

SCOTTISH POPULATION SURVEY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

22nd JUNE 2006 MINUTES

Present

Rob Wishart	– Office of the Permanent Secretary (Chair)
Robert Williams	– Office of the Permanent Secretary
Julie Ramsay	– Health
Ellen Lynch	– Office of the Permanent Secretary
Janette Purbrick	– Office of Permanent Secretary (Minutes)
Leicha Rickards	– Office for National Statistics (via audio-link)
David McPhee	– Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department
Ian Grant	– ISD
Ganka Mueller	– General Register Office for Scotland
John Tibbitt	– Development Department
Sandra Campbell	– Education Department
Donna Easterlow	– Environment and Rural Affairs Department
Dave Cormack	– Communities Scotland
Coryn Barclay	– Fife Council
David Hazle	– Glasgow City Council

Apologies: Julie Wilson (OPS), Colin Fischbacher (ISD), Sharon Davidson (Education), Barry Stalker (Justice), Korin Lebov (Justice), Ian McAllister (OPS)

Welcome and introductions

1. Rob welcomed new members to the group and noted that Julie Ramsay will attend future meetings in place of Karen MacNee and that Dave Cormack has replaced Andy Robinson at Communities Scotland.

Minutes of last meeting and actions

2. Action points were complete except for action 06/01 – Nikki Bennet/Leicha Rickards to send prototype questionnaire to SE.

ONS Integrated Household Survey

3. Leicha Rickard provided a verbal update at the meeting, submitting a written paper (06/17) after the meeting. Members noted the good progress. Discussion will continue with ONS through IHS Steering Group, bilaterals and SPSCC. Rob stressed the importance of continuing to talk to Leicha re harmonisation matters via the IHS steering group.

4. The Scottish Executive is keen to keep in touch in particular their progress in developing specific questions on sexual orientation and Civil Partnerships. Leicha advised that sexual orientation questions will not be included in the 2011 census but are being tested in the Omnibus survey and that currently, same sex couple who live together are recorded if they volunteer this information. Robert Williams asked when the Omnibus results on sexual orientation will be available.

Action 06/08 – Leicha will provide update on sexual orientation results from Omnibus.

Long-term Strategy for Population Surveys

Procurement Strategy verbal updates from survey managers:

SHS

5. John Tibbitt advised that the SHS contract is in its final stage and should be let very soon. He sent out 13 tender requests but received only one tender from a consortium of 3 companies. Upon contacting those companies who did not submit a tender for feedback, he was informed that there were capacity issues with staff and CAPI machines.

6. SHS is working with Procurement Directorate throughout the procurement exercise. It was acknowledged that contractors have recognised the role they can play in the harmonisation of Scottish Executive large scale surveys.

SHCS

7. SHCS issued 14 tender requests and got 7 bids back. The SHCS survey size is not as large as SHS. There has been a delay in procurement but they are due to let the contract in the near future.

SHeS

8. SHES is due to be at procurement stage later in the summer.

SCVS

9. SCVS is due to start procurement later in the year.

10. Rob suggested that survey managers should continue to communicate with each other to aid recognition of potential issues and opportunities.

Paper 06/09 - Core Questions

11. Robert summarised the paper and asked members to note progress and comment on the draft set of SHS socio-economic core questions for inclusion and questions under consideration for inclusion.

12. John Tibbitt is aiming to finalise SHS core by 1st August.

13. Ganka said that for consistent migration monitoring, address 1 year ago would be required.

14. David Hazel gave some interesting insights into the problems facing Glasgow City council with tenure questions being subject to confusion among some respondents. Glasgow also required the "Limiting long term illness" questions to be more detailed. John Tibbitt and David Hazel will be in touch to discuss these issues further.

15. Whilst recognising David's comments, it was noted that there is a balance here between asking detailed questions and developing core questions and detailed questions in a module where other questions can be added.

16. Rob asked Leicha if ONS experience any problems with tenure. Leicha will investigate and advise.

17. All acknowledged that LFS is the main source of economic activity. David McPhee and Robert Williams recognised the need for SHS employment and economic status questions to be consistent with LFS particularly ILO unemployment. John Tibbitt concurred.

18. Julie Ramsay said it would be helpful to see the detailed SHS questionnaire. John Tibbitt will arrange.

19. Ethnicity classifications are under consideration and development and are included in the census tests. OCS is analysing these and will discuss with a wide range of users how best to incorporate changes to ethical questions into large scale surveys and administrative systems.

