

Communities Analytical Services Statistics Plan 2009/10 and beyond

Introduction

Communities Analytical Services (CAS) is one of seven subject based Analytical Services Divisions within the Scottish Government. The division is made up of 14 individual analytical branches covering statistics, research and economic analysis with eight of these branches having a statistical resource.

The division provides analysis on a wide range of policy areas such as housing, regeneration, planning, equalities and poverty and also covers three Directorate Generals – Justice and Communities, Economy and Health. The division is also responsible for two of the Scottish Government's major continuous population surveys, the Scottish Household Survey and the Scottish House Condition Survey.

The statistics produced by Communities Analytical Services are a key part of the analytical base for policy development within the Scottish Government. These statistics are also key to monitoring and evaluating the outcomes delivered by the Scottish Government and Local Authorities with many indicators produced by the division informing the National Performance Framework and Single Outcome Agreements. The division is always keen to improve the statistics which it produces and welcomes views on this from all users. Further information on specific consultation issues are included below.

This statistics plan outlines the key achievements over the last couple of years, the plans for developing statistics for the coming year and beyond and the key uses of the data for developing policy within the Scottish Government. Some of the longer term plans will be dependent on future resources and also on consultation with users of these statistics.

A list of the key statistical outputs produced in 2009/10 is included in Annex A.

Consultation and Development of Statistics

Over the last year there has been a large amount of consultation on the statistics produced by CAS through a variety of means including, one to one discussion with users and data providers, email consultations through SCOTSTAT and one off events for users. Some events of particular note over the last year have been the income and poverty statistics users day which was held last June and the Centre for Housing Market Analysis training days which were held between August and February. These events yielded some helpful feedback which has been used to shape the work throughout the year and also helped shape the plan for future years. There was also continued discussion over the course of the year regarding the development of Scotland's new official ethnicity classification and following its publication, in July, there were further meetings with key stakeholders.

One important development around consultation for the coming year will be the reinvigoration of the Built Environment Statistical Advisory Committee (BESAC). BESAC has not met since mid 2006 and the remit and membership of the group have not been assessed in some time. It is the intention that over the coming year this group will be reinvigorated with a fresh look at the membership of the group and a refocusing of the remit to ensure that the group is helping to develop and improve the statistics which are relevant to the Built Environment policy area.

Also over the course of the coming year there will be further consultation on the development of improved equalities data. A programme of work to devise new questions on disability is being taken forward and there will be considerable consultation associated with this work. CAS are currently considering establishing a steering group to oversee the development of a longer term data and evidence plan for equalities.

Statistics Reform Issues

Over the last year the new statistics code has taken shape and has had an impact on the statistics we produce and how we produce them. As much of the code is, in spirit, very similar to the previous statistics code many of the issues raised were already taken care of. However we will continue to work to ensure that any new or amended elements of the code are reflected in how we deal with statistics and how we work with users and data providers.

One particular issue for the division is how management information is used and published. We are working with the Government Statistical Service's cross office group on management information and with the internal Scottish Government group on management information to ensure that we follow best practice and that our practices are as transparent and sensible as possible.

It is also worth noting that one of the key developments this year was having the Scottish House Condition Survey assessed for National Statistics status and for the Scottish Household survey to have its legacy National Statistics status assessed by the Statistics Authority.

Resources

Within the division there are the following statistical staff:

- 2 Senior Statisticians (C2 level) – 1.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)
- 4 Statisticians (C1 level) – 2.6 FTE
- 5 B3 Assistant Statisticians – 5 FTE
- 3 B2 Assistant Statisticians – 3 FTE
- 3 B1 Assistant Statisticians – 3 FTE
- 1 B2, 1 B1 and 2 A3 Admin team members – 4FTE

Other non statistical colleagues also spend an un-quantified amount of time working on statistical issues.

Key Achievements Over the Last Year

Some of the key achievements in the statistics produced by Communities Analytical Services over the last year have been:

Housing and planning statistics

- Introducing the electronic Housing Statistics Annual Return, replacing 8 paper returns.
- Developing a new electronic version of the Housing Revenue Account return and updating the guidance for completion of this.
- Obtaining access to the Rent Registration Service Market Evidence database which will lead to better statistics on rents for policy analysis.
- Obtaining an extract of the Landlord Registration dataset which helps to provide insight into the workings of the private rented sector.
- Input into key policy documents such as the Private Rented Sector Review and the Housing Bill Consultation document.
- Bringing forward the publication of social new build statistics and Affordable Housing Investment Programme statistics to reduce the lag to under two months.
- Establishing a Housing Supply Statistics Working Group (HSSWG) to help with the development of data on housing and planning.
- Updating house price data on Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS).
- Working with a new contractor on Scottish Continuous Recording System (SCORE) to improve the outputs and the response rates.
- Setting geographies and thresholds for the national Expansion of Low Cost Home Ownership schemes.

