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Janet Egdell, Registrar General  
National Records of Scotland

Sent via e-mail.

24 August 2023

## **Findings from the Group reviewing the Coherence Assessment for the Census 2022 First Outputs**

Dear Janet,

I previously wrote (1 June 2023) and responded to your request to convene a group with the purpose of reviewing your coherence assessment. I am now happy to provide you with my response.

I convened a small group of experienced senior analysts from the Scottish Government who use Census Population estimates predominantly for funding decisions and statistical outputs. As a group we met several times with your census team and demography statisticians in National Records of Scotland. I can now provide you with my response.

We, the group of senior analysts, discussed with your census team the themes emerging from the discussions with Local Authorities and examined the work done to respond to the issues that they had raised.

We also discussed with your team the assumptions and the results from the methodology, for our wider understanding, both of which has been agreed with the International Steering Group.

We then fully explored, rigorously tested and examined the results with your team in the following four areas:

- Local authority level results
- Early years
- Comparison with the Mid-Year Estimates
- Adolescence

I asked your team to respond to specific questions the group had on technical decisions taken to improve the estimations.

We also examined the results from the census population estimates and focussed on areas where the outputs differ in comparison with other trusted data sources. I asked them to respond to specific questions that the group had.

Following your team's responses, I communicated to your team our detailed findings. To preserve the orderly release of the statistics I have provided a summarised version of the group's findings below:

- The group found that the rationale and decisions taken to provide census outputs in the areas tested are sound and well-reasoned.
- We recognise that decisions have been taken to refine the modelling. We recommend that the statisticians publish clearly the decisions taken to make those refinements through the quality assurance reports.
- We recognise that publishing statistics on this scale is hugely challenging and further work is being started to address wider issues identified through this process. Although not directly related to these census outputs, we recognise work is being taken forward to address these issues.

I am satisfied in the discussions with your team that they have addressed our concerns and provided us with reasonable explanations in all the areas tested.

I am also satisfied from subsequent meetings with your senior statistical team they have constructively taken on board the groups detailed findings and am reassured that they are taking reasonable steps to address them.

I am therefore satisfied, based on this review, that the outputs will provide the robust population statistics to support the wider statistical system and that analysts and the general public can have confidence in the outputs, and that they can be published on 14 September 2023.

I am providing a copy of this letter to the Permanent Secretary and the Senior Executive Team in the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely



Alastair McAlpine  
Chief Statistician