20. Leicha advised that ONS harmonisation group will commence shortly. OCS will continue to liaise with ONS re harmonisation work.

Action 06/9 – OCS to continue to liaise with ONS re harmonisation

Paper 06/10 - Survey of Surveys

21. Janette Purbrick thanked the large scale survey managers for providing the information about their surveys saying that an excel spreadsheet now held all the information. OCS looking at best way to make information available over the internet. Updating procedures would be established in due course but in the meantime any changes could be emailed to Janette for updating.

22. Rob remarked that completion of the Survey of Surveys was important progress.

23. David McPhee raised the issue of presentation and press release. e.g. 2 different surveys issued a week apart showing different data for similar questions. There is a need for consistency and clarity of message. Coryn Barclay asked about preferred sources. The next stage of the survey of surveys will involve considering preferred sources, consistency and clarity of message and the need to ensure the right advice and guidance is made available to survey users.

Action 06/10 – Consider preferred sources, consistency and clarity of message and gather advice / guidance for survey users. Update Survey of surveys accordingly.

Research into the implications of unclustered and modular design on large scale surveys.

24. Robert Williams told the meeting that the invitation to tender had been issued to 5 contractors for this research project but all had declined to bid – feedback suggested that this was due to capacity issues.

25. Debate centred around whether we needed this research now given the developments in design through the latest procurement. E.g. SHS is likely to move from 40% to 70% unclustered. Modular design is being actively considered too in line with harmonised socio-economic core. SHS is likely to have modules on transport, cultural participation, communities, housing and social justice. This suggests that the urgency to get expert research is declining.

26. Dave Cormack advised that IPSOS/MORI had produced a report into clustered/unclustered design.

27. Rob queried whether there was any opportunity to move the research forward or parts of it?

28. Sandra Campbell raised the possibility of ONS methodology group for this research. Leicha thought it was unlikely due to ONS workload but she would flag it up with them as they may know other researchers who may be interested.

Action 06/11 - Leicha will contact ONS methodology group to find out if any researchers interested.

Paper 06/11 – Survey Respondent Permissions and Guarantees

29. Robert summarised this paper and concluded that the next step is a thorough review of the situation for all large scale surveys to develop a harmonised template. SHCS will send OCS their survey permissions and consents. SHes and SHCS asked OCS to bear in mind their “duty of care” obligations. Members agreed that a harmonised template and guidance would be welcomed by the end of the year.

30. Ganka reminded the meeting that Sue Duncan at GRS is doing work on consents. It would be useful to obtain a progress update and to work with GRS on this. Ganka also raised the issue of changing the permissions to allow work on linkage to proceed – Robert Williams recognised that this was a separate piece of work to producing harmonised guidance and OCS would need to think about how to proceed on this.

Action 06/12 - Conduct a thorough review of large scale surveys consents to develop a harmonised template by the end of the year working closely with GRS.

Scottish Household Survey Review

31. John Tibbitt had covered SHS during earlier items.

Scottish Health Survey Review Update

32. Julie Ramsay summarised the content of this paper noting SHes preference for move to continuous and unclustered which is ultimately a cost decision and reported a favourable response to a harmonised socio-economic core.

Annual Population Survey/LFS Update

33. David McPhee reported on this item. The next quarterly report is due Thursday 29th June and includes, for the first time, data on urban/rural splits and 15% most deprived areas. While the APS boost in England has been discontinued, the boost to the Scottish sample will continue this year and next. Funding is still to be secured for 2008 onwards. David hopeful that Face to Face interviews North of the Caledonian Canal will commence at the beginning of 2007. A possible boost to the LFS ethnic sample is being considered. Work is ongoing into providing labour market analysis at family and household level.

Update on SCVS, FRS, GUS and SSAS.

35. This paper was for information.

GROS: Alternative Sources Update

36. Ganka Mueller provided a short update on this paper noting that the development of research capacity in GROS is pleasing.

Any other business

37.

- Rob thanked Robert Williams for his contributions to the SPSCC and wished him luck in his new post.
- John Tibbitt advised that contractors are offering more facilities on dissemination of information. This will be discussed at future meetings.
- Robert queried when SE should update its strategy statement to incorporate long term strategy and who should update it.
- John Tibbit mentioned the useful SHS user day in March and suggested that a surveys user event would be a good idea to help promote and discuss the broader issues. This concept was suggested by Coryn Barclay too.

Date of next meeting

38. The next meeting is 10am-12pm on Monday 30th October (conference room 11 at Victoria Quay.)