKee	University of Ulster
Dave Rogers	Dep. Employment & Learning (NI)
Emma Wright	ONS

General Issues

The NI consultation panel were generally happy with the timetable, the number of releases and the number of variant projections. It urges the historic projections to be moved from GAD to ONS before the 2008-based projections are released to avoid confusion.

Fertility Assumptions

The NI fertility assumption of 1.95 is unchanged from the 2006-based projections. In the past 3 years though, rates have been as high as 2.10 (p) in 2008. This is a combined effect of delayed fertility and migrant mothers. It is thought that the former will not be affected by the recession. The panel agreed with the unchanged assumption, but it will be necessary to reduce from the current high rate to the long-run assumption over a longer period of time.

Mortality Assumptions

There was general agreement on the unchanged methodology underlying the mortality/EoL assumptions, as it was supported by trends over the very long term. It was noted though, that the NI (and UK) EoL will exceed those in other North-Western European countries (Sweden, France, Netherlands).

Migration Assumptions

The NI net international migration flows equals -500 (exponential smoothing), although other estimates range from -1,000 to +500. The panel agreed that this was too much of a drop compared to the +500 in the 2006-based assumptions. Also, it diverts from the increases observed in the other countries. The panel suggested retaining the +500 assumption. There appears to be some concern around the assumption of net zero migration from A8 and A2 countries. It was recommended to look at the impact of previous changes in accession (Maastricht Treaty in 1992) on the numbers of migrants from EU countries who settled.

The internal migration assumption was +500 originating from Scotland (zero from other countries), compared to a zero net migration assumed in the 2006-based projections. The panel suggested that the combined international and internal migration would become too high. The panel recommended reverting net internal migration assumptions to zero in discussions with the Scottish projections team.