

CASE STUDY: Dumfries and Galloway Council use Migration Policy Toolkit as they develop a Demographic Work Plan

BACKGROUND

Public sector agencies in Dumfries and Galloway, including the Council and the NHS, recognised that if the population predictions produced by National Records for Scotland (formerly the General Register Office for Scotland) came to pass they would face a significant challenge as their population aged and declined.

They recognised that while this demographic issue is sometimes portrayed as being solely a problem for the NHS and Social Care providers, it is in fact a much more general problem. Where a rapidly expanding non-working population has an expanding need for goods and services of all kinds, and where a diminishing working age population no longer has the capacity to provide all of these goods and services, there is an

imbalance in the economy and society. Viewed in this way, the problem is one which will impact on all parts of the public service, as well as in the private and third sectors.

Agencies in Dumfries and Galloway realised that to tackle the implications of the significant demographic challenges being faced and in order to maintain the standard of living and quality of life for their area, it was necessary to put in place a plan with local actions and policies. COSLA's Strategic Migration Partnership Toolkit was one of the tools they used to support this planning.

Dumfries and Galloway Fact File

- ◆ Dumfries and Galloway has a population of 148,190.
- ◆ The largest town in the region is Dumfries with a population of 31,610.
- ◆ The two other main towns are Stranraer (10,380 pop.) and Annan (8,450 pop.).
- ◆ All other settlements have populations of 4,000 or less.
- ◆ Population density is 23 people per square km compared with the Scottish average of 67.
- ◆ National Records of Scotland project that Dumfries and Galloway will experience a slight decline in their total population and a growth in their elderly population to 2033.
- ◆ By 2033 households headed by the 75+ age group are projected to increase in number by 93%.

DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY'S DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

Dumfries and Galloway faces a number of demographic challenges now and in the future. The General Register Office for Scotland 2008-based population forecasts indicate that:

- ◆ the total population is expected to decline from 148,580 in 2008 to 147,138 in 2033, a decrease of 1%. This decline is due to more deaths than births despite in-migration but is a smaller reduction than forecast in the 2006-based projections;
- ◆ the gap between older and younger populations is likely to widen over time. The over-65s population is likely to grow by 25% by 2018 and 56% by 2033 (29% for those aged 65-74 and 88% for those aged 75 and over);
- ◆ the number of residents aged 90 years or over is projected to increase from 1,134 in 2008 to 4,425 in 2033;
- ◆ the number of children aged 0-15 is expected to reduce by 8.1% between 2008 and 2033, declining from 25,157 to 23,111;
- ◆ the working age population is predicted to decline by 10.8% by 2033. This will see a decrease in the absolute numbers from 86,000 in 2008 to approximately 77,000 in 2033;
- ◆ the number of deaths exceeds the number of births, which means that the natural growth of the population is negative (although the population estimate for the region has been reasonably stable over time);
- ◆ and in terms of migration, the high migration variant shows the population increasing from 148,580 in 2008 to 155,918 in 2033, an increase of 4.9%. The low migration projection forecasts that the population size will fall to 138,485 in 2033, a decrease of 6.8%.

Community Planning partners in Dumfries and Galloway were therefore prompted to form a Working Group to explore the implications of these projections and to identify ways to respond.

WHAT DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY DID

A Community Planning Demographic Working Group was established under the leadership of Dr Derek Cox, Director of Public Health. The Group included representatives from Dumfries and Galloway Council, NHS Dumfries and Galloway, the Employability Partnership, Scottish Enterprise South, General Register Office for Scotland, Skills Development Scotland the third sector. The Group's remit was to identify key issues facing the region and ways of addressing them. The Working Group was to produce a Strategic Plan and an Action Plan to respond to the implications of the projected demographic change for Dumfries and Galloway. The work was undertaken with support from the Council's Policy and Community Planning Office.

The Working Group focused on delivering three high level goals:

- To optimise the size of the workforce
- To increase productivity
- To enhance independence

Between March and September 2010 a mapping exercise took place to identify relevant activities across the public sector and partner organisations which contributed to these goals. The aim was to ensure that the Action Plan was informed by existing and planned work in order to avoid duplication of effort and to maximise the use of limited resources. The Group also looked for gaps in provision that would need to be filled in order to meet the three high level goals.

This work was informed by information and statistics from a range of sources, including COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership's Policy Toolkit. The policy guidance of the Toolkit was put to use to help consider the role that migration could play in stabilising Dumfries and Galloway's demographic situation. The policy guidance section provided a framework for considering to what extent services were in place to attract migrants into the area and to encourage them to settle there. The Toolkit also includes a chapter on the information sources available on migration and population and this was a useful resource in terms of ensuring that the Working Group had as much information about its population as possible.

Resources used by Working Group

- ◆ COSLA's Strategic Migration Partnership Policy Toolkit.
- ◆ Analysis and advice from National Records for Scotland.
- ◆ COSLA Health and Social Care Team;
- ◆ Scottish Government/NHS Scotland/ COSLA National Public Engagement Programme on Reshaping Care for Older People - local event held in Dumfries on 3 June 2010.
- ◆ The South of Scotland Alliance - Skills Strategy (in development).

The Toolkit was an important resource because Dumfries and Galloway realised that inward migration can be one way of helping to reverse the population decline that projections suggested they were about to experience.

Once a draft of the Action Plan had been produced it was impact assessed using Dumfries and Galloway Council's generic screening toolkit which covers age, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation; health; environment; social sustainability; and economic sustainability. The draft Plan was also informed through consultation with a wide range of stakeholders.

OUTCOMES

The draft Action Plan produced by the Demographic Working Group focuses on the three goals outlined on page 2. The Plan takes into account the range of work across the region, including colleges, NHS, local authority, multi-agency thematic partnerships and the third sector that was already underway and which can contribute to achieving these goals. The Plan also identifies where more could be done and where gaps exist. The process of identifying relevant work that is already underway and bringing it together into the Demographic Action Plan is important in terms of ensuring agencies across the area understand how they can and do contribute to stabilising Dumfries and Galloway's population.

Given the current economic climate and the limited resources this brings, prioritisation of activities was clearly important. The Working Group acknowledges that priorities within the Action Plan are likely to change from time to time, given changing circumstances. For example, whilst investing resources in encouraging inward migration is not a priority at present, it may become a priority in the future as a means of securing inward investment into the area which could help secure prosperity and quality of life.

This case study may be updated in the future to reflect further developments in the development of the Demographic Working Group's Action Plan.

Further information

[The draft Dumfries and Galloway Demographic Action Plan](#)
[The Impact Assessment of the Draft Plan](#)

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