Income, poverty and equality statistics

- Negotiated early access to the Family Resources Survey from the Department of Work and Pensions to allow for a more complete Poverty and Income Inequality publication (which was published in May 2009).
- Article on 'Low Pay and In Work Poverty in Scotland' published in Scottish Economic Statistics.
- Publication of Scotland's new Official Ethnicity Classification following four years of consultation and testing.
- Publication of guidance notes for collecting statistical information on age, gender and religion.

Scottish House Condition Survey and Scottish Household Survey

- Completed the boost to the Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS) for Scottish Borders Council
- Completed the review of the 49 Scottish Housing Quality Standard Modules and updated the Annual Report with this information.
- Made two datasets from the SHCS covering the physical and derived variables available for general use.
- Initiated a review of the SHCS physical form to meet the needs of Historic Scotland.
- Published SHS Annual Report 2007 with enhanced access to supporting analysis through Web Tables.

- Set up SHS Operations Management Group.
- Completed SHS Questionnaire Review 2009 process producing a new questionnaire for 2009 fieldwork, meeting relevant policy needs.
- Delivered training to around 70 analysts across the public sector in Scotland in how to analyse the SHS Lite Datasets using SPSS.
- Revamped the SHS website to make the information more accessible.
- Set in place guidelines and associated pro-formas for researchers to submit applications for SHS follow-up surveys and special dataset requests.
- Produced an ad-hoc request tracker system for the SHS to allow for greater clarity in documenting all requests, and setting out standardised response templates.

The achievements listed above are by no means exhaustive and further information on other work can be obtained from the relevant websites or by contacting the division directly using the contact details at the end of this plan.

Planned Developments for 2009/10

The key planned developments for statistics in Communities Analytical Services for 2009/10 are outlined below. It should be noted that these planned developments may be subject to change depending on any emerging or unforeseen issues.

Housing and planning statistics

- Working with Local Authorities through HSSWG to gain access to their Housing Land Audit (HLA) databases to support validation of the NB1 and NB2 returns.
- Working with Local Authorities through HSSWG to improve the data collected through building control systems with the aim of using completion certificates as the basis for new build statistics.
- Review all housing statistics collections to ensure that data which is being collected is appropriate.
- Work with the Rent Registration Service to better understand the Market Evidence data with a view to publishing this data.
- Work with the Scottish Housing Regulator to agree common definitions and to consider the scope for joint publications covering the whole social rented sector.
- Work with Housing Investment Division to change from using approvals as a proxy for starts for housing association new build to using actual starts data.
- Pilot the collection of affordable housing completions data through the affordable housing planning consents survey to help provide a broader overview of affordable housing provision.
- Work with Local Authorities to develop an enhanced monitoring system to monitor the impact of the changes to the planning system.
- Develop a Generalised Land Use Database for Scotland.
- Place summary data from SCORE on SNS.

- Extend SCORE to cover Local Authority lets as well as Housing Association lets.
- Overhaul SNS “House Sales and Prices” data to exclude non-market transactions and add upper quartile values to existing count, lower quartile, median and mean.
- Identify national social landlord coverage for Mortgage to Rent Scheme.
- Establish unit level recording mechanism for the characteristics of Mid Market Rent customers.
- Work with Registers of Scotland to obtain a new customised dataset of house sales transactions and make available to Local Authorities for input into Housing Need and Demand Assessments.

Income, poverty and equality statistics

- Develop the methodology for experimental Local Authority level poverty estimates through the Family Resources Survey and Scottish Household Survey Income Imputation Project. This project is being funded by the Office for National Statistics Quality Improvement Fund.
- Analyse wave 1 of the Wealth and Assets Survey for Scotland and make this analysis available to users.
- Develop the Income and Poverty web pages.
- Develop methodology for small area income estimates for Scotland at datazone level and assess the accuracy of these estimates.
- Develop Equality Statistics web pages.
- Launch, with the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Equality Measurement Framework.
- Develop and publish a long term Equalities data and evidence plan.
- Develop a new suite of questions on disability for use in social surveys.
- Publish guidance for collecting statistical information on disability and sexual orientation.

Scottish House Condition Survey and Scottish Household Survey

- Take forward the boost to the SHCS commissioned by Aberdeenshire Council.
- Publish Local Authority tables for key indicators and indicators which may be used in Single Outcome Agreements.
- Develop up to date estimates of fuel poverty at local authority level by updating the variables which are not dependent on survey information.
- Complete a review of the bedroom standard and publish a report on the figures given the different definitions and work to standardise and achieve a consensus on this through consultation with users.
- Work with Local Authorities to determine the best way to improve SHCS coverage at a Local Authority level, including Local Authority boosts.
- Create and implement a new weighting strategy for the SHS, which accounts for non-response bias within the survey and allows for the grossing to population estimates.
- Work with colleagues from Social Justice Statistics to develop a new Income Imputation strategy for the SHS.

