

## Alternative Sources Update

### Inter-Departmental Task Force on International Migration

1. Over the summer GROS was involved in the Inter-Departmental Task Force on International Migration. This was set up by Karen Dunnell, National Statistician, to look at ways for improving estimates of migration and migrant populations in the UK, nationally and at a local level. The task force is due to report to FST and other ministers in October. Among the recommendations the report calls for greater use of existing administrative information that potentially identifies migrants through national insurance, tax, school, health and other registration records, enhancing the coverage of migrants through surveys and Census and the better integration of data from different sources.
2. The main implications for Scotland relate to administrative data on devolved matters such as health and education. It is likely that some initial research to establish their potential in estimating migration flows and stock will be required. We have negotiated with SEED access to a wider range of school census data to allow extending our current analysis into this area. Similar work in the health field is being pursued by our colleagues in Population and Migration Branch.
3. The Task Force identifies the Integrated Household Survey as a key survey-based source for improved statistics on migration and recommends extending both the sample to include communal establishments and the survey content to cover key migration questions as part of its core. Scottish statistics would clearly benefit if there are parallel developments in the design of the large general surveys commissioned by the SE, the SHS in particular. This would allow UK wide sources to be supplemented with Scottish samples to achieve improved precision at lower levels of geography.

### Other developments

4. Our evaluation of Electoral Roll data concluded that the nature of this register at present limits its usefulness as a data source in the production and quality assurance of demographic statistics. Undertaking an individual level collection would require substantial level of resource and given the current limitations in terms of data quality we did not feel this was justified. DCA are currently running a project aiming to establish a Co-ordinated Online Record of Electors (CORE) which will operate at the national level and improve the integrity of the data. This is likely to overcome most of the current limitations of the register and will constitute a better source for research and production of statistics.
5. Work on the Scottish Longitudinal Study has continued. Linkage with 2001 Census records was completed and some quality assurance and clerical review work is currently being carried out. Projected completion date for the database is the end of the year. We are planning to hold another SLS seminar for SE analysts in the Spring. The intention is to present and offer an opportunity to discuss some early results on broad trends as reflected in the study. A data dictionary describing the variables held on the SLS database has now been published on the SLS website (<http://www.lscs.ac.uk/sls/dict.htm>). An

ESRC funded opportunity for secondment of SE analytical staff to St Andrew's University Longitudinal Studies Centre to carry out analysis of the SLS on particular issues of policy interest was advertised across the SE. Details are available at <http://www.uptap.net/>.

6. We have continued collating and analyzing small area administrative data on Child Benefit recipients and Older Persons in receipt of state pension and other benefits. A report on the use of these data in quality assuring Small Area Population Estimates (SAPE) was presented by our colleague Harvey Snowling at the BPS conference in September.

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