- Review SHS data security processes, covering data transfer between SHS Project Team and contractors and the internal storage and archiving of SHS data.
- Facilitate greater access to survey metadata, in particular statistical metadata attached to the SHS datasets. This includes producing a SHS Variable Lookup system.
- Set up an SHS Steering Group
- Initiate “root and branch” review of the SHS, subject to steering group approval.

Homelessness Statistics

- Follow-up to consultation on future of statistics on housing support through establishing a short-life working group reporting to the Housing Support Forum with representatives of CoSLA, local authorities, support providers and voluntary bodies.
- Assess the effectiveness/ accessibility of homelessness statistics published on the recently improved and extended homelessness section of the Scottish Government Housing Statistics website and make appropriate changes.
- Publish a specific report on progress towards the 2012 commitment and, in particular, the extent to which councils have/have not achieved their interim objectives of % assessed as priority by 31 March 2010.
- Maintain modelling of councils’ capacity to meet the 2012 homelessness commitment to, among other things, support the work of CoSLA/Scottish Government joint working groups on housing investment and homelessness.
- Further work to ensure the quality and consistency of coding of the progress of homelessness applications in the HL1 system.

Longer Term Developments

Some longer term developments for the statistics within the division are:

- Replace the remaining paper based statistical returns with electronic returns.
- Support the development of consistent guidance for Housing Land Audits across all local authority areas through consultation and discussion with Local Authority contacts.
- Develop the use of longitudinal surveys such as the UK Household Longitudinal Survey and Growing Up in Scotland to develop persistent poverty estimates for Scotland when sufficient data becomes available.
- Work with the teams carrying out the other large scale population surveys to ensure consistency and comparability where possible and to maximise the usefulness of the surveys.

The Use of Statistics in the Policy Process

While much of the resource of statistics branches within the division is used to collect, process, quality assure and disseminate statistics it is also important that statisticians are involved in the development and monitoring of policies within the Scottish Government. A selection of some of the planned involvement in this work is outlined below. This should be seen as an example of this type of work rather than a full list of all policy engagement.

- Work with the Rent Registration Service to evidence the rationales behind Broad Rental Market Areas.
- Use Geo-referenced housing data to investigate the mix of tenures across Scotland.
- Develop a poverty toolkit for Scotland.
- Work with financial inclusion colleagues to analyse information on debt.
- Use the carbon modelling tool to inform investment in domestic building energy efficiency.
- Improve the use of SCORE within the development of policy on social housing.
- Work with Housing Investment Division to collect and analyse unit level data on the customer characteristics of our various products e.g. Open Market Shared Equity Pilot, New Supply Shared Equity.

Link to Overall CASD Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, Communities Analytical Services covers wider issues than just statistics. To reflect this a wider analytical programme for the division will be published showing the future research priorities of the division. The divisional plan and the statistics plan will complement each and provide a fuller view of the work of the division.

Comments on the plan

This statistics plan has been brought together through consultation with internal and external users. We would welcome further comments on the content of this plan including comments on any potential developments which are not included in this plan. Any comments can be addressed to the individual statistics branches using the email addresses below or directly to the divisions senior statistician (david.mcphee@scotland.gsi.gov.uk).

Housing Statistics – housingstatistics@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Planning Statistics – planstats@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Scottish Household Survey – shs@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Scottish House Condition Survey – shcs@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Equalities Statistics – social-justice-analysis@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Income and Poverty Statistics – social-justice-analysis@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

**Communities Analytical Services Division
2009**

Annex A – Statistical Outputs

Month	National Statistics Status	Frequency	Output
April 2009			
May 2009	National Statistic	Quarterly	Housing Statistics for Scotland
	National Statistics	Annually	Poverty and Income Inequality in Scotland 2007/08
June 2009			
July 2009			
August 2009	National Statistics	Quarterly	Housing Statistics for Scotland
	National Statistics	Annually	Scottish Household Survey – Annual Report
September 2009	National Statistics	Biannually	Operation of the homelessness legislation
	Official Statistics	Annually	Affordable Housing Securing Planning Consents
	Official Statistics	Annually	Local authority housing income and expenditure
October 2009			
November 2009	National Statistics	Quarterly	Housing Statistics for Scotland
	National Statistics	Annually	Scottish House Conditions Survey – Annual Report
December 2009			
January 2010	National Statistics	Annually	Scottish Vacant and Derelict Land Survey
February 2010	National Statistics	Quarterly	Housing Statistics for Scotland
March 2010	National Statistics	Biannually	Operation of the homelessness legislation